



**A Formative Evaluation of the Dream Toolkit component of the Be the Dream Programme.**

Brilliant Bhebe  
(BHBBRI001)

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Academic supervisor: Mrs Carren Field

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## List of Acronyms

|      |   |
|------|---|
| DFF  | Dream Factory Foundation                    |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations              |
| NPOs | Non-Profit Organisations                    |
| PYD  | Positive Youth Development                  |
| SA   | South Africa                                |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| TYD  | Traditional Youth Development               |
| UCT  | University of Cape Town                     |
| USA  | United States of America                    |

## **Abstract**

The need for positive youth development programmes is necessary in the South African context where youth struggle with many socio-economic challenges including poverty, youth unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, violent behaviour and high school dropout. These programmes aim to promote personal and interpersonal development outcomes for at-risk youth so that they can lead better purpose-driven lives. The following dissertation presents the findings of a formative evaluation conducted for the Dream Toolkit Component of the Be the Dream Programme, a PYD programme implemented by Dream Factory Foundation in Cape Town. Three evaluations were performed, namely programme theory evaluation, implementation evaluation, and short-term outcome evaluation. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were utilised to answer the evaluation questions posed. Overall, the findings indicate that: a) the programme theory of the Dream Toolkit Programme is consistent with best practices programmes and the causal logic of the programme was deemed to be plausible; b) programme participants were highly satisfied with the programme services; c) the programme was implemented with limited fidelity; and d) majority of the learners demonstrated relatively high self-esteem and career decidedness outcome levels. While the evaluation yielded positive results, the evaluator was able to make a number of recommendations and highlight important considerations for DFF to improve the Dream Toolkit Programme. This study contributes to limited research on implementation and programme theory driven evaluations in the PYD programme context.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

This dissertation reports on a formative evaluation that was conducted for Dream Factory Foundation. Dream Factory Foundation is a youth empowerment organisation based in Cape Town. The evaluand of this research, the Be the Dream Programme targets youths who are in grades nine to twelve. The programme seeks to support and motivate young people to realise their life purpose through life orientation and skills development workshops and seminars. This chapter provides an overview of youth development programmes and the approaches used in designing these programmes. This is followed by a full programme description of the Be the Dream Programme as well as the evaluation questions that guided the evaluation.

### **Overview of Youth Development Programmes**

Youths across the globe are generally confronted by a myriad of problems including drug and alcohol use and abuse, unsafe sex practices, teenage pregnancies, school failure, dropping out of school, and crime and delinquency amongst many other self-destructive behaviours (Lerner, 2005; Lerner, 2006; Mohammed & Wheeler, 2001). These problems are exacerbated by several factors, amongst them, poverty, poor quality education, family instability and time-crunched parents (Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Theron, 2007). These contextual factors (families, schools, and communities) serve as both risk and protective factors that influence the trajectories of development for young people (Catalano et al, 2002; Catalano et al, 2004; Lerner et al, 2006). The youth context can significantly influence whether young people achieve critical development outcomes (Lerner et al, 2006; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Theron, 2007). In this regard, beneficial relations between young people and their different contexts may have a positive impact on the direction and outcomes of youth development. Thus, in order to respond to the various youth risk behaviours a number of youth development programmes target youth at home, in school and in the community environment (Lerner, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Youth development programmes have become one of the dominant ways of providing opportunities and support to help youth gain the competencies and knowledge they need to meet the increasing challenges they will face as they mature and the problems discussed above (Lerner et al, 2006; Roth et al, 1998; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). The following section provides a conceptual understanding of youth development programmes.

### **Defining youth development programmes.**

Given that different youth programmes implement different activities and have different outcomes of interest, a single definition of youth development is somewhat elusive (Lerner et al, 2003; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Smith, 2007). Youth development, however, can be broadly understood as a coordinated, collective process aimed at nurturing youth and providing supporting activities that promote the social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic wellbeing of young people (Abrefah, 2003; Pittman, 1991; Roth et al, 1998). It is postulated that through engaging in youth development activities young people should develop competencies and life skills that will enable them to become healthy and responsible adults (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Therefore, youth development programmes offer an opportunity for a positive transition into adulthood through provision of adult support and guidance, life skills education, mentoring and tutoring among other activities (Durlak, 2010; Shernoff & Vandell, 2007).

Gallagher (2005) describes youth development as a process that encompasses the combination of all the people, places, supports and opportunities needed for the healthy and successful development of young people. There are two key outstanding issues arising from this conceptual understanding of youth development. Firstly, youth development is understood not as a single event but an on-going process that prepares young people to withstand adolescence and adulthood challenges and achieve their full potential (Hamilton, 1999; Hamilton, Hamilton & Pittman, 2004). Secondly, youth development requires the collective participation, commitment and support of relevant stakeholders, that is, parents, families, schools, communities and other entities (Lerner et al, 2006; Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001).

Youth development programmes started in the United States of America around the 20th Century (Halpern, 2002; Woodland, 2008). These programmes differed in their designs, some were community youth development initiatives, others were school-based programmes, or out of school time programmes. By the early 1990s, USA was reported as having approximately 17 000 active youth programmes (Gallagher et al, 2005). The most well-known of which included the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Big Sisters and Big Brothers of America, and Campfire USA, (Kein et al., 2005; Quinn, 1999). Recognition of these programmes was seen through substantial government funding of youth oriented programming. For instance, in 2002, the United States Congress released funds amounting to US\$1 billion for after school programmes (Gallagher et al, 2005).

In South Africa, youth development programmes gained prominence as a result of post-1994 efforts by various government institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and non-profit organisations (NPOs) to address structural problems such as poverty, high youth unemployment, skill shortages, and poor-quality education (Gumede, 2012; Mthembu, 2017; Theron, 2007). These structural problems are still prevalent today as South African youths are faced with risky behaviours and unhealthy life styles that culminate into high rates of violence and substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, prevalence of HIV as well as high school dropout rates (Mthembu, 2017; Shisana et al, 2014; Theron, 2007). Over the years, several youth development programmes have been established in the country to deal with these problems.

Based on the fact that youth development programmes aim to reduce risk and provide opportunities for healthy development most interventions have largely been informed by two distinct approaches, namely the Traditional Youth Development Approach and the Positive Youth Development Approach. These approaches determine the manner in which a programme is designed as well as its programme activities. The following section discusses the different approaches to youth programming.

## **The Traditional Youth Development Approach**

The Traditional Youth Development (TYD) approach is a problem-focused approach to youth development. It is arguably one of the earliest approaches to youth development and became dominant about four decades ago (Catalano et al, 2002; Small & Memmo, 2004). Under the TYD approach young people are viewed as people who are damaged (characterised by problem behaviours) or at the risk of being damaged and therefore need to be managed (Benson, 2003; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Hence, the underlying rationale for a programme grounded in the TYD approach would be to help fix young people who are seen as being prone to or engaging in risky behaviours (Catalano et al, 2002; Roth et al, 1998; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Therefore, TYD interventions were established as a direct response to existing crises. The realisation that youth problems were on the increase prompted the development of intervention and treatment protocols (individuals and groups) that aimed to reduce specific problem behaviours of affected youths (Catalano et al, 2002; Catalano et al, 2004; Smith, 2007). Undesirable behaviours such as aggression, substance abuse, delinquency, teenage pregnancy and school failure are amongst the focal areas of traditional youth programming (Dryfoos, 1990; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Small & Memmo, 2004; Smith, 2007). According to Benson (2003) this approach was based on the deficit-reduction paradigm which concerned itself with identifying, tracking, and reducing health compromising behaviours such as the ones listed above. As a result, programmes using this approach measure programme success through continual tracking and assessment of problem behaviours (Catalano et al, 1999; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Despite its widespread use in shaping interventions for youth, the traditional approach has been faced with criticism. To begin with, contrary to the objectives of such programmes, grouping young people according to problem type tends to confirm their identity as a troubled lot and reinforce negative behaviour (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Small & Memmo, 2004). This labelling and grouping of youths based on observed problems may lead to stigmatisation and low levels of motivation. As a result, young people may be discouraged to continue participating in any of these

programmes and the danger is that personality and character shortcomings of these youths may be reinforced (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Small & Memmo, 2004).

Another criticism of the TYD approach is that it adopts a single problem-focused approach and by doing so it does not take a holistic approach to youth, their families, environments and the overall context in which risk behaviours occur (Burt, 2002; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). A focus on one problem behaviour may negate the co-occurrence of problem behaviours within individuals as well as common predictors of those undesirable behaviours (Catalano et al, 2004). These predictors include their different contexts and the interactions between young people and those contexts. Relationships between individuals and their contexts provide the foundation for human behaviour (Damon, 1998; Lerner et al, 2006). Therefore, youth development efforts should seek to take a holistic approach which focuses on both characteristics of individuals and the specifics of their context (Lerner et al, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Lastly, as a result of too much emphasis on youth with problem behaviours, researchers have argued that TYD programmes fail to address other youth problems such as inadequate life skills and attitudes needed for healthy development (Pittman, 1991; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997). Central to the understanding of youth development here is that the absence of problem behaviours amongst youths does not necessarily mean that they are adequately prepared for the future. Therefore, Pittman and Fleming (1991) argued that youth development should be viewed as an effective strategy to addressing youth problems as opposed to the view that youth problems are the primary barrier to youth development.

Given the above-mentioned criticisms of the TYD approach, development scientists and programme planners of adolescent programmes have adopted a more positive approach to youth development. In contrast to the TYD approach, the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective is considered a holistic approach that tends to focus on the manifest potentialities (competencies) of youth rather than the supposed incapacities (problems) of young people from all backgrounds.

## **Positive Youth Development Approach**

There is an increased focus on the PYD perspective in both research and programme design across the globe (Lerner, 2005; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This shift in perspective gained prominence in the 1990s due to the realisation that a strength-based approach to youth development would yield better results than a deficit model or approach (Klein et al, 2005; Lerner, 2005). The PYD approach is based on the view that all youths have inherent capacity and potential to contribute positively to the healthy development of their own lives as well as those of families, communities and society in its entirety (Damon, 2004; Lerner et al, 2006; Schwartz et al 2010). This perspective is derived from the developmental systems that emphasise the view of youths as resources that can be developed (Lerner, 2002; Lerner et al, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) as opposed to the understanding of youth as problems to be managed (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray & Foster, 1998).

According to Ciocanel et al (2016) one of the reasons that led to the prominence of the PYD approach is its ability to influence both risk factors (sexual behaviours, substance use, antisocial behaviours) and positive outcomes (prosocial behaviours, academic achievement, and psychological adjustment). Through developing a sense of competence and self-efficacy amongst young people, PYD programmes have the ability to promote positive behaviour and reduce the likelihood of risky behaviour (Bowers et al, 2010; Ciocanel et al, 2016).

Lerner (2004) identifies what he terms the three design features of PYD programmes. These include opportunities for youth participation in programme activities, development of life skills, and caring adult-youth relationships. According to Lerner et al (2011) there is great need for the entire motivational system within youths to be activated and remain engaged as they negotiate everyday life challenges (Lerner et al, 2011). Therefore, the PYD programme context provides the necessary support and environment to ensure that young people's own motivation can be activated to influence positive development.

The fundamental function of PYD programme activities is to influence development of young people in four domains: physical development, intellectual development, psychological and emotional development, and social development

(Eccles and Gootman, 2002; Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). The five Cs model has been used as indicators of development in the four domains (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b). These five Cs include: confidence, competence, character, connection and caring. Each of these have been used in literature when describing the characteristics of a thriving youth (Lerner, 2005; King, et al, 2005). According to Lerner (2005) the model has been useful in integrating all key indicators of PYD such as academic achievement and self-esteem. Table 1 outlines the definitions of each of the five Cs.

Table 1

*Definitions of the Five Cs PYD Approach*

| <b>C</b>   | <b>Definition</b>  |
|------------|--|
| Confidence | Positive view of self which includes outcomes such as self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity and a belief in the future.   |
| Competence | High performance in different areas of life including; social, academic, cognitive and vocational. Social competence includes interpersonal development attributes such as team work and conflict resolution skills. Cognitive competence outcomes relate to cognitive abilities such as decision making. Academic competence refers to high school grades or test scores. |
| Caring     | Relates to improving young people's sense of empathy and identification with others.   |
| Character  | Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.  |
| Connection | Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bi-directional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.   |

Note. Derived from Lerner et al (2005)

In recent years, a sixth C (contribution) has also been introduced to the model with a belief that the five Cs also result in contributions to self, family, community and other institutions of civil society (Jones et al, 2011; Lerner, 2005; Zarrett and Lerner,

2008). Through contribution young people are able to remain active agents in their own development as well as those around them (Lerner, 2005). Despite the recent introduction of contribution as an indicator for positive development, the five Cs model has remained the most dominant and empirically supported model in PYD literature (Jones et al, 2011; King et al, 2005).

According to Lerner (2004) PYD programme services offer a significant context through which these five Cs can be achieved. The achievement of these five Cs is largely dependent on the three design features of PYD programmes discussed above. Youths who exhibit these five Cs are often described as thriving and with an increased likelihood of leading successful lives.

The evaluand of this research, the Be the Dream Programme, is a youth development programme that uses a PYD approach. The following section provides a description of the implementing organisation and the programme.

### **Description of the Implementing Organisation**

Dream Factory Foundation (DFF) is a youth focused organisation established in 2011 that seeks to empower young people (aged 13 - 25 years old) to lead successful and purpose-driven lives. The mission of the organisation reads; *“To ignite, inspire and motivate hope for the future in the hearts of young people through their dreams and aspirations”*<sup>1</sup>. They aim to achieve this mission through life orientation sessions, career education, tutoring, mentoring and personal development sessions.

DFF was founded by two young graduates, Lusanda Gwayi and Laurian Nortje who identified a need to motivate and inspire youth from disadvantaged communities. While working in under-resourced schools in the Western Cape, the founders were confronted with the realities of lack of access to quality education, high levels of unemployment, lack of exposure to sustainable livelihoods and poverty faced by young people in these schools. It was during this time that they realised that if not addressed these difficulties would limit youth from reaching their full potential.

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<sup>1</sup> Information retrieved from DFF website <http://www.dreamfactoryfoundation.org/about/index.html>

In response they decided that they would provide services which encouraged youth to identify their life-oriented goals and help them to devise strategies on how to achieve these.

One such initiative which enables DFF to: a) connect learners to caring mentors, b) present curricular that incorporates a sense of purpose, and c) provide opportunities where they can actualise their dreams is the Be the Dream Programme. The next section details the programme.

