

Building a Stronger Community Together

Wilma Luimes-Sindane
Communications

Seldom do I get inspired to put into words what happens every day in my life. I have been with City Year now since the first corps started and served in 2005. I have seen many occasions such as openings, service days and graduations of corps past.

But I have never seen the value of City Year South Africa in its purest form until one of our Service Leaders passed away tragically in a car accident. Through the next week of working with the team who lost their brother, I witnessed for

the first time the power of young people who feel like they belong together. Not knowing each other at the beginning of the year, and six months later feeling like the loss of their fellow Service Leader was equivalent to the loss of a close family member. A team whose male members pledged to each other that they would "never leave one man down," even to the point of taking their brother, team member and friend to his final resting place in Avalon cemetery, Soweto. I had the privilege of spending a large amount of time with a team who consider themselves to be brothers and sisters, (and who also refer to their team leader as "Dad" – who, incidentally, is only a few years their senior), besides the fact that they will never be mistaken for biological siblings. It has been through the tears, pain and sorrow that the value of City Year South Africa has

become real in a country where youth cry out for a place to belong.

A bond so close, it could be seen when I looked over the faces of 200 minus 1 young people, whose pain was written so clearly, so marked, and so deeply in each one's faces, tear stained eyes, and crippled posture. Red jackets usually worn with so much energy, laughter and joy, were worn with sagging shoulders, deeply wounded by the loss of a comrade.

When we talk 'City Year', we can mention the training, the service, the number of learners in our after school programme and the number of graduates from year to year. We can boast about our post-service placement of over 90% year-on-year and we can count the number of service projects completed, but we will never be able to place a number or monetary value on a 'lost generation' that has found themselves a home and a purpose at City Year South Africa.

Photo: Top Left: Jabu Sibisi (right front) with his team at John Mitchell Primary School before his passing in July.



BROADEN YOUR HORIZENS...
FIND YOURSELF...

"BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD"...

A 'City Year' might just be **your best opportunity yet...**

NOW RECRUITING FOR 2008

City Year South Africa
EVENTS

CITY YEAR REUNION - 27 OCTOBER 2007 - more details to follow.
GRADUATION - NOVEMBER 30, 2007

CITY YEAR SOUTH AFRICA FOUNDING LEAD SPONSORS



My City Year has been the best year of my life. I've been to university and worked overseas and regret nothing but City Year has given me an education and life experience in my own country, on my own doorstep that neither of them could offer me in a lifetime."
Huw Mc Donald, 23, City Year Service Leader 2005



Youth Reflect Society

Teboho Mahuma
City Year SA - Executive Director

Help! South Africa's children and youth are in trouble! As a parent and a professional it pains me to note the violence that our children are exposed to these days, both as victims and as perpetrators. The past week alone has seen two teenagers dying in the hands of other teenagers, in both instances at events that many a parent would consider safe by virtue of them being school related. Not too long before that, one of our partner (primary) schools experienced a similar tragedy twice in one month, with one learner being murdered by another youth and another committing suicide. There are

too many stories like these. Maybe it's time we adults asked ourselves some very uncomfortable questions.

If children and youth are a mirror of the

Right: Teboho Mahuma, Executive Director CYSA

Photo: Huw McDonald

Photo: Right: Fellow City Year Service Leaders mingle after engaging in PT which happens on Fridays at Mary Fitzgerald Square.



Focus on Training

Besides an opportunity to work with diverse teams and spend a year serving in different communities, our post-graduation placement rate of over 90% year on year indicates that there are a few other things graduates gain from the City Year programme.

Training manager, Lerato Motimele, says that "the strength of the City Year training programme compared to other programmes is that it engages young people practically, rather than simply theoretically. Young people get the feel of how to implement, and see if the theory is applicable in real life situations". Focusing on project management, life skills and computer skills, which, according to Motimele, are "generic and applicable across many fields of employment."

City Year is "responsible for the fact that I am socially concerned," said alum, Etienne de Beer. The programme aims to empower young people to be leaders and critical thinkers in their communities. "Part of the programme's success can be attributed to the kinds of skills given to young people" adds Motimele.



Service Leaders interact with learners at one of the After School Programme sites in which they work three days a week.

Finding Myself in CY

Pretty Mashele
Service Leader 2007

There was a time when I thought there was nothing left here in this world.

After I completed my matric my life was horrible, and I even wanted to do things that I never thought I would do.

But one day I was approached by some guy who was wearing a red jacket. He started asking questions about me and I felt safe enough to answer him. In 2007, I joined City Year and

I thought that it was a waste of time. I did not really know why I joined. The time I was waiting for came and I went to serve at Orchards Primary School. I was nervous and did not know what to say or do. Learners were so excited because the red jackets were in their school. One day I was reading one of my poems to the Grade sixes titled "Who I Am". They were impressed and wanted to write their own. One of the learners came to me and said "You have changed my life for the better. You

made me realise that I also can write poetry. Thank you, you are the best". I paused for a minute and I could not believe what I had just heard. I even wanted to cry in front of the learner. When I debriefed with my team, I did cry and sometimes everyone needs to cry. I now realise that I am in this world for a purpose. I'm here to make a change in my community and country. Through City Year I'm being given that opportunity to serve my community; 'My Beloved Community'.

