

UBUNTU ACADEMY / IMPACT

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THE OUTCOMES

Achievements beyond expectation. We are proud to say that we have many success stories. Three of the students, Sinayo, Asisipho and Thando are currently in an learnership programme with Red & Yellow School for Advertising. They are about to or already doing internships in various companies, including Pearson. Dean has started his own dance school in his community of Mitchell's Plain and was accepted to the dance school of UCT, enrolled in the Rainbow Academy and was just offered a job at the department for social developments. Jean-Pierre is about to complete his sound engineering programme at the SAE Institute. Prince aka MK The Kapital got over 10.000 downloads within the first week of release of a new track, he performs regularly and is a frequent guest on various radio and TV shows. Zolani continues to run his art events, including weekly poetry workshops in his Mfuleni. His second big music concert is coming up at the District Six museum in central Cape Town. Our own Bongani has written and directed and gotten 4 awards for his musical Egoli, about to play at Baxter (again). Half of his cast are Ubuntu Academy students. They are all continuing to collaborate within and beyond our partner and mentor network.

Above all, we continue to stay in touch via our WhatsApp group. We share news, opportunities, jokes and collaborate on projects and events. We just keep on rolling together.

Over the course of two years we have done a lot of events, shows, performances, art pieces. We have grown together, lived through taxing and unpleasant situations, but always came back. We've criticised, fought and forgiven. Everyone brought in their unique, authentic feelings and ideas, which allowed us to focus on goals and outcomes that we then set out to make happen.

Apart from introducing to students to new skills, concepts, people and ideas, we have given them challenging and thus valuable experiences that have clearly inspired them to reflect on who they are, what they want to achieve, and how they can do so. Together, we have grown a network that spans a large area and different cultures, and that connects private, public and civic sector, and we have instilled a fresh mind-set of possibilities. That is what makes Ubuntu Academy a hothouse for innovation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The impact of the Ubuntu Academy on its students was captured through surveys, individuals reflections and group evaluations with students, staff, volunteers and external partners throughout the duration of the pilot programme. Quite a few evaluation workshops were designed and facilitated by expert partners, such as Mauritz Brans (an organisational development facilitator), and the Kaospilots (a business leadership school).

The impact is narrowed down to eight themes that came out of these evaluations most repeatedly, and most strongly. All themes are supported with quotes from students that they wrote in their reflective diaries. For additional insights on the data accumulated, please contact the Ubuntu Academy.

IMPACT

1. Social cohesion: Students know about and respect other cultures

One of the most quoted impact was that UA brought students from different communities, socio-economic backgrounds and cultures together. Racial segregation is still a complicated reality in Cape Town, thus having a melting pot taught people about fellow South Africans lifestyles and belief systems, and to overcome assumptions and prejudices. UA allowed international coaches and volunteers to interact and learn from students who in turn got to learn about other cultures by experiencing them.

"It (UA) made me realise that we are all the same"

"The more we work together, the more we understand each other"

"We learned to respect other cultures and their thinking, we must treat everyone equally"

"Don't judge a book by its cover, there is so much more to people than their outer appearance"
"I learned how to work with people more easily, and especially with the ones from different cultures"

2. Networks: Students have better access to opportunities and resources

UA has created a new network and community through which students and stakeholders have access to a number of public, private and civic organisations across industries. Personal interactions, exchanges of ideas, exhibitions or performances give students direct access to theatres, academia, the private sector, public and cultural institutions. Engaging with people from various backgrounds, experiencing different businesses and structures has opened minds and ideas about what's possible, and how systems work.

"I never used to talk about my personal life, but now I do with the students and coaches and they feel as a family"
"I learned working with people and networking"
"UA put me on the internet"

3. Students' horizons are broadened

UA has affected students' worldviews and mind-sets. On the one hand this was done by challenging students directly on their perspectives during workshops or conversations. But also indirectly, by working in a multicultural environment.