### **DFF's Be the Dream Programme<sup>2</sup>**

The Be the Dream Programme was rolled out in 2015 and targets grades nine to twelve learners in under-resourced schools predominantly in the Cape Town region. The main sponsors of the programme include the Learning Trust Fund, the US Embassy and Google. The programme was established in response to socio-economic development ills faced by at-risk-youth in Cape Town. According to programme staff some of the socio-economic development challenges facing these learners include: youth unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, aggression, and poor-quality education. Amongst other challenges facing these youths is in-adequate career education, identity crisis, low self-esteem, hopelessness and uncertainty about their future. As such the programme aims to provide a platform where these at-risk-youths can be motivated to realise their life purpose through career and life skills education.

#### **The remodeling of the programme.**

The Be the Dream Programme was first implemented as an after school programme in 2015. At the end of 2016, DFF reviewed the original programme design and decided that some changes and improvements were required. These changes are presented in Table 2. It is important to note that the 2017 newly redesigned programme was evaluated as part of this research.

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<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from programme documents and interview with Be the Dream Programme Management Staff

Table 2

*Summary of Be the Dream Programme Changes*

| <b>Initial Programme Design</b>   | <b>2017 Redesigned Programme</b>   |
|---|--|
| Students from 10 high schools across Cape Town could be involved in the programme           | DFF partnered with three high schools  |
| Students had to apply and be selected into the programme by writing a “dream letter” to DFF | The programme is available to all Grade 9 to 12 students in each of the three schools  |
| The programme took place after school hours and on Saturday mornings                        | The programme will be presented to the students during life orientation lessons during school time in term two, three, and four. |

**2017 Be the Dream model.**

The programme is designed or framed around what DFF call the Be the Dream Model. The programme is structured in such a way that a student begins the programme in Grade nine and completes the programme in Grade 12. During each of the four years as part of the programme the student will be exposed to two key programme components: the Dream Toolkit Programme (Grade nine) and the President’s Awards Programme (Grades ten to twelve).

***Component 1: Dream Toolkit Programme.***

This first year (Grade nine) of the programme is a journey of self-discovery where the learner learns more about themselves and their career interests. This process is guided by the Dream Toolkit. The Dream Toolkit is a training manual developed by programme staff in consultation with guidance and life orientation consultants.

Dream Toolkit sessions are provided during the time allocated for life orientation lessons in targeted schools. The toolkit is delivered by facilitators who are trained on the toolkit by DFF permanent staff. The content is covered in term two of the academic year over a total of fifteen sessions. The Dream Toolkit covers following topics: identity; what is your dream; bucket list; this is essential to who I am; presentation of vision boards and action plans, and community action. The expected outcomes for grade nine learners after having completed the programme are: increased self- knowledge (values, goals, and career aspirations), a more favourable attitude towards school, increased knowledge of post-school opportunities, increased self-esteem and improved grades. Figure 1 presents the key thematic areas of the Dream Toolkit Programme.



*Figure 1. Key thematic areas of the Dream Toolkit Programme.*

### ***Component 2: The President's Awards Programme.***

Grades ten to twelve complete the President's Award Programme. As part of the President's Award Programme learners have to complete four main components, namely developing a new skill, participating in physical recreation activities, engaging in community service and embarking on an adventurous journey. During

these years, participants must progress through three levels: bronze (Grade 10), silver (Grade 11) and gold (Grade 12).

Through this programme, the first component requires that each learner select a new skill that they want to learn. Participants must demonstrate regular effort and improvement in their chosen skill. These skills may include things like playing chess, photography or debating.

The second component is the physical recreation and requires that each participant select a physical recreation activity such as ball sports, water sports, athletics, dancing and/or gymnastics. These activities are aimed at encouraging learners to participate in sport and other recreational activities for the improvement of health and fitness.

The third component includes dedicating time to a service either at school or in the community. This activity is aimed at helping learners understand the value of serving in their communities while experiencing the benefits that their service provides to others. This may include participating in charity work, volunteering at a local hospital, helping elderly persons in the community, sports coaching amongst many other services.

Finally, the fourth component of the programme requires that participants embark on an adventurous team journey or expedition. This component is aimed at encouraging a sense of adventure and discovery among participants. Learners may participate in mountain hikes, on site camping or a demanding journey on foot or bicycle.

The four components should all be completed at the three different levels but with each year a higher complexity is introduced. As the levels increase learners are required to put in more hours in each component. Table 3 demonstrates the minimum amount of time required per component (activity) at each level.

Table 3

*President's Awards Programme*

| <b>Programme component</b> | <b>Bronze</b>                                     | <b>Silver</b>                                     | <b>Gold</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Developing a new skill     | Minimum of 3 months or 6 months                   | Minimum of 6 months                               | Minimum of 12 months  |
| Community Service          | 24 hours spread over a minimum period of 3 months | 48 hours spread over a minimum period of 6 months | 72 hours spread over a minimum period of 12 months                |
| Physical recreation        | 12 hours spread over a minimum period of 3 months | 24 hours spread over a period of 6 months         | 36 hours spread over a minimum period of 12 months                |
| Adventurous journey        | 12 hours spread over 2 days                       | 21 hours spread over 3 days                       | 32 hours spread over 4 days                                       |
| Residential project        |   |   | Minimum of 5 days and 4 nights away from usual place of residence |

In addition, level three (gold) of the programme has an additional activity that requires Grade 12 learners to participate in a residential project with people who are not their usual peers. Through this project, learners set out to achieve an agreed upon goal with other participants. Examples of residential projects include voluntary work with international charity organisations, national parks, youth parliaments, and sports coaching.<sup>3</sup> Ideally, this project must be undertaken in an unfamiliar environment and it is hoped that during this period learners will meet new people, develop new skills and have a life changing experience. The residential project should take place over a period of at least four nights and five consecutive days.

<sup>3</sup> Information obtained from President's Award Programme Website

<http://www.intaward.org/residential-project>

Expected outcomes of this activity include a sense of personal achievement and enhanced social connection with new people.

Overall, the President's Award Programme seeks to provide opportunities for self-development through increasing the learners' knowledge of self, levels of self-esteem, enhancing their capacity to achieve in whatever circumstances as well as enabling them to become active citizens within their communities.

As mentioned earlier, the Be the Dream Programme was redesigned and only the Dream Toolkit Programme component (grade nine) was implemented. Hence the Dream Toolkit Programme is the evaluand as the evaluator could only evaluate this aspect of the programme.

### **The Dream Toolkit Evaluation Approach**

The current evaluation adopted a formative evaluation approach. While evaluations are commissioned for various reasons, any evaluation whose purpose is to gather information that will be used to guide programme improvement is called a formative evaluation (Rossi et al., 2004; Scriven, 1991). Chen (2004) also propounds that at the initial implementation stages, the purpose of the evaluation is to trouble shoot, provide information on implementation problems and the sources to assist stakeholders to fix the problem. In this regard, the current evaluation sought to gather evidence that can be used to improve the operations of the Dream Toolkit component of the Be the Dream Programme. This was important for programme management staff given that the programme had been redesigned and is in its early stages of implementation. The scope of the evaluation is threefold focusing on: programme theory, implementation and short-term outcomes of the Dream Toolkit Programme.

According to Rossi et al (2004) the main audience for formative evaluations is key programme stakeholders including programme planners, administrators and oversight boards whose interest is in optimising programme effectiveness. Similarly, the main audience for this evaluation was high level management staff of the Dream Toolkit Programme. The evaluator also worked closely with programme management to frame the scope of the evaluation. The three evaluation levels were

chosen because the management staff were specifically interested in a) if the programme in its current design is likely to succeed, and b) the quality of the first-year roll-out and c) it was envisioned that the results from both the programme theory and implementation evaluation would help programme staff to improve the Dream Toolkit Programme and as such increase the likelihood of achieving its desired goals. The three levels of evaluation are discussed in the following sections together with the key evaluation questions.

### **Programme Theory Evaluation**

Over the last few decades, there has been a consistent growing interest in theory-driven evaluation (Chen, 1989; Chen and Rossi, 1980; Coryn et al., 2010; Donaldson, 2007). The use of programme theory can be traced back as far as the 1930s but only became dominant in evaluation practice in the early 1990s (Bickman, 1987; Chen, 1990; Coryn et al., 2010). Despite its widespread use in evaluation practice, the conceptual underpinnings of theory based evaluations have been largely elusive and as a result several terms have been attached to it. The most common terms include theory-driven evaluation, programme-theory evaluation, theory-based evaluation, theory-guided evaluation, theory of action, theory of change, and program logic (Chen, 1990; Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Rossi et al, 2004) and most recently theory driven evaluation science (Donaldson, 2007; Deanne and Harre, 2014). Coryn et al (2010), however, argues that although there seems to be no shared conceptualisation of theory driven evaluation, its use in evaluation practice is increasingly espoused by several evaluation specialists and remains the most prominent evaluation method. In fact, the ability to articulate programme theory and apply it in evaluation is now regarded as an important competence for evaluators (Stevahn et al., 2005).

Theory-driven evaluation provides a useful framework for uncovering the mechanisms responsible for change (Deanne & Harre, 2014). Programme theory can be understood as an implicit or explicit model of how an intervention is presumed to work to bring about positive change (Bickman, 1987; Funnel & Rogers, 2011; Rossi et al, 2004). This means that every intervention is embedded in programme theory whether it has been explicitly stated or not. The main purpose of

programme theory is to explain the main idea of an intervention, linking programme activities to the projected outcomes (Posavac & Carey, 2007). This helps both programme stakeholders and evaluators to be able to articulate the programme processes that are presumed to bring about change.

### **Eliciting and assessing programme theory.**

Programme theory evaluations are usually guided by two main steps, that is, articulating programme theory (programme logic) and assessing its plausibility (logic analysis (Rossi et al., 2004). In the same fashion, the current evaluation was largely concerned with developing the programme theory of the Dream Toolkit Programme and assessing its plausibility. Brousselle and Champagne (2011) argue that articulating programme theory (first step) is simply a depiction of stakeholder perception, correct or incorrect about the mechanisms that operate between the delivery of an intervention and achievement of outcomes.

Therefore, it is not enough to simply outline the mechanisms through which a programme is presumed to work, programme evaluators should take a step further to test this logic and question the validity of the intervention's chain of action. This process forms the second step of programme theory evaluations. Different terms have been attached to the process of testing programme logic by evaluation scholars and practitioners. Amongst the common terms are logic analysis, plausibility assessment, plausibility check and programme theory evaluation (Brousselle & Champagne, 2011; Chen, 1990; Rossi et al., 2004).

### **The value of programme theory evaluations.**

The value of conducting programme theory evaluation has been demonstrated by several scholars (Brousselle & Champagne, 2011; Donaldson, 2007; Rossi et al, 2004). First, programme theory evaluation helps assess whether a programme is designed in a way that it can achieve its intended outcomes (Brousselle & Champagne, 2011). A plausible theory would mean that a programme is likely to achieve its expected outcomes. If a programme theory is considered weak, evaluators can assist programme stakeholders to refocus their design and focus on more realistic programme objectives (Posavac & Carey, 2007).

Secondly, programme theory evaluations help evaluators and key stakeholders to identify areas for further evaluation. In fact, it is argued that no meaningful evaluation can be conducted without a conceptual understanding of how the programme is presumed to work. Specifying programme theory helps evaluators to know which areas to focus on when conducting an evaluation. Programme theory specifies a) the programme processes that must occur as a condition for change b) the expected programme goal. Once it is clear to evaluators how programme activities should impact programme beneficiaries, the evaluator can then develop methods to assess both. Kalafat et al (2005) also argue that both the assessment of programme implementation and outcomes require a clear understanding of the logic underlying the programme. This was true for the implementation and short-term outcome evaluation of the Dream Toolkit Programme which were largely informed by the results obtained from the theory evaluation.

Finally, programme theory assessments play a crucial role as a trouble-shooting strategy for programmes. This is done through identifying trouble areas in the programme's process or change theory and addressing them (Chen, 2004). Through the process of assessing the soundness of a programme, evaluators are able to provide a timely assessment of challenges or problems facing an intervention. Following this, because programme theory assessments can also be formative in nature, an evaluator may then assist stakeholders to look at options available to address the identified problems.

Given that the Dream Toolkit Programme had undergone major adjustments in 2017, a theory evaluation was deemed appropriate. Changes such as implementing in-school as opposed to in-school and the redesign of the Dream Toolkit curriculum left DFF unsure whether the programme comprised the necessary components to bring about the intended outcomes. As a result, DFF was interested in seeing how their programme compared to others and whether their causal assumptions were correct. Given this mandate, the theory evaluation sought to answer the following key questions:

1. What are the underlying assumptions of the Dream Toolkit Programme?

2. Are the causal linkages between the Dream Toolkit content, activities and proposed outcomes plausible?
3. What elements of the Dream Toolkit Programme theory could be modified to maximise intended outcomes?

### **Implementation Evaluation**

Implementation evaluation is also known as process evaluation (Rossi et al, 2004) and can be understood as a process which seeks to assess how well a programme is functioning and whether or not it is delivered to the targeted recipients (Scheirer, 1994). The focus of this type of evaluation is on the enacted programme that is, its activities, operations, component parts, and resources. Rossi et al (2004) argue that to bring about desire change, a programme needs more than a good implementation plan but that it implements its plan. Therefore, it is critical that evaluations assess the adequacy of programme process, paying particular attention to implementation fidelity. Implementation fidelity refers to how well a programme is being implemented in comparison to the original programme design (Mihalic, 2002). Carrol et al (2007) postulates that implementation fidelity should be understood in line with its five key defining elements: adherence to an intervention, exposure or dose, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, and programme differentiation. Four of these elements except programme differentiation formed a crucial part of the implementation of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Table 4 outlines the definitions for each of these elements.

Table 4

*Definitions of elements of implementation fidelity*

| <b>Concept</b>             | <b>Definition</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Adherence                  | Refers to whether a programme or intervention is being delivered as it was designed                        |
| Dosage                     | The amount of an intervention received by participants (coverage, frequency and duration)                  |
| Quality of delivery        | The manner in which a programme is delivered by the service provider (teacher, volunteer, or staff member) |
| Participant responsiveness | The extent to which participants respond to, or are engaged by, an intervention or its activities.         |
| Programme differentiation  | Identifying unique programme features without which the programme will not have its intended effect        |

Rossi et al (2004) arguably provides one of the most commonly used implementation evaluation conceptual frameworks. This framework covers three essential aspects of programme process: programme delivery, service utilisation, and organisational support. Service utilisation is largely consistent with dosage as prescribed by Carrol et al (2007). It generally looks at the coverage of the programme and the extent to which the intended target population receives the intended services. Assessment of service delivery looks at the extent to which programme delivery is consistent with programme design specifications (adherence) and whether or not it was implemented with sufficient quality. Finally, this framework incorporates programme resources as a critical element when looking at programme process. In this regard, the evaluation seeks to assess the extent to which available resources are sufficient for the smooth operation of the programme.

