

# SUCCESS STORY BOOKLET

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# ABBREVIATIONS

ABYM	Adolescent Boys and Young Men
AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Woman
CANGO	The Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organization
GBV	Gender-based violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTS	HIV Testing Services
LSE	Life Skills Education
NCP	Neighbourhood Care Point
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
PR	Public Recipient
TB	Tuberculosis
THF	Total Health Foundation
WVS	World Vision Eswatini

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## PREAMBLE

CANGO is a Principal Recipient of the Global Fund Grant in Eswatini supporting four Sub-recipients currently for the implementation of HIV prevention interventions targeting adolescents and youth in and out of school including Tertiary institutions, Key Populations (Sex Workers, Men having Sex with Men, Transport Operators) and People Living with HIV.

One of CANGO's prioritized programs under the grant (implementation period 2018-2021) focuses on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in 14 targeted Tinkhundla. CANGO provides sub grants to other CSO organizations to implement the AGYW focused interventions in selected tinkhundlas and further support capacity building and project management oversight in the implementation of these grants. The goal of this project is to reduce new HIV infections and reduce vulnerability among AGYW in Eswatini by improving access to adolescent youth friendly facility services through a coordinated system for referrals and linkages across the AGYW partner network.

Through the funding from the Global Fund, CANGO is aiming to contribute to turning the tide and prevent new HIV infections among adolescents and young women through the Stepping Stones model. Stepping Stones is a workshop series designed as a tool to help promote sexual health, improve psychological well-being and prevent HIV.

This booklet henceforth, provides the CANGO—Global Fund grant project success stories which illustrate positive change/changes in the life or lives of the project beneficiaries. The methodology used in the documentation of these stories included reviewing project performance, interviewing, and visiting project sites to observe the practices of project beneficiaries using the success story data collection and analysis tools. The tools focused on capturing the 'who, what, where, why, when, and how' of an individual, group, or intervention in a story that represents the case of different individuals, groups or interventions targeted by the project over the years of implementation.

## ORGANIZATIONS' PROFILE

### YOUNG HEROES ESWATINI

Young Heroes Eswatini provides Eswatini's orphans and vulnerable children with the financial, medical, educational and psychosocial support they too often go without. With programs ranging from monthly life-support grants and comprehensive healthcare to educational support and vocational training, they help them grow successfully into self-sufficient, healthy adulthood.

### WORLD VISION ESWATINI

World Vision Eswatini (WVS) began in 1992 as an emergency relief organization before transitioning to transformational development and advocacy for the most vulnerable children, people and communities in Eswatini. WVS supports broader government initiatives targeted at these and other vulnerable children, and further works with traditional structures existing within the communities, to ensure sustainability.

The transformational development programmes in WVS include maternal, newborn and child health and Nutrition, Education, HIV and AIDS, Water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Livelihoods and economic development, Child protection and the spiritual nurturing of children.

### BANTWANA INITIATIVE ESWATINI

In 2008, World Education's Bantwana Initiative began working in Eswatini using a school-based model to provide support to highly vulnerable children. The primary goal in Eswatini is to provide comprehensive support to vulnerable children and families by building the capacity of communities, schools, and government officials to provide critically needed services. Bantwana delivers programming that supports a range of education, health/HIV, and social protection outcomes. This in-the-field experience lends deep insight into communities, which in turn, leads to successful initiatives as well as the development of programming innovation that addresses the real needs of children and caregivers.



**STORIES  
FROM THE FIELD**



## STEPPING STONE

***This project supports the provision of pre-paid vouchers and education subsidies to increase uptake of services for specifically vulnerable adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in high density, low-income areas, facilitate school re-entry for those who are able and interested to continue with formal education, as well as ensuring adequate knowledge and access to HIV, TB and sexual reproductive health (SRH) information. The intervention utilize the Stepping Stones approach to capacitate out-of-school AGYW through peer educator and facilitator networks with comprehensive HIV knowledge and skills. Community AGYW and other role models are supported to play an active role as champions for demand generation among AGYW. The out-of-school curriculum also place emphasis on issues of healthy relationships (partners, family, peers), SGBV, sexual health, contraception, gender norms, and negotiating condom use. It also strengthen AGYW agency by including a focus on AGYW empowerment.***



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# EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN AND ADOLESCENT BOYS & YOUNG MEN LEADS TO BECOME A HEALTHY COMMUNITY—LUSOTI COMMUNITY



*The Lusoti prevention group being addressed by the Community Facilitator.*

**I**n Lusoti, a community situated in Simunye - one of the sugar belts companies in the Lubombo region, Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) between the ages 18 and 26 gather weekly to discuss their lives and relationships. But, these are not just casual meetings; these AGYW are participating in Stepping Stones program. Stepping Stones is an evidence-based training that applies participatory learning approaches to guide participants through a series of topics, including gender-based violence (GBV), sexuality, HIV, communications and relationship skills. However, this group is very unique as there are also male participants (adolescent boys and young men) too unlike other Stepping Stone groups.