"I used to only think about hip-hop dancing, but UA has shown me there is more. Now I love contemporary"
"I realise now that wellness is very important to pay attention to"
"UA made me aware that I have more talents than dancing. I discovered acting and music as well"
"I thought singing was where you open your mouth and sing, I now know it's more than that"
"My way of thinking has changed; I now think out of the box"

4. Students' self esteem is raised

UA managed to make a positive impact on the student's self esteem. Most importantly students themselves reflect this. But also the team has observed the students becoming increasingly confident to speak from their heart and build a strong identity. They can open themselves up to strangers – even if they are from a different background. For example, at the start of the programme Nashley never wanted to speak. But with hard work from her coaches, by the end of the pilot, Nashley talked everyone's ears off – also the ears of guests and strangers visiting - and she has become very active as a dance leader in her community as well.

"I have changed a lot because at the beginning I was very shy and not a speaking person now I know I must speak up when there is a problem or when I want something"
"UA has helped me pop out of my shell"
"I have learned to look beyond my circumstances and just move on with life. I am worth more than I thought; I am bigger than my situation. The world is my oyster."
"UA made me believe in my talents"
"They boosted my talent, gave me confidence."

5. Students build their identity

Through UA, the students got to know themselves better and strengthened their identity. This was an important aspect of the programme that is reflected in the art, entrepreneurship and leadership pillars. Students got to explore and grow their talent, and they now see their own potential. They recognize and value their own talent. Furthermore, students have learned to reflect on themselves.

"UA has helped me to want to discover myself much more"
"I changed to be a good person, and how to know what is best for me by doing my artwork. They (UA) showed me the way of how to be myself again"
"I want them (other young people in the community) to look at me and say: "If she did it then why can't I?""
"More than it (UA) made me to be a better artist, it made me to be a better person"

6. Students have developed an entrepreneurial spirit and focus

Students now know where they want to go in life, and have more focus on their next steps. They were continuously stimulated to think about their future and next steps. Students know where they want to go, they know their ambition and they can express this.

"UA gave me direction. (I already had visions and dreams)"
"I now know what I want to achieve and how to get there"
"It taught me how to make sure things get done and what procedure I must put in place to make sure happen and get done properly"
"I learned to come up with idea and to operate them"

"UA changed me from a street performer to a business performer"

"Need to be more serious about what I want in life, to be more focused"

7. Students have become more mature and communicate better

Problems around discipline and communication were real obstacles to overcome. UA therefore prioritized working on these skills. Together with the students rules were developed and group reflections around these issues often took place. Although UA desires to make a bigger impact on this skills area, some improvement in communication skills is definitely evident.

"I saw the development in my daughter, how she grew in communication and listening, things she can pass on to kids in the community"

"The projects helped me work as a team player"

"I learned communicating effectively. Before UA I had never been communicating in a group"

"I am more serious about dancing"

"I know now I need to communicate the best I can"

"Being Professional: coming on time and respecting time. Punctuality, respecting the time of the facilitator"

"I am no longer ignorant, I now first observe, listen carefully and then I try it myself"

"I am able to travel by myself now (didn't dare before)"

8. Students have made meaningful next steps in their lives: they got into further education, employment or they started their own project

At the start of the programme the goal was set for students to either get into further education or employment or to initiate a project or business. Here we would like to highlight a few success stories of our students to show the impact of the Ubuntu Academy.

Three students, Sinayo, Thando, and Asisipho, got accepted to the Red & Yellow Learnership Programme, directly through the connection of UA. This opportunity will significantly improve their outlook on employment. The Ubuntu Academy has been the connector, but has also directly assisted the students in the application process.

The Ubuntu Academy has inspired student Spook to start a dance school for children in his own community, and has helped him prepare for auditions for the Rainbow Academy where he is currently studying dance.

A real entrepreneur is student Jean Pierre. UA has stimulated him to focus on his passion. During the UA programme he enrolled into the SAE Institute for sound engineering and he now started his very own recording studio in his house.

"I achieved two of my (UA) goals already: I started my own dance school in my area and I'm going to start studying at UCT next year"

"I'm doing a lot of artwork and making own clothes"

"I've made changes through UA. I enrolled at a college"

"I helped people to dance and told them that they should believe in what they do"

"Because my community is full of gangsters and drugs and for young people to see someone in their community rise above the circumstances and being positive will motivate them to do the same"