This evaluation adopted some aspects of the framework prescribed by Rossi et al (2004). Major focus was given to issues of service utilisation and service delivery. This focus was largely informed by the expressed needs of the Dream

Toolkit Programme stakeholders. Their major concern was for the evaluation to assess how well the programme was being delivered and received, and how they could improve upon this. Also of interest to them was the assessment of programme reach and coverage. Assessment of organisational support was not seen as important at the time of evaluation and thus was not included as part of the research. The formative nature of evaluation was seen as the most appropriate given that this was a redesigned programme ultimately in its first year of operation. According to Rossi et al (2004) a process evaluation may be appropriate for relatively new programmes to assess how well it has established its operations and services. This helps to furnish programme managers with useful and timely feedback. In this regard, the implementation evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

4. How many Grade nine learners participated in the Dream Toolkit Programme?  
Did all the learners attend all of the Dream Toolkit sessions? (*service utilisation*)
5. Was the Dream Toolkit Programme implemented according to plan?  
(*programme plan adherence*)
6. What are the learners' perceptions of the dream toolkit sessions delivered by the programme? (*service delivery*)
7. Do the programme facilitators build relationships with learners that are considered necessary for programme outcomes? (*service delivery*)
8. Are the Dream Toolkit facilitators adequately trained to deliver the dream toolkit sessions with sufficient quality? (*service delivery*)

### **Short-term Outcomes Evaluation**

Given the formative nature of this evaluation, programme stakeholders and the evaluator also saw it fit to provide information on the expected initial short-term outcomes. According to Rossi et al (2004) it is important that data be collected on programme outcomes to provide relevant feedback to programme stakeholders to improve the programme at this stage of programme implementation. Given that short-term outcome data was only collected after the programme, the evaluation only reported on the outcome level as opposed to outcome change. Outcome levels refer to how high or low the programme beneficiaries are with regard to that variable while

outcome change is the difference in the outcome variable between pre-programme and post-programme phases (Rossi et al., 2004). As such outcome levels tell us how the target population is doing regarding the selected variable without attributing it to programme efforts. Although outcome levels on their own do not tell us much about programme effectiveness, Rossi et al (2004) argues that they may still be used to indicate programme effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

This evaluation sought to gather information on three important short-term outcomes of the Dream Toolkit Programme. These outcomes included; student engagement in school, career decidedness and self- esteem. While data obtained on these outcomes cannot be used to make causal inferences between the Dream Toolkit Programme and its presumed effects on participants, Rossi et al (2004) argues that the information can be useful to stakeholders for monitoring programme performance. Thus, the short-term outcome evaluation sought to answer the following question:

### **Short-term outcomes assessment**

9. What level(s) of short-term outcomes are reported by the participants of the Dream Toolkit Programme?

This chapter was divided into three key sections. The first section presented an overview of youth development programmes and the approaches used in implementing such programmes. The second section provided a description of the implementing organisation and the evaluand. Finally, the chapter outlined the evaluation approach employed by the evaluator. The evaluation of the programme was in three levels: programme theory, implementation and short-term outcomes evaluation. The following chapter describes the methods used in order to answer the evaluation questions posed.

## **Chapter Two: Method**

The three forms of evaluation took place independently and as such the method chapter is divided into three sections with a methodology reported for the programme theory, process evaluation, and short-term evaluation.

### **Method for Programme Theory Evaluation**

Programme theory evaluations are largely concerned with constructing and assessing models of how programmes are presumed to work (Bickman, 1987; Rossi et al., 2004). In order to answer the three programme theory evaluation questions posed in the previous chapter, the evaluator was guided by Donaldson's (2007) five steps of developing and evaluating programme theory.

#### **Step 1 and 2: Engaging the stakeholders and developing the first draft.**

Given that there was no clearly articulated programme theory for the Dream Toolkit Programme, the first step as prescribed by Rossi et al (2004) was to elicit the Dream Toolkit's underlying logic and assumptions from the programme stakeholders. The evaluator engaged two key DFF staff members to develop a clearly articulated programme theory for the Dream Toolkit. A total of four staff members work directly with the Dream Toolkit Programme, however, only two were available for this process. Participating staff included the Programme Coordinator and the Programme Manager. Both stakeholders were appropriate as they had the best knowledge and understanding of the programme's causal logic and expected outcomes.

The evaluator had a meeting with each of the stakeholders independently. The purpose of the meetings was for the evaluator to obtain an understanding of the underlying rationale of the Dream Toolkit Programme. A number of questions were asked related to the rationale for the programme, targeted population, programme activities as well as overall goals, and intended outcomes (see Appendix A). According to Mahoney et al (2010) it is important to ensure that all key programme features including ways in which they are presumed to bring out change must be adequately described during this process. These causal links as well as comprehensive descriptions of the key programme features were documented by the evaluator during the meetings.

The development of the first programme theory draft took place in two key phases. The first meeting with the Programme Coordinator marked the first phase of the process. During the first meeting the evaluator simply gathered information on the problem, target population, programme activities and the final goal. A combination of the backward and forward reasoning approach informed the discussion (Chen, 2005). Forward reasoning is a process whereby the programme theory is projected according to the initial steps that need to be taken in order to achieve programme goals. On the other hand, backward reasoning involves a process where the evaluator had to reason back from actual or desired program outcomes. Both approaches seek to help stakeholders to connect their thoughts about how the programme is supposed to work in a systematic manner.

The main objective of this meeting was to come up with an activities versus outcome logic of the Dream Toolkit Programme. At this stage the evaluator was interested in gathering information on the overall goal of the programme and the steps they were taken to achieve the programme's ultimate goal. Through this process the Programme Coordinator outlined the various activities of the programme and what they expected to achieve as a result of all those activities combined. The evaluator took notes throughout the engagement. After the meeting, the evaluator constructed a simple box and arrow diagram which depicted the activities to long-term outcome logic of the Dream Toolkit Programme.

Following the first meeting, the evaluator sought to build on the initial logic to produce the first comprehensive draft of the full programme theory of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Given that the second engagement was with a different stakeholder (Programme Manager) the evaluator had to first ensure that there was agreement on the activities versus long-term outcome logic. Once consensus had been reached the Programme Manager was then asked to demonstrate the process through which the long-term outcomes would be achieved. This process involved identifying short-term and medium-term outcomes and mapping out the causal linkages amongst the different levels of outcomes. Through this process the evaluator was interested in knowing which short-term outcomes lead to which intermediate outcomes and if both would lead to the long-term outcome logically.

After the second meeting, the evaluator took some time to develop the first comprehensive programme theory diagram. The diagram was informed by notes taken from both meetings and some input from the evaluator.

### **Step 3: Present first draft to stakeholders.**

The evaluator emailed the first draft of the programme theory to the two key stakeholders for confirmation. This required them to determine the extent to which the draft accurately depicted the logic of the programme and to propose changes. Changes were incorporated into the initial draft as requested by the stakeholders. Given that the diagrams are the direct results of the theory evaluation, they are presented in the Chapter Three. Once the necessary changes had been made the diagram was signed off as a way of affirming that it was a true representation of the underlying assumptions of the Dream Toolkit Programme.

### **Step 4: Plausibility check.**

Following the finalisation of the programme theory, the evaluator proceeded to conduct a plausibility check of the programme's underlying assumptions. Using evidence from evaluation and broader social science research the evaluator assessed the strength of the causal links expressed in the programme theory diagram.

The plausibility assessment was based on available literature on positive youth development (PYD) programmes including: out of school time programmes, school-based programmes, youth mentoring programmes and service learning programmes. The research was located using the following databases: JSTOR, EBSCOHOST and Google Scholar. Some of the articles reviewed were obtained from: the Journal of Youth Development, the American Journal of Community Psychology, the Journal of Applied Development Psychology, the Journal of Youth and Adolescence and the Evaluation and Programme Planning Journal.

Use of prior research allowed the evaluator to compare the causal logic of the Dream Toolkit Programme to other similar PYD programmes. In so doing, the evaluator was also able to assess whether the activities and intended outcomes have been found in similar programmes as well as to identify design and

implementation considerations that other researchers have found useful for programme success.

### **Step 5: Final model.**

Using information gathered through the extensive literature search the evaluator was able to judge the plausibility of the programme theory and suggest changes to key programme stakeholders. The final theory diagram includes a component of implementation considerations that are deemed necessary for programme success (presented in the Results Chapter).

## **Method for the Implementation Evaluation**

### **Research design.**

The implementation evaluation used a descriptive evaluation design to identify areas of the Dream Toolkit Programme that need improvement. Descriptive research designs can be used to accurately describe phenomenon through use of narrative type descriptions (qualitative) or quantitative methods (Anastas, 2012; Blanche et al, 2006). Knupfer and McLellan (1996) emphasise that descriptive research cannot be categorised as either quantitative or qualitative research but instead researchers using this design can use both elements within the same study. Therefore, the evaluator used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques in answering the different implementation evaluation questions.

The descriptive design was deemed appropriate in order to describe the way the Dream Toolkit Programme was implemented. Descriptive evaluation designs can be helpful in demonstrating whether or not programme was implemented as planned as well as provide feedback on programme processes (De Vaus, 2001; Knupfer & McLellan, 1996). Given that this evaluation sought to provide information that could be used to improve the Dream Toolkit Programme, a descriptive design was also considered appropriate for that purpose.

The following section outlines the procedures used for each of the evaluation questions. The questions are presented according to the key aspects of

implementation assessed in this evaluation. These aspects include: service utilisation, programme plan and service delivery.

### **Service Utilisation Question**

*Question 4. How many Grade 9 learners are participating in the programme? Did all the learners attend all of the dream toolkit sessions? (Reach and coverage)*

#### **Data collection tool.**

Secondary data, in the form of attendance registers obtained from DFF staff were used to answer the question on reach and coverage. The evaluator made use of attendance registers documented from the start of the programme in May 2017 to the last week of October 2017.

#### **Data analysis.**

The registers which were in an Excel spreadsheet format were exported to SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to assess the reach of the programme, that is, the overall number of learners serviced by the Dream Toolkit Programme at Phoenix High School. In addition, descriptive statistics were also run for participant attendance for each of the classes at the school.

### **Programme Plan Question**

*Question 5. Was the Dream Toolkit Programme implemented according to plan? (Implementation fidelity)*

#### **Data collection tool.**

To answer the programme plan question, the evaluator used a combination of primary and secondary data. Secondary data included class registers, the Dream Toolkit Curriculum, and the programme plan. The evaluator also held a meeting with the Programme Manager to confirm that the data that had been obtained from secondary sources was a true reflection of what transpired.

### **Data analysis.**

In order to assess implementation fidelity, the evaluator assessed actual topics delivered versus intended, projected number of sessions, and the expected duration of the programme. Class registers were used to determine the number of sessions that were conducted in comparison with what was projected on the programme plan. This enabled the evaluator to determine the extent to which the programme was delivered as intended.

### **Service Delivery Questions**

This section details the sampling techniques used to select respondents for the service delivery component of the implementation evaluation. It also outlines the data collection tools and data analysis procedures used for the different service delivery questions.

#### **Sampling.**

The implementation evaluation utilised a non-probability purposive sampling technique. According to Tongco (2007) purposive sampling can be defined as the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. Patton (2015) also emphasises that the logic behind purposive sampling lies in choosing information-rich cases from which an evaluator can learn about issues central to the purpose of inquiry. The participants of this evaluation were selected because they either participated in the programme (beneficiaries) or were responsible for its implementation (programme facilitators). These two cohorts of participants were considered to have the knowledge that could inform programme improvement. The first cohort comprised of programme participants who responded to questions regarding their satisfaction with the Dream Toolkit Programme. The second cohort was made up of programme facilitators who responded to questions related to the training they received prior to implementing the programme. Table 5 summarises the data sources and data providers relevant to answering each service delivery evaluation question. These will be discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

Table 5

*Summary of data sources and data providers relevant to each service delivery evaluation question.*

| <b>Evaluation Question</b>  | <b>Data source/<br/>Tool</b> | <b>Participants</b>    | <b>No.</b> |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| 6. What are the learners' perceptions of the Dream Toolkit sessions delivered by the programme?                         | Questionnaire                | Programme participants | 119        |
| 7. Do the facilitators build relationships with learners that are considered necessary for programme outcomes?          | Questionnaire                | Programme participants | 119        |
| 8. Are the Dream Toolkit facilitators adequately trained to deliver the dream toolkit sessions with sufficient quality? | Interviews                   | Facilitators           | 6          |

### **Evaluation Question 6 and 7**

#### **Data collection tool.**

A questionnaire (see Appendix B) was used to answer evaluation questions 6 and 7. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section (A) comprised of five likert type questions where learners were asked to indicate the level of importance they placed on each of the covered topics. The responses ranged from 1 (*not at all important*) to 5 (*very important*). Learners were also asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with the entire Dream Toolkit Programme. Responses for overall satisfaction ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An example item was "*I enjoyed the Dream Toolkit Sessions*". The second section (B) required learners to respond to questions related to facilitator knowledge of the Dream Toolkit content and learner-facilitator relationships during implementation of the programme. An example for the facilitator-learner relationship category was, "*Facilitators respected my opinions*" and "*I would talk to programme facilitators about my problems*". The last section (C) was on short-term outcomes and will be discussed under method for short-term outcome evaluation.

## **Sample characteristics of programme participants**

A total of 119 programme participants made up the first cohort of respondents for the service delivery questions. Forty-six were male Grade 9 learners, 61 were female and 12 preferred not to reveal their gender. Information on race indicates that the majority of participants were Coloured (82.4%), followed by Black (10.9%), Indian (2.5%), and Asian (0.8%). Approximately 3.4 % of the participants preferred to keep their race unknown. The average age of the participating learners was 15 years ( $M=15.18$   $SD= .97$ ).

### **Procedure and data analysis.**

DFF administered the questionnaire designed by the evaluator. The questions in the questionnaire were guided by evaluation information needs. Although the programme was implemented in all five grade nine classes Phoenix High School, only four classes were available for data collection. Each class completed the questionnaires independently and at separate times. Programme facilitators distributed the questionnaires and collected them once they had been completed. The evaluator was also present to observe the data collection process.

The survey was conducted over a period of two weeks between end of October and early November 2017. Data collection for the different classes was done on the day they were scheduled to have their final session.