This group was formed in 2021 and members eagerly attend the sessions because of the bonds they have formed with their peers. One member said through Stepping Stone, she has learned the different forms of gender-based violence and how to be an independent woman who does not rely on anybody especially boy-friends.

*“I am happy that through this group we are able to have easy access to condoms and contraceptives and I am confident to use them,”* another member added.

Young Heroes’ Stepping Stone project is funded by Global Fund through The Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organization

(CANGO) helps to educate and build capacity to AGYW in different constituencies in the country. This intervention is designed to reduce HIV among adolescent girls and young women by addressing the factors that increase HIV risk, including sexual violence.

The members who attend Stepping Stones have developed a trusting and supportive environment where they are able to share their experiences and challenges. They speak positively about these sessions. Another member said, “Usually we are shy or uncomfortable to discuss some of the health issues we are facing in the local clinic however, here personally, I am able to be open with the other members because we can relate to each other’s experiences. I see it as a support group.”

*“Our parents are very much supportive of this initiative. We are not just empowering ourselves*

*but we are also using what we have learned to support other family members and our friends through information sharing,”* said another member.

While the group is happy with the initiative, they also wish the age bracket could be stretched to accommodate youth up-to the ages of 30 years old as they are also facing similar issues as the 10-24 age bracket.

“The combination of both females and males participants during the program helps participants to pick how the other gender perceive certain things or actions. In this way they are able to relate, share their perceptions and get views about how each gender’s mind-sets work,” explained Busi the Community Facilitator.

*The Lusoti and Mhlume Community Facilitators being engaged by THF Senior Management staff after the group session at Lusoti Pre-Fab Hall.*



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## ‘WORLD VISION ESWATINI MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE FOR ME’- WORDS OF A DETERMINED YOUNG GIRL



*Ayanda Lushaba at her school during an interview with the Total Health Foundation Team.*

**A**yanda Lushaba\* (*not her real name*) is a 16 year old girl doing Form 4 at St. Michaels High School. She currently resides at Fairview in Manzini with her elder sister (half-sister). Initially, Ayanda hails from Mlindazwe in the Lubombo region where she grew up.

St. Michael's High School is an Anglican School for girls and one of the prestigious schools in the country known for its high passing rate. Its vision is to be an iconic school for academic excellence in the production of globally competitive students.

She joined the World Vision Eswatini Stepping Stone program in 2019 while she was in doing Form 2 at Ekuphakameni in Lavumisa. It was

however, difficult to stay in school due to lack of school fees and many times she would be sent away. Her source of support is her mother as her father is unemployed. Her mother only gets money through making soaps and selling them and sometimes her step-father also provides support towards Ayanda's needs. Her sister also lost her job after the company she was working for was hit by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they are surviving from savings she made before she lost her job and Ayanda's mother sometimes send them money.

Her encounter with the Stepping Stone program has change her life positively. Through the program, she received school fees support to sustain her in school after completing the curriculum. The project started paying her fees in 2020 when she was in Form 3 and she successfully passed her Junior Examination with a First Class despite the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted classes with lockdown. She then found a place to pursue her high school at St' Michaels High School. Her life is now completely transformed. Her self-esteem has improved through the support she received interacting with her peers within the Stepping Stone sessions, where she was enlighten about making healthy choices and self-care. Previously she was a more social person who did not make much time for her studies but through the sessions she started to shift her focus towards her studies as they were taught about the importance of education.

*“The environment here is very different and I need to adapt sooner so that my marks can pick up. In as much as I have managed to reach the 60% pass mark in all my subjects I know that if I want to fulfil my dream of studying abroad, I need to work harder. As you can see school is over for the day but I am going to class to study. I like studying here at school because I am able to source help from my teachers as they are around. Most of the times I study alone, but sometimes my friends join me. I will work hard until they know that Ayanda*

*is here and appear in the Top 15,” she said proudly.*

*“I like helping people when they are ill hence, my dream is to become a Doctor. I know that this school is the best and with all the resources available I will surely fulfil my dream. I will forever be grateful to World Vision Eswatini for the support and I wish they can continue helping other needy young girls like myself to access such opportunities,” she concluded.*



*Ayanda in her school uniform during an interview.*



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# I AM RISING AGAINST ALL ODDS BECAUSE OF YOUNG HEROES ESWATINI

**W**hen Nomfundo\* (*not her real name*) was young, she lost her grandmother who was her guardian, hence her mother brought her back to stay with her in her marital home in the Lubombo region. The now 18 year old down-to-earth girl's childhood was characterized by emotional abuse from both at school and home and interrupted education.

She lives with her mother, stepfather who is the breadwinner in the family working in one of the sugar belts companies in the Lubombo region and three siblings. Her mother on the other hand however, is a part-time domestic worker and sells second hand clothes in order to make sure Nomfundo school fees is paid, had clothes and toiletries as her step-father only takes care of the other three siblings except her.