My Long Journey of Hope and Healing

Simphiwe Cenenda
Service Leader 2007

In my opinion, City Year is an anti-retroviral for apartheid. A bridge for South Africans to come together. A place where young people should be: white, black, Indian and coloured. At City Year you work with people who are diverse, all from different backgrounds, but all have the same aim, which is to put idealism to work. My motto for 2007 has become: "The tragedy of life is not that we die but what dies inside while we live" (Albert Schweitzer paraphrased).

On the 26th of June 2000, two days before my birthday, I was involved in an accident. I nearly lost my leg. Six years later in April 2006 during the Easter holidays, I was in a fist fight in an Eldorado Park club at about 4am in the morning. I remember exchanging words with two guys over ladies who commented

about my plate of food. The next minute the whole club ganged up on me and they started beating me up. That day, I nearly lost my life. Since then, I hated 'coloureds' so much I wanted revenge, until I met a young boy called Dullin Hill. He is in our After School programme at Dowling Primary School in Westbury.

Dullin is forever outside during After School Programme time. One day I went out looking for him and saw him playing outside. I was coaching soccer the following day and asked him about his whereabouts the previous day. He told me that he was practicing with the soccer team. I never told him that I knew better because I was the soccer trainer that day. The following day Dullin was not in class again. Again I found him playing outside. We sat down and talked man to man. I told him to be free. He expressed himself in township lingo and I also talked to him in township lingo. I

told him that no one was perfect and not everyone was intelligent. Even I have to work hard for everything I have. I took out my City Year "Idealist Handbook", turned to a story about a man who built bridges to enable the people behind him to cross rivers, and I asked him to read it.

The next day when he came to class, I asked if I could be his friend, so he can share everything with me. He even consulted his mother to see if this was okay. From this boy, I learned that in life we sometimes make wrong choices. I thought of two quotes from the "Idealist Handbook": "Learn to recognise and resolve false choices" and "Seek to transcend both guilt and anger." I have made it my mission to help this young boy even after City Year, because this young man removed the anger I was carrying without saying a word. Thanks to him, I am now healing; slowly but surely.

Primary Schools not Immune



Service Leaders receiving their red jackets at the beginning of the year
Photo: KOKO

Being City Year

Rabia Taju
Service Leader 2007

I've been Rabia Faquir Taju for too many years of my life. Suddenly, this year, I received a new identity the minute I proudly put on my City Year uniform. I was no longer Rabia, even though my name is printed on my jacket. I was called, and still am called, City Year.

One afternoon as I was walking home, I walked past a park not far from my house. In the park were six little boys, maybe between the ages of 10 to 13. They stopped playing soccer, just to wave at me and scream 'City Year', 'City Year'.

It was interesting to see how kids respond to the uniform, an indication of the impact City Year has on the lives of little South African children.

Gloria Bohloko and
Nastassja Kucus
Service Leaders 2007

Sarah is a grade 4 learner we work with at the school we serve. Gloria and I discovered that she was not participating in our After School Programme as enthusiastically as all the other learners were. She always distanced herself from the activities and never participated in any of the ice breakers. We also noticed that she didn't do any of her school work. The last date that was entered in her school books was 28 January 2007.

Gloria and I were troubled by our discovery and decided to enquire about her situation as we wanted to help her. I tried talking to her to understand why she was doing so badly at school. She

told me that she didn't do her work because she didn't understand the work. Gloria then took action and got her to do some work like the rest of the class did. She paired her up with a classmate who helped her with her work. We immediately noticed some difference. Although it took her a long time to do half of the work required, she still made an effort to do it.

We then approached her teacher to find the real reason behind her unhappiness and poor performance at school. She told us that she had been raped by someone she knew and naturally was having trouble dealing with the situation.

Despite what happened, what gives us hope is the fact that we were able to get

her to do a little work one step at a time. We believe that part of her healing is to keep her up to date with her school work and get her more involved. We also want her to feel that there are people out there who care about her personal well-being and development. When we return to school, we will make arrangements, with her parent's consent, to send her to therapy. We will also be more supportive and give her more attention in class. We are really grateful for the opportunity City Year has given us. Working in our school with the kids has been an amazing experience thus far. It is children like this who remind us that we really can make a difference.

* Named changed to protect the learner

Building Sports Teams

Steve Andrew Arries
Service Leader 2007

The first time I attended the cricket practice session, I noticed that the boys' equipment was not up to scratch. The batting pads were not enough and very old. The bats we had were old and thin and there were not enough cricket balls. Some of the boys also didn't have takkies for practice. I immediately offered to help and first helped the bowlers with their actions and their run-ups.

The cricket team didn't have any real coaching before, and therefore their actions were

very unorthodox. I had a lot of fun helping them with their bowling actions. By the end of the first practice I attended, I could see that there was progress already.

I attended more and more practices, and helped them with their fielding. I taught them a couple of fielding drills, and they learned it very quickly.

The following week, they had a match against a neighbouring school. Unfortunately I couldn't go with them because I had computer classes to facilitate, but they won the match, and I am glad I helped contribute to their success.