Statistical analysis of the data was done through IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Given that all the questions required learner ratings of the topic and overall programme, the quantitative data was summarised using minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation statistics. Standard deviations and means were calculated to show variances and averages.

## **Evaluation Question 8**

### **Data collection tool.**

Six key informant interviews with the Dream Toolkit facilitators were used to elicit information on the adequacy of the facilitator training. These individuals were asked questions related to their satisfaction with the training they received before

implementing the Dream Toolkit sessions and whether or not they felt adequately prepared to deliver the sessions. The interview schedule is attached in Appendix C.

### **Procedure and data analysis.**

The evaluator sent an email to DFF staff requesting to interview the programme facilitators and a date was scheduled for interviews. Six facilitators were available for the interviews. Interviews were held at the DFF premises and each interview was approximately 30 minutes long. The interviews were recorded with permission from the data providers and later transcribed by a Cape Town based transcription company.

ATLAS.ti was used to analyse qualitative data from the interviews. The coding function was used to identify key themes that emerged from the interviews. Groundedness was reported to demonstrate the total number of quotations associated with the theme. Therefore, a high grounded score demonstrated that there were many quotations in the transcribed data that were linked to the theme. Key themes that emerged from the interviews are reported in the implementation results chapter.

### **Method for Short-term Evaluation**

*Evaluation Question 6: What level(s) of short-term outcomes are reported by the participants of the Dream Toolkit Programme?*

#### **Data collection tool.**

The same questionnaire used for evaluation questions 3 and 4 was used to collect data for the short-term outcomes evaluation question. The questionnaire contained a section which assessed short-term outcomes of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Participants responded to Likert type questions on self-esteem, student engagement and career decidedness. The questions were adopted from well-established scales such as the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (1965) and Career Maturity Inventory Scale (Crites, 1996), and Student Engagement Scales (Shui-Fong, 2014). These scales were selected because they indicated high internal consistency and acceptable reliability in previous studies (Rosenberg, 1965; Shui-

Fong, 2014). Demographic information of programme participants was also collected for descriptive purposes.

### **Data analysis.**

Statistical analysis of the data was done through IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data from quantitative responses based on Likert type questions. Frequencies and measures of central tendency were calculated to show variances and averages.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The evaluator first sought permission from Dream Factory Foundation Coordinator to conduct the evaluation. The permission letter granted the evaluator the right to conduct the evaluation as well as access information required during the evaluation process (see Appendix D). This was in accordance to the requirements of the ethics framework of the Faculty of Commerce. The evaluator then developed an evaluation proposal which was sent to the UCT Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee for approval. The evaluator was granted clearance to proceed with the evaluation (see Appendix E).

The evaluator ensured that all persons participating in the evaluation were informed about the evaluation and its purpose. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) participation in a study should be based on full and open information. This means that participants should be fully informed about the evaluation being conducted. In this regard, each interview participant was given a consent form which outlined the purpose of the evaluation, why their participation in the study was important and how the findings would be used (see Appendices F and G). Participants were also informed that participation in the evaluation was voluntary. The main aim of this was to ensure that participants were able to make an informed decision about participating in the evaluation or not. After agreeing to participate in the evaluation, participants were asked to sign the consent forms.

Due to the fact that the research involved the participation of learners whose ages were under 18, DFF had to administer the questionnaire as part of the programme. This eliminated the need for the evaluator to seek parental consent,

however, informed consent was still sought from participants. A cover page was included in the questionnaire which informed participants about the purpose of the evaluation (see first page Appendix B). It is also important to note that although data collection took place during class time, learners were informed that participation in the evaluation was voluntary. Information on the cover page also indicated that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any point in time.

The evaluation process was also guided by ethical considerations that sought to guarantee privacy and confidentiality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). In order to ensure confidentiality, the data obtained from programme participants and programme facilitators was anonymised throughout the process. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) confidentiality of participants must be guaranteed as a safeguard to protect research participants from unwanted exposure. First, the evaluator did not collect names of survey respondents (programme participants), or any information that could be used to infer their identity. Second, interview participants' names were not mentioned anywhere in this report. Each interviewee was assigned a number which was used in reporting the findings. For example, an interviewee would be referred to as "interviewee 1". Finally, programme management staff who participated in the theory evaluation are referred to using their job titles and not their names. It should be noted, however, that they were not concerned about protecting their identity.

This chapter outlined the methods used to answer each of the evaluation questions. The evaluator also discussed the ethical considerations that guided the entire evaluation process. The following chapter presents the programme theory evaluation results.

## Chapter Three: Programme Theory Evaluation Results

This section outlines the results of the programme theory evaluation of the Dream Toolkit Programme. The chapter is divided into three main parts; the development of the programme theory, the results of the plausibility assessment, as well as a report of the implementation considerations identified during the extensive literature review that are presumed to affect programme success.

### Developing the Dream Toolkit Programme's Programme Theory

#### Evaluation Question 1: What are the underlying assumptions of the Dream Toolkit Programme?

The development of the preliminary theory underlying the Dream Toolkit Programme took place in two interrelated phases. During the initial engagements with the stakeholders (phase one) the evaluator elicited the two broad components underlying the Dream Toolkit Programme as understood by the stakeholders. These components included the activities that the programme uses and the resulting long-term outcome of the programme. Figure 2 depicts the activities and long-term outcome elicited during the first engagement.



Figure 2. Basic Dream Toolkit Programme Logic

The activities versus long term outcome approach helped to obtain a high-level perspective of the main assumption underlying the Dream Toolkit Programme. As shown in Figure 2, the stakeholders asserted that the various content areas covered in the Dream Toolkit training sessions would result in youth being able to lead successful and purpose driven lives. That assumption is based on the fact that

the activities are purpose-driven and would help young people map a positive direction for their lives. Ideally this would be achieved through goal setting activities such as coming up with bucket-lists, vision boards and drawing up action plans. According to stakeholders setting goals has the benefit of providing a future direction for young people's lives which also helps them in everyday decision-making processes. In this regard, consensus amongst programme stakeholders was that if properly guided and given adequate support, young people can be able to map their life purpose, set career and other life goals, and lead purpose driven lives.

Once the activities and long-term outcomes of the programme had been agreed on, the evaluator facilitated the process of including short-term and medium-term outcomes into the programme theory diagram. This was done through another stakeholder engagement meeting (phase two). From the discussions with programme stakeholders it came out that the initial outcomes emanating from programme activities would include: increased self-knowledge, increased knowledge of career aspirations, more favourable attitude towards school, and skill acquisition.

In addition, intermediate outcomes of the programme included increased self-esteem and positive self-concept, informed subject choices, increased academic engagement and ultimately improved academic grades. As indicated in Figure 3 the first comprehensive draft of the programme theory diagram shows how the activities interrelate with the short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes. For instance, an increased knowledge of self, career options and aspirations is expected to result in informed subject choices, academic engagement and a positive sense of self.

It is worth noting that the process of outlining the short-term versus intermediate outcome was complicated and characterised by a few reconsiderations until the first draft was finalised. For instance, informed subject choices and academic engagement were initially listed as short-term outcomes. After careful deliberations between programme stakeholders and the evaluator it was then agreed that the two outcomes were intermediate outcomes resulting from knowledge of career aspirations and a positive attitude towards self and school.

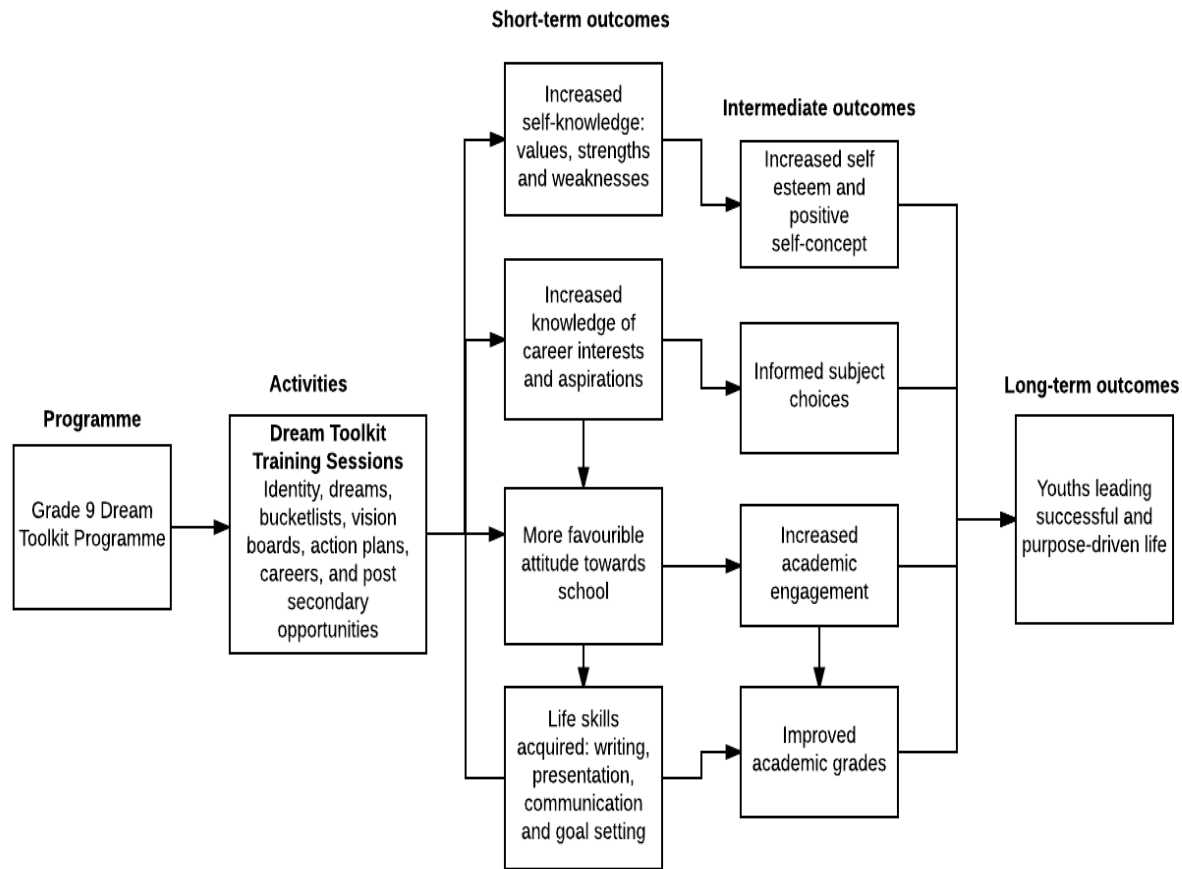


Figure 3. First draft: Programme Theory.

The first draft was presented to stakeholders for comment as per Donaldson's third step. The draft programme theory (Figure 3) obtained considerable agreement from the stakeholders as being an accurate reflection of the assumptions underlying the programme, however, some changes were requested. These included adding a separate component of group assessments and presentations under the activities block. Stakeholders indicated that it was important that the theory captures the issue of teamwork as learners are often required to work in groups for a number of tasks. This was seen as an important component which encourages teamwork amongst learners. Stakeholders also emphasised that group assessments also enhanced active engagement of learners in class through developing their collaborative learning skills, and ultimately this would also contribute to better academic grades.

Given that stakeholders agreed with every other component of the programme theory, the evaluator added the group presentations component as well as the resulting short and medium-term outcomes. The changes are indicated in Figure 4 (blue boxes).

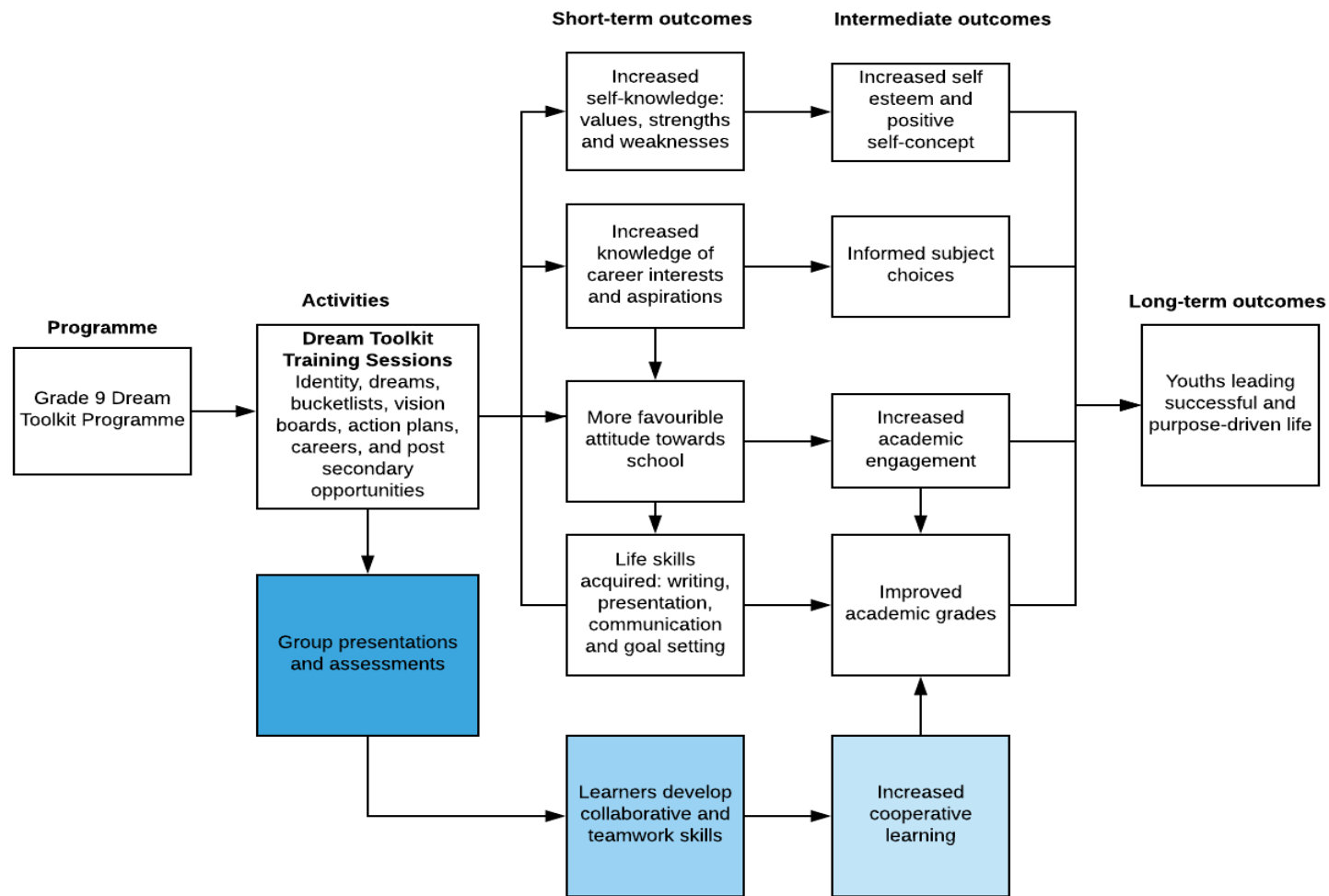


Figure 4. Programme theory with group assessment component

Following the addition of the group assessments' component, the evaluator proceeded to assess the extent to which this theory was plausible. The plausibility assessment was based on the signed off programme theory diagram depicted in Figure 4.