The interrupted education started in 2019 after she had just passed her Junior Secondary with a First Class and had to progress to High School. The first class pass followed a Merit pass in her Primary Education. The young girl could see her dream of becoming a Human Rights Lawyer slipping right away from her hands. All she ever wanted was to go back to school, however, circumstances forced her to drop out of school the whole of the first term as her mother could no longer afford High School. However, after the Indvuna Yenkhundla got to know that she has dropped out of school he offered to pay for her fees in Form 4.

Towards the end of 2019, Nomfundo was invited to join Stepping Stone by the Indvuna



*Young Heroes Stepping Stone beneficiary during an Interview in the Lubombo region.*

Yenkhundla. Stepping Stone is a Global Fund funded initiative through CANGO as part of its effort to to increase uptake of services for specifically vulnerable adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in high density, low-income areas, facilitate school re-entry for those who are able and interested to continue with formal education, as well as ensuring adequate knowledge and access to HIV, TB and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) information. Young Heroes implements Stepping Stone in Eswatini in different constituencies.

Along with other girls her age, and under the guidance of a Community Facilitator, Nomfundo completed the 12-week Stepping Stone curriculum that covered topics including, HIV prevention, family planning, sexual reproductive health

(SRH), gender-based violence, and financial literacy among others. For the first time, Nomfundo felt at peace being around her peers and being able to be herself without anybody name shaming and classing her unlike at school and at home. She was able to be herself and fully express herself and through Stepping Stone she grew even more determined to finish school and change her life around.

After the completion of the curriculum, Nomfundo was eligible to be enrolled in the Stepping Stone school re-entry initiative which targets girls who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school because of an inability to cover the cost. The initiative covered Nomfundo's fees as well as school supplies.

*"I will always be grateful to Young Heroes for making me the person I am today. This is the*

*best gift any person could ever give me in my entire life. Education will surely open doors for me. At some point I could see my dream drifting away but they did not allow that to happen. The funding has made me realize that there is a lot to live for in life and giving up is certainly not an option. In my Form 5 examination I managed crediting 5 subjects and got a pass in 1 subject and I am currently awaiting for admission at the University of Eswatini where I had applied,"* she emotionally explained.

*"I cannot forget the lessons we got during the Stepping Stone curriculum, I feel empowered, safe from HIV and I am more focused in life. I am positive and not allowing anything to interfere with my dreams despite my background and the present circumstances,"* she stated proudly.



*Young Heroes Community Facilitator and Young Heroes Stepping Stone beneficiary .*



***“Overall, the project has proven its ability to bring change to the lives of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). It has given a second chance to adolescent girls who were at the verge of dropping out of school and those who fell pregnant at a very young age”***

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# WORLD VISION ESWATINI CREATING LOCAL ROLE MODELS FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS— LUHLEKWENI COMMUNITY

**T**he community facilitator program plays a major role in ensuring that adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) who benefit from it remain on their education pathway and the out of teen mothers rebuild their confidence and further reconnect them to the larger community of resources around them.

## **The Community Facilitator:**

Sandzisile Mavimbela is a 29 year old girl single mother of a 7 year old girl. Sandzisile lives at Luhlekweni a community under Somntongo Inkhunda in the Shiselweni region. She is a Community Facilitator in her community under the World Vision Eswatini Stepping Stone project with is funded by Global Fund through The Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisation (CANGO).

## **The story:**

*“I started working as a Peer Educator back in 2016 with another organization. That is where my love and passion for young people grew seeing all the challenges they were in. I joined World Vision in 2020, I was recruited through the Inkhundla where World Vision sent out an advertisement and we were then interviewed and I got the position.*

*However, when the project was introduced in our community, which was after we were recruited, the community especially parents had different opinions. Some believed that the project will spoil the girl child as we encourage the*

*use of Family Planning services, whilst others appreciated it and allowed their adolescent girls to be part of the program to be capacitated with knowledge. Overall, the project has proven its ability to bring change to the lives of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). It has given a second chance to adolescent girls who were at the verge of dropping out of school and those who fell pregnant at a very young age. Some of the project beneficiaries are sponsored for their school fees and their parents are appreciating the project.*

*When I first became a mentor I was not sure if I was the right candidate. I was judging myself from past experiences I had. I was a mother myself at that time who was taking care of her daughter in the absence of the baby’s father. I never thought I could be a good role model to the girls. I later realized that it was not about me, or my past, but about changing my life and that of the other girls in my community for a better future. I knew I had to be brave so that I could be trusted and bring the positive impact in my community through the participants.*

*For me, being a Community Facilitator is like being a leader, you lead from the front and put out your right hand for others to hold onto it. I learned to practice patience and dedicate my time to the AGYW.*

*At first, the young mothers used to struggle with raising their babies, with no money to take care of themselves and their babies. They were*



*hopeless and my job was to be a leader and lead them out of the dark tunnel and give them hope,” she narrated.*

### **Success:**

The Stepping Stone program has empowered many young women within their communities to lead and mentor their peers to improve their livelihoods and quality life.