## **Plausibility Assessment of the Dream Toolkit Programme**

### **Evaluation Question 2: Are the causal linkages between the Dream Toolkit content, activities and proposed outcomes plausible?**

The causal logic of the elicited programme theory was compared to social science research and literature to ascertain its plausibility. The plausibility assessment critiqued whether the programme activities, outcomes, and the causal links between activities and outcomes were consistent with literature. The major components of the Dream Toolkit Programme were evaluated against available literature on programme activities and resulting outcomes of positive youth development programmes including: out of school time programmes, school-based programmes, mentoring programmes, and service learning programmes. The results of the plausibility assessment are separated into programme activities, outcomes, and causal linkages between activities and outcomes.

#### **The programme activities and content.**

To assess whether the activities of the Dream Toolkit Programme were aligned to similar programmes the evaluator reviewed literature on PYD programmes. It is important to note that there is no clear definition of what activities rightly constitute a PYD programme. Evidence in the literature, however, demonstrates that most PYD programmes have an assortment of organised, extra-curricular, and purpose driven activities (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Koshy & Mariano, 2011; Larson, 2000). Organised activities are largely understood as being characterised by structure, adult-supervision, and an emphasis on skill building (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Larson, 2000; Mahoney et al, 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). In addition, these organised activities should be challenging in nature introducing increased complexity from one activity to another (Larson, 1994; 2000).

The Dream Toolkit Programme activities are largely organised and have a structured sequence thus being in alignment with what the literature says activities in

these kind of programmes should adhere to. For instance, the programme has 11 scheduled dream toolkit topics covered over 15 sessions. These sessions are designed in such a way that they must be conducted in a regular (weekly) and structured manner such that the one session builds on to the next. The activities are organised around purpose mapping and goal-setting skills. For example, learners are required to come up with plans on what they intend to achieve on a short-term, intermediate and long-term basis. Once learners have documented their plans they are then required to draft a plan of action, that is, strategies of how they intend to achieve those plans. Through this process learners begin to develop and refine goal setting skills. This is consistent with purpose-driven activities of positive youth development programmes.

### ***The programme content.***

The content that the Dream Toolkit covers was also assessed against relevant literature. The assessment was based on the six theoretical components of the programme activities, namely: identity, goal-setting, team-work, skill-building, career education, and mentoring. All six areas were found to form part of most PYD programmes documented in the literature. Table 6 lists the content areas of the Dream Toolkit programme as well as the supporting academic sources for each of the areas.

Table 6

*Summary of plausibility assessment results of programme activities similar to the Dream Toolkit*

| <b>Activity category</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Academic sources</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Identity                 | Activities that are focused on promoting personal exploration, increasing self-knowledge, and positive self-concept.   | Eccles et al, 2003; Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003; Kahne et.al, 2001; Lerner, Roeser & Phelps, 2008; Mahoney, Larson, Lord & Eccles, 2005; Tsang & Yip, 2006  |
| Goal-setting             | Identification of goals that one wants to achieve as well as developing action plans.  | Bird & Markle, 2012; Deanne et al, 2016; Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003; Napolitano et al, 2011; Portwood, Ayers, Kennison, Waris & Wise, 2005; Sun & Shek, 2012   |
| Team-work                | These are activities that encourage working with others, that is, in pairs or groups   | Deanne and Harre, 2014; Deanne et al, 2016; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003; Larson, 2006; Larson, Hansen & Walker, 2005; Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006   |
| Skill-building           | Activities that provide opportunities to learn new social, emotional, psychological and intellectual skills (e.g. presentation skill, communication skills, and skills necessary to prepare for post-secondary education and adult employment) | Catalano et al, 2002; Catalano et al, 2004; Deanne et al, 2016; Durlak and Weissberg, 2007; Greenberg, Weissberg & Obrien, 2003; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh & MacMaken, 2011; Lerner et al, 2005; Rhodes, 2008; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter & Price, 2013 |
| Mentoring                | Adult-youth relations that help model enthusiasm and communicate confidence in young people's abilities and help them set realistic goals for their lives.   | Deanne et al, 2016; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Herrera, DuBois, & Grossman, 2013; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Fieldman & McMakien, 2007; Larson, 2006; Portwood, Ayers, Kennison, Waris & Wise, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008                |

As indicated in Table 6, the activities of the Dream Toolkit Programme were found to be highly consistent with existing literature on PYD programmes. As a result programme activities of the Dream Toolkit Programme were considered to be plausible.

### **Programme outcomes.**

Evidence in literature indicates that PYD programmes play a major role in contributing to the achievement of positive outcomes for participating youths. PYD

literature focuses on three key broad outcomes including: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioural adjustment, and academic achievement (Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al, 2010; Grolnick et al, 2007; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Through these programmes participating youth are reported to exhibit significant changes in all the three broad outcomes. More specifically, significant changes of improvement have been reported in participant's self-perceptions, psychosocial wellbeing, connectedness to school, and school grades amongst other learning outcomes (Catalano et al, 2004; Grolnick et al, 2007; Portwood et al, 2005).

Eight key outcomes of the Dream Toolkit Programme were assessed against relevant academic sources and all of them were found to be consistent with expected and observed outcomes of similar PYD programmes. Table 7 provides the intended outcomes of the Dream Toolkit programme and the literature which supports these outcomes as being attainable.

Table 7

*Summary of outcomes found in PYD literature*

| <b>OUTCOME</b>  | <b>ACADEMIC SOURCES</b>  |
|---|--|
| Increased self-knowledge                                | Catalano et al, 2004; Deanne and Harre, 2014; Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010; Durlak et al, 2007; Durlak et al, 2010b; Givaundan et al; Klein et al., 2005   |
| Increased self-esteem and positive self-concept         | Catalano et al, 2004; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Durlak et al, 2010; Deanne et al, 2016; DuBois et al, 2011; Kahne et al, 2001; Lerner, 2005; Leong et al, 2012; Weissberg & Durlak, 2010; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003   |
| Increased knowledge of career interests and aspirations | Eby et al, 2008; Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003; Gavin et al, 2009; Hughes & Karp, 2004; Lever et al, 2004; Scheneder & Stevenson, 1999  |
| Increased academic grades                               | Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al, 2010; Durlak & Weissberg, 2010; Grolnick et al, 2007; Klein & Bolus, 2002; Lauer et al., 2006; Mahoney et al, 2005; Mahoney et. al, 2009b; Shernoff, 2010; Taheri & Welsh, 2015 |
| Increased academic engagement                           | Grolnick et al., 2007; Shernoff & Vandell, 2007; Durlak et al, 2010; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Mahoney et al, 2010;  |
| More favourable attitude towards school                 | Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al, 2010; Klein et al., 2005; Mahoney et al., 2010; Taheri & Welsh, 2015; Weissberg & Durlak, 2010  |
| Knowledge and skill acquisition                         | Deanne & Harre, 2013; Deanne & Harre, 2014; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Larson, 2000; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2011   |
| Youths leading successful and purpose-driven lives      | Deanne & Harre, 2014; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003   |

The results of the theory evaluation indicate that PYD programmes play a key role in promoting both participants personal and interpersonal development outcomes (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & and Hunter, 2003; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Self-concept, positive identity, academic achievement, increased self-esteem, acquisition of new skills, and more favourable attitude towards school are amongst the key personal development outcomes noted across PYD literature (Deanne and Harre, 2014; Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010; Eccles and Gootman, 2002; Larson, 2000; Fredricks and Eccles, 2006). These outcomes were found to be consistent with the expected outcomes of the Dream Toolkit Programme and thus the outcomes were deemed to be feasible. The next section assesses the linkages between programme activities and outcomes.

### **Linkages between programme activities and outcomes.**

The final step of the plausibility assessment of the Dream Toolkit Programme was to critique the links between programme's activities and outcomes. The causal logic was deemed plausible given that similar links were found in social science research and literature in other PYD programmes.

Most PYD programme activities are centred on identity formation (Mahoney, Larson, Lord & Eccles, 2005; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Through identity-based activities young people are able to develop their sense of identity including positive conceptions of their current and future identities (Darling et al, 2002; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Portwood et al, 2005). In this regard, the Dream Toolkit programme is consistent with literature the programme's causal logic stated that identity activities are expected to result in positive self-concept and self-esteem outcomes.

Team-work based activities were found to be a common feature of PYD programmes (Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003; Deanne and Harre, 2014; Deanne et al, 2016). These activities have been found to be important for the interpersonal development of programme participants. Through these activities participants demonstrate teamwork skills such as improved communication skills with peers, collaborative learning outcomes, and increased feelings of connection with their peers. The wide range of interpersonal skills developed through team-work activities helps participants to integrate feelings, thinking and actions towards achieving goals (Durlak et al, 2011; Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003).

Furthermore, PYD programmes involve participation in challenging tasks. Goal setting activities are amongst some of the identified tasks that require young people to devote effort towards developing plans, organising their time and developing skills required as they work towards achieving goals (Heath, 1999; Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003). Involvement in these challenging activities has been seen to be effective for most programme participants and completion of tasks is largely associated with increased feelings of competency and positive self-concept (Deanne and Harre, 2013). For instance, accomplishments in given tasks may result in changes in participants' outlook or attitude toward self, their future and the world they live in. Good performance in these activities also promotes positive functioning

amongst young people, increase the likelihood of positive development and reduce negative behaviours (Eccles et al., 2003; Larson, 1994).

Career education also forms a crucial part of youth development with the aim of equipping adolescents with tools and knowledge that would help them plan their future and make informed decisions when choosing a career path (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Scheneder & Stevenson, 1999). Through career guidance programmes, participants get information related to career options and other post-secondary opportunities. Zeldan (1995) refers to a variety of career preparation outcomes which result from these services, including increased knowledge of career options, increased self-knowledge and positive sense of self, and decision-making skills.

Finally, PYD literature also indicates a close relationship between mentoring services for youth and positive outcomes. Remarkable increases in mentoring services for youth in school-based interventions have also been noted in literature (DuBois et al., 2005; Portwood et al, 2005; Rhodes and Dubois, 2008). In fact there is growing perspective that any programme that involves contact between adults and youths may count as a mentoring programme (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Through mentoring services programme staff play a key role in motivating empowering learners to identify their own purpose and helping them find ways of reaching their set targets or goals. This forms an important protective factor of positive youth development (Kahne et al, 2001). The resulting outcomes of such programme services include: increased self-esteem, increased emotional and psychological wellbeing, improved academic outcomes, and increased school connectedness (DuBois et al, 2002; Herrera et al, 2007; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008).

As indicated in the discussion above, the links between programme activities and outcomes were found in relevant literature and thus the programme theory diagram components as well as its causal logic is plausible. While a plausible programme theory increases the likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes, programme success is largely dependent on how well and reliably programme implementers deliver the programme services (Catalano et al., 2004; Mahoney et al, 2010). Several studies have shown that programme implementation has a significant bearing on programme outcomes (Carroll et al, 2007; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Mahoney et al, 2010). During the literature review, implementation considerations

were identified and these will be reported in the next section as matters that Dream Factory Foundation should be aware of.

## **Implementation Considerations**

### **Evaluation Question 3: What elements of the Dream Toolkit Programme Theory can be modified to maximise intended outcomes?**

Evidence in literature demonstrates that it is important to pay attention to the quality of programme implementation for various reasons. Amongst these reasons is the ability to implement the programme as planned and ensuring that programme staff deliver the programme with sufficient quality and dosage to produce intended outcomes (Berry, 2015; Catalano et al., 2004). The most important aspects of implementation that are deemed necessary for programme success include: quality of programme staff, quality of programme activities, and quality of relationships between programme staff and participants (Berry, 2015; Durlak et al, 2010). In addition, the quality of participation of programme recipients is also considered to be a determinant of programme outcomes (Mahoney et al, 2010). Each of these implementation considerations have been discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

#### **Quality of programme staff.**

The quality of programme staff can significantly impact the quality of programme delivery and the subsequent achievement of programme outcomes. According to Gagnon et al (2015) some of the characteristics of programme staff that influence service delivery include: programme-specific training, programme buy-in, level of experience facilitating groups, and overall competency. The presence or absence of these characteristics are believed to influence the extent to which the programme is implemented with sufficient quality. Programme staff training is largely viewed as one of the key mechanisms through which most of these characteristics may be developed and the quality of implementing staff improved (Berry, 2015; Gagnon et al., 2015; Durlak & DuPre, 2008). For instance, adequate training has been found to enhance the competence of implementing staff and contributing to increased confidence about their ability to deliver the programme (Gagnon et al.,

2015). Therefore, staff competence has largely been associated with enhanced quality of programme implementation.

In addition, there is a close relationship between quality of programme staff and the extent to which programme outcomes are achieved. Humphrey et al (2017) asserts that the level of programme staff preparedness coupled with their ability to actively engage and enthuse participants may influence programme outcomes. According to these scholars such programme staff qualities promote effective participant learning without which knowledge acquisition and subsequent skill development that underpins intervention outcomes is unlikely to occur. Berry (2015) also found that high-quality programme staff of a college readiness programme had participants that demonstrated significant gains in outcomes.

Given the above considerations, quality of programme staff should be perceived as a prerequisite for optimising the quality of programme delivery as well as its intended outcomes.

### **Quality of programme activities.**

The quality of programme activities is essential to achievement of programme outcomes. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) postulate that PYD programmes need to deliver programme activities that provide opportunities for young people to nurture their interests and develop new personal and interpersonal skills. Positive youth development is believed to occur as a result of engaging in challenging activities which become progressively complex as young people continue to develop and refine various competencies (Deanne & Harre, 2013; Hamilton et al., 2004). Such activities are seen to be beneficial to young people's social, emotional, cognitive and physical competencies (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Mahoney et al, 2010; Mahoney et al, 2007; Vandell et al, 2004). More so, structured activities such as those implemented in PYD programmes are also linked to high levels of engagement (Larson, 2000; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2015).

Therefore, it is important for programme staff to ensure that programme activities and content are research-based and developmentally appropriate for the targeted population (Berry, 2015). This is important because it can directly affect programme outcomes and may influence the extent to which young people take

interest in the programme and become fully engaged in programme activities. Activities that have been seen to be effective are those that provide opportunities to develop a sense of identity, goal setting and leadership skills (decision making and problem solving), and cooperative learning through team-work (Deanne & Harre, 2013; Mahoney, Larson, Lord & Eccles, 2005; Quinn, 1999).

### **Quality of programme staff-youth relationships.**

Furthermore, one of the key implementation considerations mentioned in the broader literature is the extent to which programme participants are able to benefit from the relationship processes in a manner that allows them to realise the expected outcomes. Programme participants have been seen to benefit significantly from positive and supportive relationships with programme staff (Rhodes, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2015). Some of the benefits that emanate from quality relationships include positive development outcomes as well as other attendance and engagement outcomes. For instance, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2015) postulate that quality of relationships has been closely linked to better attendance whereby programme participants consistently attend the programme because they feel that implementing staff care about them. Therefore, the quality and integrity of the relationships between participants and programme staff can be regarded as a key ingredient to successful programmes.

More so, there is also evidence that proves that poor quality relationships between staff and programme participants may have a negative effect on participants. For example, a study by Pierce et al (1999) found that negative staff behaviour towards participants resulted in low academic grades. Thus it is important that PYD programme implementers work on building relationships with participants.

### **Quality of programme participation.**

Participation in positive development programmes is largely associated with significant gains in outcomes for programme participants, however, it does not always follow that involvement in any such programme will result in achievement of outcomes. According to Weiss et al (2005) for PYD programmes to be successful there is need for programme staff to place importance on what she terms the participation equation in its entirety. The three important components of participation

include: enrolment, attendance and engagement (Mahoney et al, 2010; Weiss et al, 2005). It is hoped that focusing on the three important facets of participation will ensure that programme participants do not become passive recipients of programme services but rather become actively involved in order to benefit significantly from such programmes. There is widespread evidence in literature which shows that the majority of programmes tend to focus on enrolment without much attention being paid to whether participants consistently attend the programme and are actively engaged by programme activities (Mahoney et al, 2010; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005; Simpkins, Little & Weiss, 2004; Weiss et al, 2005).

It is important for one to have a conceptual understanding of the three facets of participation. Mahoney et al (2010) provides a comprehensive understanding of all three terms. To begin with, enrolment refers to whether or not a learner has signed up to be part of the programme and has for a long time been considered to be the most basic tenet of participation (Mahoney et al, 2010). The major focus here is the number of participants, male and females that sign up for the programme when it starts. On the other hand, attendance is largely concerned with the amount of time participants spend in the programme and is usually defined by dosage (the number of times one attends the programme) and duration (stability of a participant's attendance over time). Finally, engagement is largely characterised by enthusiasm, interest and effort in activity participation (Larson, 2000; Mahoney et al, 2010; Weiss et al, 2005).

Despite enrolment being a common characteristic of participation, it is argued that enrolment alone provides little information on the real nature of participation. It ignores important indicators such as the frequency of attendance and the extent to which one is engaged during the programme. Therefore, in addition to enrolment programme implementers should also be concerned with questions pertaining whether or not participants sufficiently attend the programme and are responsive to and engage in programme activities (Berry, 2015; Mahoney et al, 2010). High levels of dosage can have significant positive effects on programme participants (Deanne and Harre, 2013; Lipsey & Cordray, 2000). For instance, a study by Mahoney et al (2010) shows that participant attendance in out of school time programmes was largely associated with better school attendance, increased motivation for learning,

and school connectedness. More so, gains in school attendance were much higher for participants who demonstrated regular and durable attendance in those programmes.

Finally, it is also not enough for programme implementers to focus on enrolment and attendance alone. According to Hamilton and Hamilton (2005) youth development occurs in situations where programme participants are fully engaged in programme activities and are not just passive recipients. Standards around positive youth development also encourage active learning and engagement of programme participants. Therefore, it is also important to pay attention to the extent to which programme participants are engaged by and involved in the activities and content of the programme (Berry, 2015). High levels of engagement have been linked to higher academic outcomes (Mahoney, Lord & Carryl, 2005; Shernoff, 2010).

In line with these considerations it is important for programme implementers to put in place mechanisms to document information for all three facets of participation. Given the influence that participation has on programme outcomes, programme implementers need to routinely collect data on participant attendance and reliably measure participant engagement. Figure 5 (red boxes) depicts the final programme theory of the Dream Toolkit Programme including the implementation considerations.

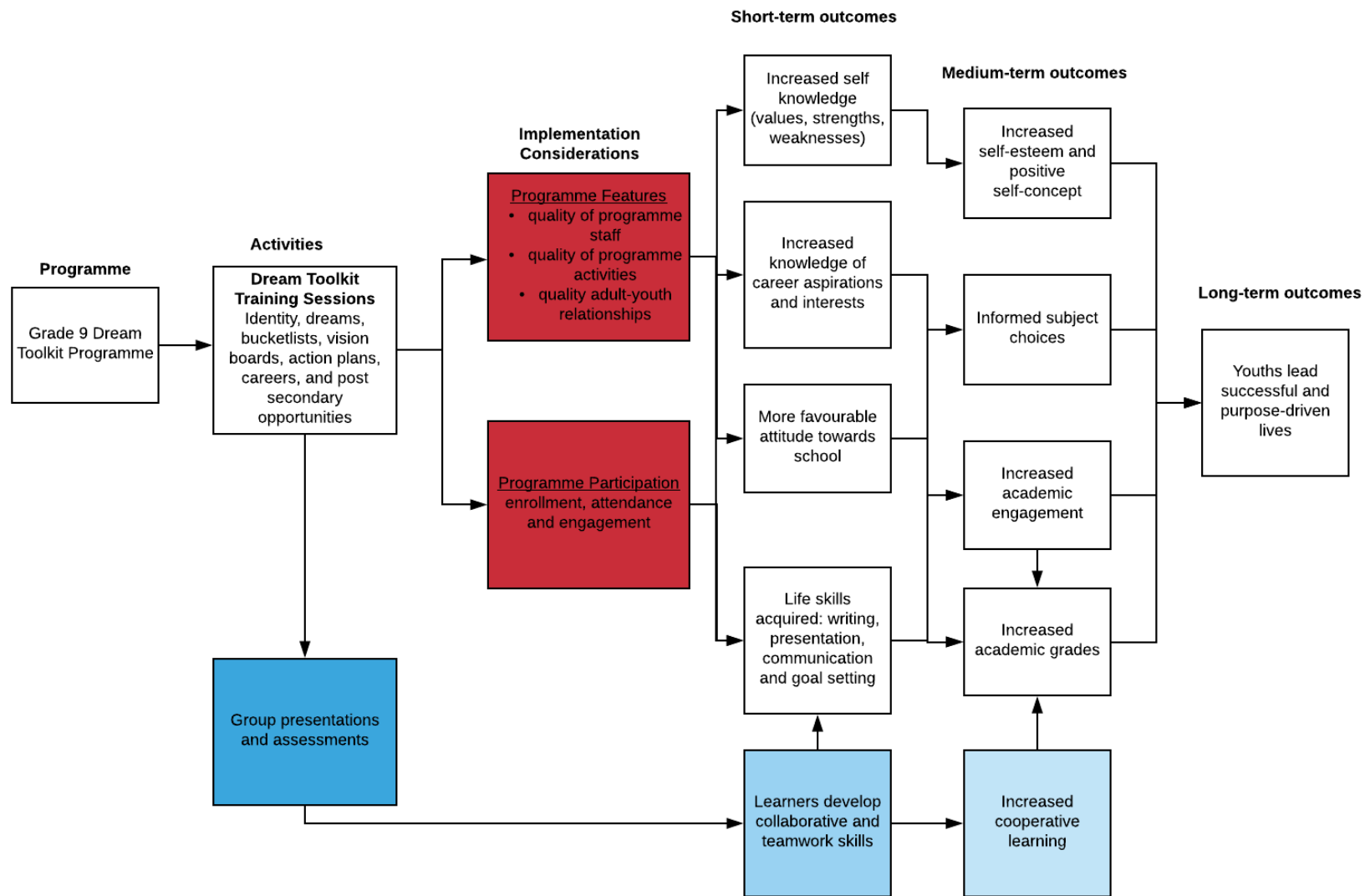


Figure 5. Finalised programme theory with implementation component

## Chapter Four: Process and Short-term Outcome Evaluation Results

The purpose of the process evaluation was to assess the overall reach (service utilisation) of the Dream Toolkit Programme and the extent to which the programme was delivered with sufficient quality (service delivery). The results are presented in accordance to the service utilisation and service delivery evaluation questions presented in the method chapter.

### Service Utilisation and Programme Plan Results

#### Evaluation Question 4: How many grade nine learners participated in the Dream Toolkit Programme?

As indicated in the programme attendance records a total of 231 Grade 9 learners were enrolled into the Dream Toolkit Programme at Phoenix High School in Cape Town. The programme is implemented in all five Grade 9 classes at the school. The average number of learners in each class is 46. Although records indicate that 231 learners were enrolled in the programme, 16 learners in Class A did not attend any of the Dream Toolkit sessions. Reasons for this non-attendance were not recorded in any programme documentation nor known by any programme staff. Table 8 provides the descriptive statistics of attendance for the five classes. Mean statistics shown in the table indicate the average attendance per class.

Table 8

*Descriptive statistics for learner attendance*

| <b>Class</b> | <b>Class size (n)</b> | <b>Number of sessions conducted</b> | <b>Minimum attendance</b> | <b>Maximum attendance</b> | <b>M (SD)</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Class A      | 45                    | 19                                  | 0                         | 19                        | 8.98 (7.77)   |
| Class B      | 43                    | 23                                  | 4                         | 23                        | 18.37 (4.66)  |
| Class C      | 50                    | 15                                  | 5                         | 15                        | 10.96 (2.66)  |
| Class D      | 47                    | 13                                  | 4                         | 13                        | 8.70 (2.05)   |
| Class E      | 47                    | 17                                  | 1                         | 17                        | 11.51 (3.62)  |

As shown in Table 8, the number of sessions presented to each class varied, with Class B recording the highest number of sessions (23) and Class D having the

lowest number of sessions (13). Overall participant attendance was high for most of the classes with most of them recording over 50% mean attendance.

The service utilization results indicate that the programme was successful in reaching the targeted Grade 9 learners and achieving high attendance rates. The differences in the number of sessions conducted, however, shows that some classes were disadvantaged with fewer Dream Toolkit sessions. It remains unclear how many of the sessions would be regarded as sufficient for programme participants to realise positive outcomes.

**Evaluation Question 5: Was the Dream Toolkit Programme implemented according to plan?** (programme plan adherence)

This component of the evaluation sought to establish the extent to which the Dream Toolkit Programme was implemented according to its original plan. The original plan was to implement the programme at three schools, however, the programme was implemented to the best of its ability at Phoenix High School. Salt River High School was dropped from the programme while Maitland High School had only done two introductory sessions at the time of the evaluation. In addition, implementation at Maitland High School only commenced in September. Therefore, the results reported here are based on how the programme was implemented at Phoenix High School. Table 9 outlines the original plan contrasted with how the programme was implemented at Phoenix High School.

Table 9

*Original plan of the Dream Toolkit Programme contrasted with how the programme was implemented*

| Original Programme Plan         |  | Actual  |   |         |         |
|---------------------------------|--|---------|---|---------|---------|
|                                 |  | Class A | Class B   | Class C | Class D |
| Topics                          | What is a dream                                | ✓       | ✓   | ✓       | ✓       |
|                                 | The bucket-list                                | ✓       | ✓   | ✓       | ✓       |
|                                 | My bucket-list in perspective                  | ✓       | ✓   | ✓       | ✓       |
|                                 | My Identity                                    | ✓       | ✓   | ✓       | ✓       |
|                                 | This is essential to who I am                  | ✓       | ✓   | ✓       | ✓       |
|                                 | This is who I am                               | X       | x   | x       | x       |
|                                 | Dream/Vision Boards                            | X       | x   | x       | x       |
|                                 | Let's put our dreams into action               | X       | x   | x       | x       |
|                                 | Community curtain                              | x       | x   | x       | x       |
|                                 | Review and revise                              | x       | x   | x       | x       |
|                                 | Let's celebrate                                | x       | x   | x       | x       |
| <b>Total number of sessions</b> | 15   | 13      | 15  | 23      | 19      |
| <b>Duration</b>                 | May – July (3 months)<br><i>Full Programme</i> |         | May – October (6 Months)<br><i>Incomplete Programme</i> |         |         |

Table 9 demonstrates that only five out of eleven topics were delivered to the learners in all the classes. According to the original plan these topics were supposed to be covered in fifteen separate one-hour sessions. The projected duration of the programme was three months but it was implemented over a period of six months. Despite the three months increase, the programme failed to cover all the topics. As indicated in the table, all classes had reached topic five in the schedule, however, not all of them were at the same level. Some classes had completed the topic while others were only starting on it.

Various reasons have been attributed to these shortcomings. First, given that the allocated time for life orientation lessons is 45 minutes and every session required 60 minutes, most topics could not be completed in one session. As a result of this, facilitators had to do make up sessions to adequately cover the topics.

Second, programme staff indicated that some classes were generally more disengaged than others and learners would disrupt sessions. As a result of this, programme facilitators were not able to complete the topics on time. Finally, continued postponement of Dream Toolkit sessions to accommodate other school programmes also contributed to programme implementation delays.

## Service Delivery Results

### Evaluation Question 6: What are the learners' perceptions of the Dream Toolkit sessions?

Students were asked about their perceptions of the various topics covered in the programme as well as their overall satisfaction with the Dream Toolkit Programme. Their responses are reported below.

#### Dream toolkit topic ratings.

Programme participants were requested to rate the importance of each of the topics of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Findings indicate that learners rated all topics as being important to their lives, with mean scores ranging from 3.50 (SD=1.06) to 4.61 (SD =.667). Table 10 depicts the mean importance for each of the topics covered. 'What is a dream' and 'My identity' were viewed as the most important topics.

Table 10

*Descriptive statistics for each topic rating*

| <b>Topic</b>                 | <b>n</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Mean (SD)</b> |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| What is a dream              | 119      | 1              | 5              | 4.60 (.740)      |
| The bucket-list              | 119      | 1              | 5              | 3.50 (1.06)      |
| My identity                  | 119      | 1              | 5              | 4.61 (.667)      |
| This is essential to who lam | 119      | 1              | 5              | 4.34 (.753)      |

Although the means for each of the topics is above the scales midpoint of 3, the minimums do indicate that some students did not find the topics important to

them. For example, frequency tables indicate that approximately 16.8% of the learners felt that “*The bucket-list*” was not important to them (see Table H4 in Appendix H). The frequency tables demonstrate frequency statistics for Likert responses given for every topic that was rated. Table H4 in Appendix H displays the frequency tables for each topic.