Through the Stepping Stone program a savings group was also established and members of the group have been empowered to start their own businesses. Some are selling snacks, others rearing broilers and through the income and profit they are able to take care of them-

selves. They have learnt to be independent and are pushing their businesses.

*“I now consider my days boring when I am not with the girls. The environment with them is very friendly and we have easy access to services such as family planning.*

*Finally, to World Vision Eswatini, I am very grateful for the opportunity through the project I have also learnt a lot as a community facilitator. Sometimes the work is challenging or the situations but being calm and having a clear mind helps. Moreover, it is vital to listen passionately to your clients and observing confidentiality at all times as this brings trust,” She said in closing.*



*Sandzisile a Community Facilitator in Luhlekweni engaging the Get Together Savings group at the Hand-in-Hand NCP .*



***“Seeing the change is what I like most about my work. I like seeing young people’s lives improve because of the education I provide.”***

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## COMMUNITY FACILITATORS ON HIV'S FRONT LINE IN MHLUME INKHUNDLA IN THE LUBOMBO REGION

**E**swatini has one of the highest HIV infection rate in the world. As much as the country has reached the UNAIDS 95-95-95, however, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are remaining behind as – as HIV incidence and prevalence are almost four times higher among female youths 20 to 24 years of age (20.9%) compared to males of the same age group (4.2%).

Tebenguni, 27, a community facilitator says she enjoys working with the youth in her community at Mhlume Inkhundla. She works for the Stepping Stone project implemented by Young Heroes, a local nonprofit organization that is supported by The Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organization (CANGO) under the Global Fund grant. Young Heroes works to prevent the spread of HIV, specifically targeting AGYW and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). In addition to distributing condoms and connecting people with HIV testing services, TB and sexual reproductive health (SRH) information the organization supports the provision of pre-paid vouchers and education subsidies to increase uptake of services for specifically vulnerable AGYW in high density, low-income areas, facilitate school re-entry for those who are able and interested to continue with formal education. Most of Young Heroes' community education efforts are carried out by community facilitators like Tebenguni.



*Tema a Community Facilitator in Mhlume during an interview with the THF team.*

### **The role with Young Heroes:**

*“As community facilitators we work hand in hand with our mentor. I do community mobilization of the AGYW ages 10 -24 years who are vulnerable for group discussions where I teach the curriculum. I also conduct home visits where I also conduct one-on-one sessions with those who require attention. During the group discussions we normally use a central point where the participants will be comfortable too such as the community hall or the sports ground. We also mobilize HIV testing services, gender-based violence (GBV) and Family Plan-*

ning services for those who need these services.

### **Motivation:**

*The love and passion I have for young people made me take part in the project because I wanted to help the community around me. Teenage pregnancy is on the rise and it is not just in our community but countrywide which leads to young girls leaving school at an early age, and many of them become infected with HIV only because of a lack of education.*

### **Typical day in the community:**

*I conduct what we call “social behavior change communication sessions” with both in school and out of school AGYW using the Stepping Stone curriculum, which has twelve modules. I also refer clients to services such as HIV testing, HIV prevention, reproductive health, depending on their needs.*



*Young Heroes Stepping Stone graduates during an Activation activity.*

### **About the role:**

*Just recently I got recognized for being a life changer in the lives of the young people. I could not believe it when I got the award but I am happy that our work is not in vain especially because the change in behavior is visible. So, what I can say is seeing the change is what I like most about my work. I like seeing young people’s lives improve because of the education I provide. Seeing young people independent and successful are the biggest rewards of this job.*

*Moreover, I enjoy seeing the young people graduate from the program which we call an “Activation.” During the Activation participants are awarded certificates for successfully completing the Stepping Stone Curriculum. Each community facilitator brings forth members that have completed the curriculum for graduation. Also, after these sessions, it is so heartwarming to see some of them going back to school and vocational trainings especially those who are needy,” she proudly narrated.*

### **Recruitment process:**

Community facilitators are recruited by the organization through the Inkhundla. Community facilitators are part of the Inkhundla meaning they have to reside in that area. After the application process, shortlisted individuals are called in for an interview at the Inkhundla centre where the best is then selected. The organization thereafter, report to the Inkhundla council and that individual is then introduced to the council and the community in which they will be serving and what their scope entails. In addition, the new recruits undergo a training by the organization.