### **Overall satisfaction with the Dream Toolkit Programme.**

Learners were also asked to respond to four items in the questionnaire which assessed their overall satisfaction of the Dream Toolkit Programme as well as their perceived quality of the programme and how it was delivered. Table 11 outlines the descriptive statistics for each of the items.

Table 11

*Descriptive statistics for items indicating perceived satisfaction with programme delivery*

| <b>Item</b>  | <b>N</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean (SD)</b> |
|--|----------|------------|------------|------------------|
| I enjoyed the Dream Toolkit sessions                                     | 119      | 1          | 5          | 4.03 (.747)      |
| Through the programme I was able to identify my dreams                   | 119      | 1          | 5          | 4.36 (.778)      |
| The videos shown during sessions enhanced my understanding of the topics | 119      | 1          | 5          | 3.85 (.988)      |

Findings indicate that the learners had high levels of satisfaction with the programme. Most learners indicated that they had enjoyed the Dream Toolkit sessions with 81.5% learners indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed with this item in the questionnaire. Appendix I displays the frequency tables for each items listed in the Table 11.

In addition, learners felt that the programme content and activities enabled them to identify their dreams. A large proportion of the programme participants (87.5%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that the programme had enabled them to identify their dreams (see Table I2 in Appendix

l). Only a marginal 1.6% of the learners stated that the programme had not helped them in this regard.

The findings also show that the majority of learners felt that the videos shown during the Dream Toolkit sessions enhanced their understanding of the various topics. The majority of learners (71.5%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with this item. A small percentage of the participants (9.3%) thought the videos did not enhance their comprehension of the topics.

In summary, the results above indicate that many learners were highly satisfied with the manner in which the Dream Toolkit Programme was delivered.

**Evaluation Question 7: Do the programme facilitators build relationships with learners that are considered necessary for programme outcomes?**

In addition to understanding how the learners felt about the content and activities of the programme, the evaluator also aimed to establish the participants' perceptions of the programme facilitators. This included an assessment of facilitator knowledge of the Dream Toolkit content, the extent to which they encouraged interactive learning, and the way they responded to learners in class. As shown in Table 12, the majority of learners felt that facilitators had adequate knowledge of the Dream Toolkit. Approximately 82.4 % either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that facilitators knew what they were talking about, only a marginal 7.6 % disagreed with this statement (see Table J1 in Appendix J).

In addition, learners also perceived programme facilitators as being encouraging of interactive learning during Dream Toolkit sessions (see Table J2 in Appendix J). As shown in Table 12 programme participants scored highly on items demonstrating that facilitators respected programme participants' views and were always willing to respond to questions.

Furthermore, the evaluator also sought to establish whether learners felt that they had built adequate relationships with the facilitators in order to confide in them. This was deemed an important variable in the likelihood of the programme achieving its intended outcomes. Findings reveal that learners had mixed feelings on whether or not they would freely confide in programme facilitators. Less than half of the

learners (43.7%) indicated that they would confide in programme facilitators if the need arose while 25.2% of the learners indicated that would not reach out to the programme facilitators for help or assistance (see Table J3 in Appendix J).

Table 12

*Descriptive statistics of learner's perspectives of Dream Toolkit Programme facilitators*

| <i>Item</i>   | <i>n</i> | <i>Minimum</i> | <i>Maximum</i> | <i>M (SD)</i> |
|---|----------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Facilitators knew what they were talking about                        | 119      | 1              | 5              | 3.97 (.943)   |
| Facilitators were willing to respond to questions during the sessions | 119      | 1              | 5              | 4.06 (1.01)   |
| Facilitators made the training sessions interactive                   | 119      | 1              | 5              | 3.73 (1.00)   |
| Facilitators treated all learners fairly                              | 119      | 1              | 5              | 4.18 (1.07)   |
| Facilitators expected me to try my best                               | 119      | 1              | 5              | 4.24 (.909)   |
| I would talk to facilitators about my problems                        | 119      | 1              | 5              | 3.25 (1.14)   |
| Facilitators respected my opinions                                    | 119      | 1              | 5              | 3.92 (1.17)   |
| Facilitators made me feel important                                   | 119      | 1              | 5              | 3.98 (1.24)   |

**Evaluation Question 8: Are the Dream Toolkit facilitators adequately trained to deliver the dream toolkit sessions with sufficient quality?**

As part of the process evaluation the evaluator obtained feedback from the Dream Toolkit Programme facilitators about their experiences and perceptions of the training they received prior to presenting the sessions to the Grade 9 learners. The qualitative results from the interviews found that: a) the training was insufficient to prepare them for their roles and responsibilities as a programme facilitator; b) despite the inadequate training provided, facilitators still perceived themselves as knowledgeable of the programme goals and were confident to present the topics and

sessions; and c) the programme had administrative issues which affected how prepared facilitators were for the sessions. Each of these themes will be discussed below.

### **Theme one: Insufficient training.**

This theme relates to the inadequate training received by programme facilitators prior to implementing the Dream Toolkit Programme [groundedness = 15]. The groundedness score indicates the number of quotations that were associated with this theme in all six interviews. Five out of six facilitators found the training to be insufficient and felt that more could have been done to prepare them adequately for their roles. Some facilitators felt that the training they received did not qualify as formal training. The following quotations validate this theme.

*“I would say the training wasn’t exactly training. We were told here and there what to do but it wasn’t like proper training I would say. So we went through the curriculums ourselves but we didn’t know we were going to implement it to the children. We thought it was probably something totally different maybe so it wasn’t introduced to us properly should I say”.*

(Interviewee 4)

*“I would say more training would be much appreciated. We would feel more comfortable if we had more training and if they from the get go told us what we are talking and discussing and doing with you guys now, this is what you will be doing in the classes so be mindful of that. So I think if they told us that in the beginning we would have been more, I wouldn’t say that we weren’t serious at first about it but we would have been more aware”.*

(Interviewee 1)

*“...my thing is the training was supposed to be proper with us, that’s all I am asking for, for the next facilitators so this doesn’t happen again”.*

(Interviewee 5)

*“Uhm I don’t know if you call it training because we just did the things that the children are doing. So we had to do a dream letter for ourselves and we just had to watch the videos, what do we get from the videos and so basically that is what we did and then we just repeat the things to the learners”.*

(Interviewee 5)

Facilitators were of the view that while it was important to go through the Dream Toolkit Programme themselves, more effort should have been made to equip them with facilitation skills and how to handle different situations that may arise during sessions. They felt that they were not prepared enough to deliver the programme and as a result they faced challenges. They did, however, acknowledge that sometimes you can never be fully prepared for what happens on the ground.

*“I feel to a certain capacity it was because they told you what to do and yourself you had done it but as I said you meet kids from different places and you realise that, I don’t think we were prepared thoroughly and it’s not at fault but we weren’t prepared for what will happen. They always used to say to us that when you go out there you will encounter so many different things and that is as far as they could prepare us and I understood that but when you are actually there, you start to realise that I don’t think what we did was much. We knew the work but that is how far they could take us because when you get there, they don’t know the kids that we going to meet and then when you actually do meet them you realise I wasn’t as ready as I thought I would be ready”.*

(Interviewee 3)

According to one of the interviewees more time should have been dedicated to training for the Dream Toolkit Programme. The interviewee explained that they had to undergo two types of training at the same time, the Dream Toolkit and Emergent Business training and this could have compromised the extent to which they were adequately prepared to implement the Dream Toolkit Programme.

*“I feel we needed more training, maybe if they had trained us for an entire month just so we can be more prepared. Running it with the business one, it was good and we learnt a lot but to merge them together I feel like it was a lot of work load for the facilitators so we didn’t get enough time to be equipped to go to the schools. I feel like most of them were just winging it, get there, just instinctively okay what do I do”.*

(Interviewee 6)

In addition, one of the facilitators felt that more time should have been dedicated to explaining the purpose and vision of the programme. According to this interviewee, not all facilitators seemed to understand the importance of their work and emphasising the heart of the programme would have helped all the facilitators to take their roles more seriously.

*“.....maybe if they really explained the heart and the vision of Dream Factory Foundation then some of the facilitators would have taken it more seriously because it’s just that we all different and there so many dynamics, so many different personalities, and some people are much younger. Our maturity levels are different so it was important to emphasise the vision of the programme. I believe it’s important to be able to master how to work with all those dynamics in one room which is very difficult to tackle but it’s possible, not impossible”.*

(Interviewee 6)

While the majority of facilitators felt that the training was inadequate, one of them had different views altogether. According to this facilitator, the training prepared them enough to deliver the programme.

*“Yes, because at first the nervousness is there but when you talk to the children and you tell them actually what the program is about, I felt like I was prepared, we all were prepared because we had the duration before school to like do the training yourself, go home and go through your stuff and before we went to the classes, we had an hour prior to going to the classes to prepare ourselves to give the lesson to the children so we were actually trained enough to facilitate”.*

(Interviewee 2)

## **Theme two: Knowledgeable and confident.**

This theme relates to the extent to which facilitators felt that they had adequate knowledge of the programme content and goals to deliver the programme at a high quality [groundedness= 6]. Despite raising concerns about the adequacy of training they received, facilitators seemed to be aware of the Dream Toolkit Programme goals. The following quotations relate to this theme.

*“I think that the dream toolkit it mainly uhm makes the children aware. First of all, makes them aware of what a dream is. Secondly, it makes them aware of what their dream is, their dream of what they want to become as maybe in a career or what they want to do, what they want to achieve one day and thirdly I would say that with the action card, we have an action card within the toolkit so then that actually puts down, forces the learners to put down points of how you are going to achieve that dream, that end dream. So it’s basically how first of all, who can you bring within your circle to help you with your dream like go out there and get connected with people and things like that so that helps them a lot with getting to the end dream, connecting with that, finding the dots and connecting everything together”.*

(Interviewee 2)

*“We ignite their dreams with [indistinct 00:08:13] and sometimes they think like obviously because of their circumstances and I think they are not able to achieve these dreams and here we come and we telling them you are the dream. Imagine somebody telling you everyday you are the dream, you are the dream then you are going to start believing that because somebody is validating your dreams, somebody is saying no you can do it, somebody is saying you can go out and do this and then they also have the uhm the day in a life of and so they did a day in the life of an accountant and a lot of them wanted to be accountants so some of them they went to go and spend a day in the life of an accountant. I never got a chance in school to do this and now they have the opportunity which is so nice. It’s really”.*

(Interviewee 1)

*“For one I think they learn how to identify a dream. Secondly, we have a part in the workshop where we speak about identity. So I feel like they get a chance to actually look at themselves and be able to identify who they are and especially in High schools and with the youth they usually have this tendency of following everybody else and we are trying to singular you out as an individual because we tell them there’s a reason why you have that fingerprint and no one has it and there’s a reason why you look that way and no one looks like you and between the two of, we are helping and we are reaching the long term goal. We feel that if you are able to identify who you are, you will never fall for anything and you will start to be able to decide when a person says you will be nothing, you will choose that whatever this person is telling me I can take what I need and I can leave what I don’t need and for a person who is able to be headstrong”.*

(Interviewee 3)

One of the facilitators also mentioned that they had to make an effort both as individuals and amongst themselves to familiarise themselves with the content of the programme and enhance their understanding of the Dream Toolkit.

*“I would say no because most of the time we would before we go to a class or before we have to go and give a session, me and another facilitator would go together and then we would sit and familiarise ourselves before we go so we wouldn’t actually know what to do before the time. We would have to do it now so that when we go, we know”.*

(Interviewee 4)

Although the majority of facilitators felt that they had adequate knowledge to implement the programme, one of the facilitators explained that sometimes they failed to explain some of the content of the Dream Toolkit to learners. According to this interviewee this could be attributed to inadequate training.

*“because you see at the training they didn’t brief us and they weren’t into it and they didn’t explain properly what it should be so now I am a bit confused and then my learners, they are a bit confused so then I tell them what I know so then I told them how I feel it should be, not what they told me because they never told us properly how it should be so that’s basically it”.*

(Interviewee 5)

### **Theme three: Administrative issues.**

Theme three refers to logistical and communication issues that facilitators felt contributed to inadequate training and challenges faced during programme implementation [groundedness = 8]. These challenges included: lack of proper planning, continued changes in the programme schedules, and lack of communication between management staff and programme facilitators. The following quotations substantiate this theme.

*“I feel like maybe if they had planned before, how they were going to conduct each training session then we would have understood better and executed the work better”.*

(Interviewee 6)

*“Okay I felt like it needed at least a bit of organisation the way the training was conducted. It wasn’t really organised properly in my perspective”.*

(Interviewee 4)

One of the key issues that was raised by facilitators was the extent to which inadequate communication made it difficult for facilitators to effectively carry out their duties. Sometimes facilitators were told they had a session to facilitate on the day and this meant that they would go to the schools without having adequately prepared. Although this made it difficult, programme staff did not always have control of the schedule as they had to liaise with the life orientation teachers at the participating schools.

*“Totally, they don’t communicate ever with us. Like also when we know we are going to go to school is when we come here on the day and then they tell us okay this class is today so you can’t prepare like the day before and so you come here and then they tell you, you are doing a class today and there’s never communication with us prior”.*

(Interviewee 5)

*“Uhm like the teachers and Crystal now they have to come into agreement when we have to go and the time slot so we wouldn't know exactly when can we go so like a day before we would find out okay today or if we have to go we find out on the day we can't go because maybe the children is writing exams or school is going out early or stuff like that”.*

(Interviewee 4)

*“For me it was a case where most of the time the staff and themselves didn't even know, the one person is saying this and the other one is saying that and there was just so much miscommunication so it confused us as facilitators”.*

(Interviewee 6)

To emphasise on lack of communication, one of the facilitators explained that at some point the programme had to drop one of the beneficiary schools, however, management staff did not explain why they had to stop going there.

*“There was a school we did and we only went there for like two lessons and I don't know what happened and then we stopped going there and then we started with a new school again uhm and that for me even if there was something wrong, it should have been communicated with us because we had connected with the kids and we had a bond and now we like we coming back and then we don't come back and maybe there were actually kids there who wanted to continue with the programme”.*

(Interviewee 6)

In summary, the implementation results indicate that the programme was implemented with moderate fidelity. Service utilisation results indicate that the programme did not fully reach all three targeted schools. In terms of programme plan, participants where the programme was implemented did not get the full programme. There were also concerns regarding the adequacy of training that was received by facilitators prior to implementing the programme. Despite all these implementation problems, the majority programme participants expressed overall satisfaction with the Dream Toolkit Programme.