## WORTH/LIVELIHOOD

***The main purpose of this project is to determine the long-term employability skills of youth, reveal the training strategies and to create a training methodology for youth trainers. WORTH's goal is to alleviate poverty by teaching women to be financially literate and by creating the opportunity for them to become micro entrepreneurs so they can support themselves and their families. Moreover, these community-based savings groups teach financial literacy and parenting skills.***

***The goal is to improve the livelihoods and resilience of households to lead and manage their own development in a sustainable way. The focus for this sector includes improving household income (through establishment and monitoring of savings groups and promotion of local value chain development initiatives), improving household food security (through the promotion of climate-smart agriculture) and humanitarian support to affected households.***

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM THEIR COMMUNITIESP– NGOMANE COMMUNITY



*Izzy Girls savings group at Ngomane during one of their weekly meetings.*

**I**zzy Girls is the second savings group to be established in Ngomane community after its members successfully completed the Stepping Stone curriculum. This group is based at ka-Ngomane in the Lubombo region and meets every week at the Ngomane Community Hall. These savings group are aimed at providing economic strengthening interventions with social empowerment activities such as mentoring, and HIV prevention education to Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW).

The group was established in 2020 and it comprises of thirty members with both in school and out of school AGYW. Members of the group have already started their businesses with loans from the savings group. Collectives like

the savings and loan group enable the young people to support each other while developing their businesses and gaining experience in how to manage money.

Bongekile the Community Facilitator who manages and provide mentoring to the group explained that on a normal routing day the team first learn about money management from the WORTH book titled **“The way to wealth”**. Savings collections are then collected by the treasury and her committee. Weekly contribution is E10.00 which is a mandatory fee and then there is a voluntary fee which is any amount of money the member is saving. Moreover, there is a late coming fee of E5.00. After the collections are made, members who would

like to loan (from the savings group) to bolster their businesses are also given the loans. Loans are payable after a month with a 20% interest.

In the year 2020, the group managed to save a total of more than E22, 000 and this year's target is to save at least E50, 000. The Izzy Girls dream is to own a farm business and produce vegetables and maize for resell. The members explained that the profit from their business they use it for their needs such as toiletry stuff and there is easy access to health services such as HIV testing, contraceptives and condoms.

### The milestone

Young Heroes has also provided start-up materials to support the group in their Car Wash joint business. The business idea came after they identified a gap of the service in their community. This business aims to break the cycle of poverty and boost economic development among the team in their community. Young Heroes further provided a training on business management training and microfinance financial assistance to the committee to help them to effectively start and grow their business.

Support provided by the organization include the purchase of a water tank, car hoover, pressure washer, horse pipe, generator for electricity, polish for the cars (body and tyres), as well as washing clothes.



*The savings group committee receiving savings from group members.*



*Young Heroes Management awarding a cheque for an income generating initiative at Mhlume .*



*Ngomane Community Facilitator after a meeting with the THF team.*



***“With my last year’s savings I managed to buy myself a pair of school shoes,” said a member of the Siyakhula savings group.***



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## CAPACITATING EZINDWENDWENI ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WITH FINANCIAL LITERACY TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY



*Siyakhula Savings group members at the Neighbourhood Care Point where they meet weekly.*

**S**iyakhula Savings Group is within Somntongo Inkhundla in Ezindwendweni community in the Shiselweni region. The group consists of a total of 18 members with a total of 17 members' school going adolescent girls. The youngest group member is 17 years old with the eldest being 21 years old.

The group was successfully formed in 2020, after World Vision Eswatini introduced the Stepping Stone program in the constituency. During the program Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) were recruited to be part of the program which aims to support the provision of pre-paid vouchers and education subsidies to increase uptake of services for specifically vulnerable AGYW in high density, low-income areas,

facilitate school re-entry for those who are able and interested to continue with formal education, as well as ensuring adequate knowledge and access to HIV, TB and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) information.

Through the program lives are changing, skills are developing and capacity is being built as all the group members have successfully started their small businesses. A majority of the vibrant group sells snacks, sweets, lollipops and others are selling rusks and biscuits. Through these businesses these AGYW are able to handle and manage money.

The Siyakhula savings group the previous year managed to save a total of E6, 000 and each

week a member is supposed to save at least E5.00 and loans are paid with an interest of 10%.

*“With my last year’s savings I managed to buy myself a pair of school shoes,”* said one member.

Another member narrated, *“Because of the savings group I have gained knowledge on money handling and I am able to socialize with friends during the weekly meetings. Moreover, with the profit I am able to buy myself toiletry stuff and*


*have pocket money at school.”*

The group’s vision is to start a group business where they will make floor polish and sell it to local schools and also rear broilers.

World Vision Eswatini continue to empower AGYW in Eswatini and most of the Stepping Stone graduates are becoming more and more independent. Moreover, through the program, 7 members from the Siyakhula savings group have benefitted greatly from the program as their school fees are paid by the program.



*The Neighbourhood Care Point where the members meet.*



**“I use indigenous trees to produce this Vaseline and each month I am able to make at least make E300 a month. Through this money I can buy myself toiletry stuff and take care of my needs.”**

# ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN DEVELOPING EARLY INVESTMENT SKILLS THROUGH WORTH IN NDZOMANE COMMUNITY



*The Get Together Savings group at the Hand-in-Hand NCP where they meet on a weekly basis.*

**T**he Get-Together Savings Group meets weekly at the Hand in Hand Neighbouring Care Point (NCP) at Ndzomane in Somntongo Inkhundla in the Shiselweni region. The group was set up to support adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) to establish and grow businesses.

Savings group in Eswatini are normally considered to be led by older women, but this has since changed since the implementation of the Stepping Stone Program in different constituencies in the country by World Vision Eswatini funded by Global Fund through The Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organization (CANGO). A majority of AGYW in Eswatini have little or no financial independence as they are unemployed or incapable of working because they did not finish school. The Get-

Together Savings Group grew from an innovative economic empowerment (WORTH) which is covered during the Stepping Stone curriculum. WORTH's goal is to alleviate poverty by teaching young women to be financially literate and by creating the opportunity for them to become micro entrepreneurs so they can support themselves and their families. Moreover, these community-based savings groups teach financial literacy and parenting skills.

The savings group started in 2020 with a total of 18 members both in school and out of school AGYW with the youngest member being 14 years old and the oldest 24 years old. However, due to employment opportunities and schools, 10 members have since relocated to other places. This group meet every week and each member saves E10.00 minimum which is an increase

compared to the E5.00 last year's contribution. The group is guided by a constitution and the treasurer is elected by the group members. Moreover, there is a 10% interest on all loans and a fee E1.00 for late coming. The savings group plays a key role in giving its members access to funds so they can expand their businesses and assist with loans during hard times such as sending children to the clinic

After graduating from the Stepping Stone Curriculum, the group was formed and all the members have successfully set up their own small businesses. In the previous year the group saved a total of E19, 600 and their 2021 goal is to save at least E20, 000. A majority of the members are selling airtime and other business include rearing broilers, selling fat cakes, archaar, nail polish, homemade Vaseline and bubblegum. Members sell their products door-to-door, during community gatherings and also sell during the Manzini market day.

*"With the profit members get from their businesses they are able to save and buy toiletry stuff,"* explained the Community Facilitator.

*"With my last year's savings, I was able to buy myself school uniform and apart from the saving that we do, I really enjoy meeting my peers here,"* said one member.

Another member explained, *"Because of WORTH, I have become an independent young woman and I am able to buy myself toiletries without relying on my parents. Moreover, through my business I am able to take care of my child such as honouring clinic visits and buy-*

*ing the baby clothes as you know babies grow faster."*

The group's long term goal is to be a successful savings groups and reach a level of being a registered savings cooperative in the country. The Get Together savings group has become a vital tool in promoting health care and easy access to information and services such as HIV prevention through condom distribution. Moreover, it supports its members to become independent AGYW who can run successful businesses and are gaining experience on how to manage money.



*The Get Together Saving group at the Hand-in-Hand NCP listening to the proceedings of the day.*



*"I am so much grateful to World Vision Eswatini for the support they provided. I have gained knowledge both academically and health wise."*

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## SELF-RESILIENT YOUNG WOMAN EMPOWERED THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AT LUHLEKWENI

**A**fter Nomvuselelo Gina a 23-year-old young woman from Luhlekweni Chiefdom under Somntongo Inkhundla in the Shiselweni region, graduated from the Stepping Stone Curriculum with World Vision Eswatini she started her own business. Nomvuselelo sells airtime to the community.

She started her business after approaching the other members of the savings group for a loan to start her business. She has since expanded her business and is selling snacks alongside (door-to-door).

Nomvuselelo's dream has always been to become a successfully business woman. She finished her high school in 2018 where she did not perform well and in 2019 when World Vision introduced the Stepping Stone program she was a beneficiary of the school education initiative where she restarted her high school studies. She had hopes of studying towards ICT or Business Management, however, she also could not make the cut despite all her hard work. These obstacles have not moved the young woman an inch from her dream of becoming a business woman as she still hopes to go to vocational school and do a catering course.

Currently, she does not have enough funds to enrol for the course but hopes that her savings will one day be enough to cover the costs. Her business of selling airtime yields about E50.00 profit per E300.00 airtime sold and normally she sells E600.00 airtime monthly.

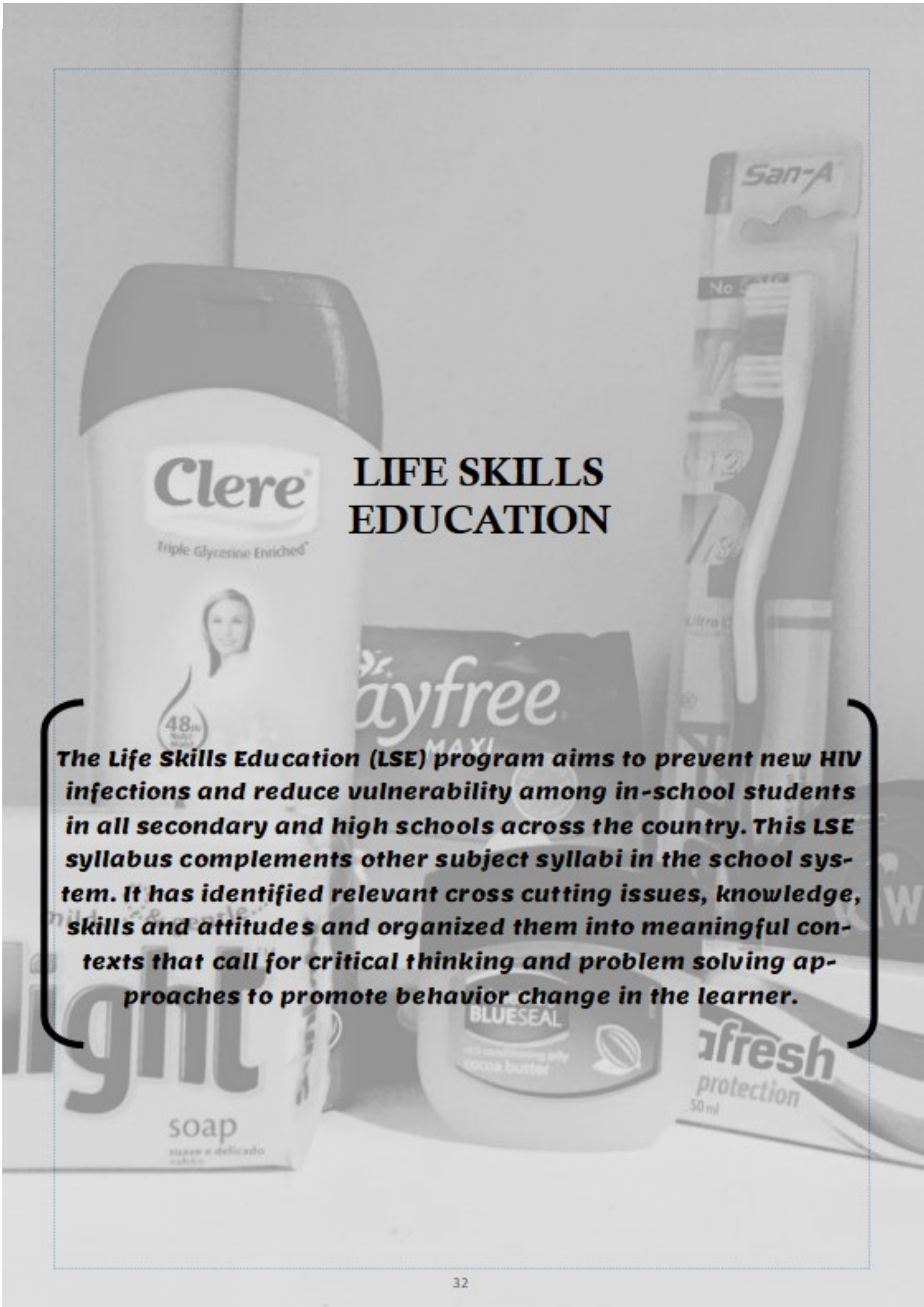
With the profit that she makes, she is able to buy herself toiletry stuff and save in the weekly meeting.

*"I am so much grateful to World Vision Eswatini for the support they provided. I have gained knowledge both academically and health wise,"* she said.

*"Just words of wisdom I would like the AGYW not stop dreaming work towards your dreams and do not give up no matter the challenges,"* she closed.



*Nomvuselelo a member of the Get Together savings group.*



## LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

**The Life Skills Education (LSE) program aims to prevent new HIV infections and reduce vulnerability among in-school students in all secondary and high schools across the country. This LSE syllabus complements other subject syllabi in the school system. It has identified relevant cross cutting issues, knowledge, skills and attitudes and organized them into meaningful contexts that call for critical thinking and problem solving approaches to promote behavior change in the learner.**



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# BANTWANA INITIATIVE ESWATINI EMBRACING THE NEW NORMAL THROUGH THE LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION RADIO PROGRAM

## Introduction

The Life Skills Education (LSE) curriculum is essential for helping adolescents understand the risks of infection from HIV and knowledge and skills on how to prevent HIV; access critical health services and make best decisions on their career paths. The introduction of the LSE program in the schools has been faced with challenges due to the fact that the subject is not examinable and does not have a designed teacher but really heavily on volunteering teachers.

## Intervention

To continue the delivery of the LSE to learners, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) through the ETGPS unit, in partnership with Bantwana (funding from the Global Fund through CANGO) has introduced LSE radio sessions that will be aired every Saturday beginning the 20th of March through September 30th 2021. The LSE by radio activity will not only reach learners, who are the primary target audience, but also the parents and guardians as support system, thus, instigating conversations among learners and parents/guardians imperative to achieve the desired goal of health behaviours, enhanced education outcomes, relationships and communication.

With schools re-opening late March, 2021, and the MOET promoting blended learning through the school shifting strategy, LSE also needed to be delivered through the national radio with constant reviews and improvements to increase

the reach and impact of the radio sessions. This has happened through the Ministry of Education and Training MoET- ETGPS unit and Bantwana in-consultation with the Eswatini Broadcasting Information Services (EBIS), in airing the LSE sessions to accomplish the main objective of LSE by reducing vulnerability among in-school students in 272 secondary schools and building the learners' resilience, skills to delay sexual debut; and ensure the overall wellbeing of the adolescents as they transition into adults and continuously empower them with skills during the time they are out of school/lockdown.

## Success

On the 20th of March 2021 the first session on LSE by radio was delivered on air on the topic: (Fear and Anxiety in EBIS 2 and other topics followed study skill, puberty, development stages, etc.). The time located for the program is every Saturday from 11 am to 12 noon and the session repeat is Tuesday from 2 pm to 3 pm. LSE on radio is creating a platform for learners to open up, reporting cases affecting them and asking questions in relation to their social life, health life and many other issues affecting them as they grow.

Ever since the program started airing and launched on the 14 May, 2021, 4 cases from different regions have been reported as a result of listening from the delivered sessions from the radio.

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The cases which were reported:

**Case 1:**

**An out of school HIV positive born young person needed counselling to accept her status as both her parents are dead. She was successfully referred to a Physiologist in her region.**

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**Case 2:**

**A learner who had some health issues and was successfully linked to a clinic close to where he/she residence.**

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**Case 3:**

**A learner who has been abused by her father and threatens to kill her once she opens up. The learner was referred to the Guidance officer in the region of her school.**

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**Case 4:**

**A learner who had fallen pregnant and afraid to report to anyone. Regional Guidance officer was linked to the case to intervene on the situation.**

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## ‘LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION BRINGS MOTIVATION AND EQUIPS US WITH REAL LIFE LESSONS’



*Tebenguni during an interview on the Life Skills Education program.*

“My name is Tebenguni Simelane, I am 17 years old and currently in Form 5. I live in Hawane with my Aunt and her 6 children. My Mother lives in Bhunya and my Father passed on.

*Life Skills Education and time Management has had a huge impact in my life. I was never able to organize my work, now I know the importance of time management and every minute counts,” she said.*

*“Receiving Dignity Packs on the other hand has helped girls a lot, we all come from different backgrounds and some did not have any source for packages included in the dignity pack. Having received dignity packs most girls are now able to be hygienic and presentable*

*among others. If we would stop receiving dignity packs, it would put girls at a disadvantage because there are some that really cannot afford. They can be pulled into getting help from ‘blessers’. That will not be okay, LSE teaches us to be well behaved and safe.*

*Before Life Skills Education we only used to have a string of other academic classes without some of the components that LSE brings. LSE brings motivation and equips learners with real life lessons.*

*Peer pressure is yet another topic that I learnt in LSE classes. This is where friends influence us to participate in things that do not profit us as learners,” she closed.*

# TEACHERS BECOMING MORE THAN TEACHERS THROUGH THE LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAM



*Sizolwethu a beneficiary of the Life Skills Education program.*

**S**izolwethu Ngwenya and Sinaye Khumalo (both from Sibovu) said life skills education (LSE) has taught them respect, life skills, good communications skills, coping with vulnerability, self-esteem, doing away with peer pressure and as well as building trust and confident, to themselves as well as their teachers in the issues confidentiality. Furthermore, it has helped in the referral points for issues they come across they cannot disclose within their families. It has also taught the importance of opening, speaking out and self-disclosure, drug and substance abuse. They said this will improve in disclosing and sharing the cases or issues that some would feel not to disclose together teachers.

*“As girls we are always vulnerable, all bad things happens to us because we do not have power and we are unable to stand on our own and talk. Initially, like if we have family problems we have hardships in identifying some or a friend that I can share or talk with, but now we have learnt that we can share our issues and trust our guidance teachers that they would handle our concerns in a confidential manner*

*and further referee us to other service providers who will follow up our cases to the end like the Police stations, SWAGAA etc., and this guidance teacher they mostly take the roles of parents to us, like in the cases of abuse where you feel like you cannot report it at home. Teachers are not just teachers they go on or over to be parents,” she explained.*

*“This program has also taught us on how to live with our peers and not to be affected by peer pressure so to have a bright future, If you expose yourself in danger with your friends when it turns around it go back to you and faces you as an individual. Life skills had even enlighten the activities that we can undertake after we finish school even if we had not done well in our examinations. In the issues related to sexual activities we prefer having people from outside the school whom we can talk to other than our teachers because we feel like it is not that safe and free in sharing such messages in because we fear if we perform poor in our academics they would think it will be because of such activities. Such stories we feel they must not be disclosed in people that we interact with on most often,” he explained.*

*Sinaye another beneficiary of the LSE program implemented by Bantwana Initiative Eswatini.*