## Chapter Five: Short-term Outcome Results

### Evaluation Question 9: What level(s) of short-term outcomes are reported by the participants of the Dream Toolkit Programme?

To assess the extent to which programme participants reported on positive youth development outcomes, learners were asked to respond to questions on three psychometric scales. These scales measured the three outcomes of interest, namely self-esteem, student engagement and career decidedness. Prior to analysing the short-term results, the reliability and validity of the scales was assessed.

#### Reliability

Reliability analysis help test the internal consistency of scales, that is, the extent to which items that make up the scale measure the same underlying construct (Pallant, 2013). A minimum Cronbach's coefficient alpha value of .70 was considered the acceptable level of reliability (DeVellis, 2012; Nunnally, 1978; Pallant, 2013). In addition, a minimum value of .3 for item-total correlations was deemed acceptable, indicating the items had strong correlations (Field, 2012).

The self-esteem and career decidedness scales were deemed reliable as they achieved high Cronbach alpha coefficients. All corrected item total correlations were within the acceptable range. Table 13 displays the reliability statistics for these two scales.

Table 13

*Reliability analysis results for self-esteem and career decidedness*

| <b>Scale</b>       | <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b> | <b>Corrected item-total correlations</b> | <b>Number of items</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Self-esteem        | .74                     | .33 < r < .63                            | 8                      |
| Career decidedness | .87                     | .42 < r < .61                            | 10                     |

The 7-item student engagement scale achieved a Cronbach Alpha of .655. While this is considered lower than the accepted level of .70, Pallant (2013) argues that it is common and acceptable to find Cronbach values as low as .5 for short scales (fewer than ten items). Given that the scale had seven items, all of which had item total correlations above the recommended .3 ( $.31 < r < .44$ ), the evaluator deemed the scale to be moderately reliable. Each of the three scales (with all items) was then subjected to validity analyses.

### **Validity**

The evaluator used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to examine the validity of the scales used in this study. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are the two important statistical measures used to help assess the factorability of the data (Pallant, 2013). The evaluator established that the KMO value should have a minimum value of .60 and the Bartlett's test should be significant ( $p < .05$ ) to warrant the PCA (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In addition, the Kaiser's criterion was used to identify the factors of each scale, where only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were considered.

One of the initial steps in this analysis is to assess whether the sample size assumptions were met. To achieve adequate sample size there should be at least ten cases for each item (Nunnally, 1978; Field, 2012). In this regard, the sample size ( $n = 119$ ) had adequate power to proceed with the PCA analysis given that items in the three different scales ranged from seven to ten items each.

**Self-esteem.** The KMO value was .759 and had a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ( $p = .000$ ) indicating that the sample was factorable and all items in the scale were correlated. Two components were extracted using the PCA method. A varimax rotation was run to indicate which of the items belonged to the two different components. The first component obtained an Eigenvalue of 2.86 and an explained variance of 35.86% while the second component had an Eigenvalue of 1.53 and an explained variance of 19.21%. Both components explained 55.08% of the total variance and this indicated that they needed to be retained.

The first component consisted of items that were negatively worded while the second component had positively worded self-esteem items. The results of the PCA indicated that all items of the self-esteem scale loaded quite strongly ( $>.40$ ) on both components. The factor component loadings ranged from .734 to .840. Several studies also confirm the two-factor solution derived from using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, however, it is argued that these two components be regarded as highly correlated and psychometrically as having a coherent, unified structure (Bagley, Bolitho & Bertrand, 1997; Shahani, Dipboye & Phillips, 1990). Therefore, the self-esteem items could be combined into a composite self-esteem score for each learner that participated in the study. Table 14 shows the rotated component matrix for the eight self-esteem items.

Table 14.

*Rotated component matrix for eight items of the self-esteem scale.*

| <i>Item</i>   | <i>Component</i> |      |
|---|------------------|------|
|   | 1                | 2    |
| I feel that I can't do anything right               | .840             |      |
| Sometimes I think I am no good at all               | .820             |      |
| I feel that my life is not very useful              | .756             |      |
| I feel I do not have much to be proud of            | .743             |      |
| I am able to do things as well as most other people |                  | .764 |
| I feel that I am a person of worth                  |                  | .747 |
| I feel that I have a number of good qualities       |                  | .734 |
| I have a positive attitude toward myself            |                  | .734 |

**Career decidedness.** The KMO value was .867 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ( $p < .000$ ). The PCA extracted two components from all the items of the career decidedness scale. The first component had an Eigenvalue of 4.02, explaining 40.19% of the item variance while the second component had an Eigenvalue of 1.08 and explained 10.79% of the variance. Although there was double loading, all items loaded significantly on the first component with component

loadings ranging from .515 to .721. Given that all items loaded significantly on the first component, the PCA was re-run with a forced one factor solution. The KMO value remained the same (.867) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity significant ( $p = .000$ ). The new factor component loadings were significant ( $.52 < r < .72$ ). Table 15 outlines the component loadings for each item. The results indicated that the mean scores of each of the ten items could be combined to form one overall mean career decidedness score.

Table 15

*Component loadings for career decidedness items*

| <i>Item</i>  | <i>Component loadings</i> |
|--|---------------------------|
| There is no point in deciding on a job when the future is so uncertain             | .721                      |
| I know very little about the requirements of jobs                                  | .575                      |
| I'm not very concerned about my future occupation                                  | .648                      |
| I am having difficulty in preparing myself for the work I want to do               | .679                      |
| I keep changing my occupational choice   | .699                      |
| I don't know what subjects I should take in school                                 | .515                      |
| I can't understand how some people can be so certain about what they want to do    | .619                      |
| I don't know whether my occupational plans are realistic                           | .600                      |
| I often day dream about what I want to be, but I have not chosen an occupation yet | .617                      |
| I'm not going to worry about choosing an occupation until I am out of school       | .651                      |

**Student engagement.** Results from the PCA produced a KMO value of .653 and a significant Bartlett's test of Sphericity ( $p = .000$ ). One component was retained with an eigenvalue of 2.41 (explained variance: 34.38%). All the seven items loaded significantly on the first component ( $.50 < r < .70$ ). The scale was deemed to be unidimensional and all the items on the student engagement scale could be combined into a composite student engagement mean score. Table 16 shows the composite matrix for all the seven items.

Table 16

*Component loadings for all student engagement items*

| <i>Item</i>   | <i>Component loadings</i> |
|---|---------------------------|
| I try hard to do well in school   | .583                      |
| When I'm in class, I participate in class activities  | .698                      |
| I pay attention in class  | .666                      |
| When I run into a difficult homework problem, I keep working at it until I think I have solved it | .589                      |
| I take an active role in extra-curricular activities in my school                                 | .520                      |
| When I'm in class my mind wanders   | .519                      |
| When I'm in class I act like I am working   | .501                      |

All the three scales were found to be reliable and valid. Following the reliability and validity analyses the evaluator analysed the descriptive statistics for each of the scales.

**Descriptive Analyses**

The descriptive statistics for all the variables of interests are reported in the form of minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation statistics as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

*Descriptive statistics for self-esteem, career decidedness, and student engagement*

| <i>Variable</i>    | <i>N</i> | <i>Minimum</i> | <i>Maximum</i> | <i>M (SD)</i> |
|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Self-esteem        | 119      | 2              | 5              | 3.83 (.686)   |
| Career decidedness | 119      | 1              | 5              | 2.99 (.865)   |
| Student engagement | 119      | 2              | 5              | 3.88 (.626)   |

As shown in Table 15 the self-esteem variable had a mean score of 3.83 ( $SD = .686$ ). Self-esteem mean scores were slightly lower than point 4 on the 5-point Likert scale indicating that participants generally had a positive view of self. Self-esteem was non-normally distributed, with skewness of  $-.364$  ( $SE = .222$ ). This

negatively skewed distribution indicates that self-esteem scores were largely heaped to the higher values of the scale. A negative skew also shows that the average of scores is less than the median and the mode (mean < median < mode). Figure 6 shows the distribution of scores and demonstrates that a few participants that reported lower self-esteem scores were pulling the average to the lower levels of the scale.

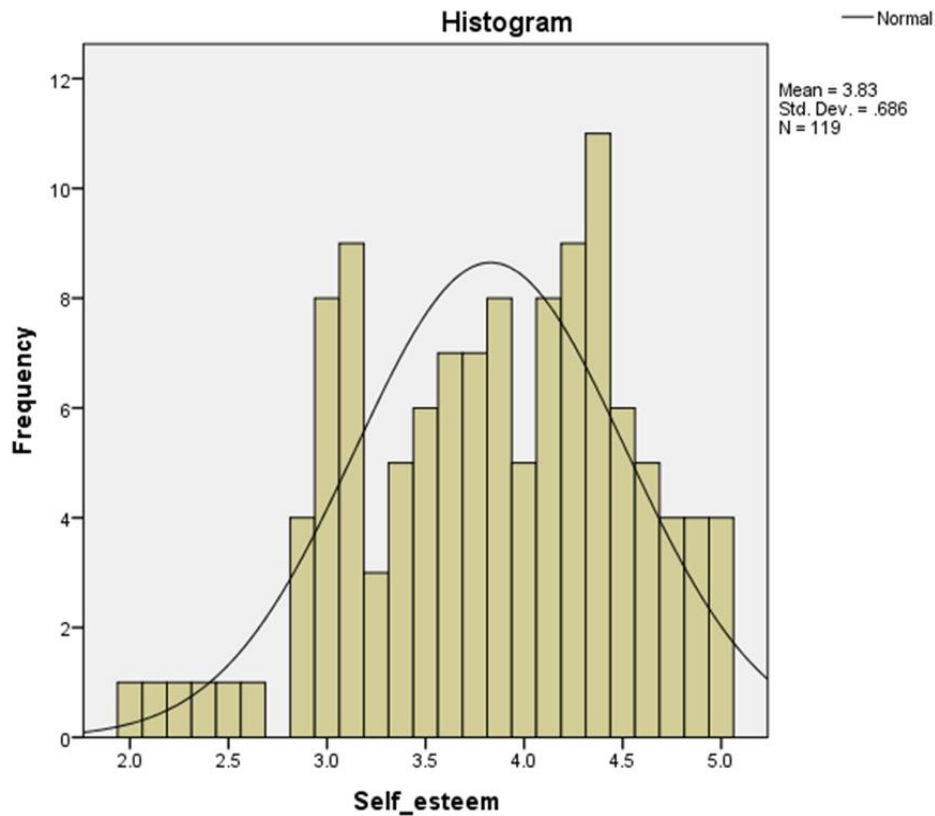


Figure 6. Histogram showing distribution of self-esteem scores

Career decidedness mean scores were much more normally distributed ( $M=2.99$   $SD = .865$ ). The results show that career decidedness scores were positioned around the mid-point of the scale (slightly below the midpoint of 3) indicating that learners had relatively average career decision making abilities or competencies. The boxplot in Figure 7 suggests a relatively normal distribution with no outliers or extreme scores.

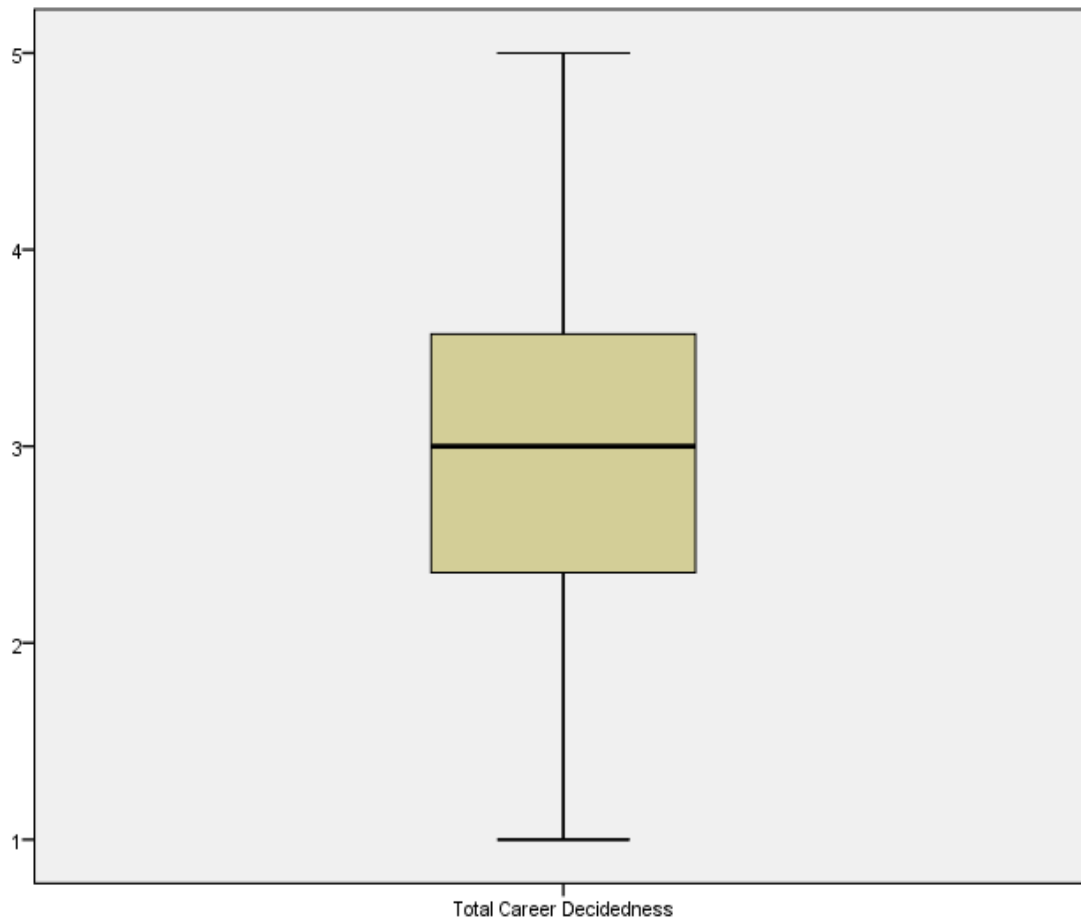


Figure 7. *Boxplot showing distribution of career decidedness.*

Although the total distribution for career decidedness indicated a relative normal distribution, it is interesting to note that a look at the distributions per class reveals that some of them were much more skewed. As shown in Figure 8, Grade 9E's distribution was positively skewed with a skewness of 1.232 (SE = .512). This indicates that the majority of scores were clustered on the lower levels of the scale. The graph also shows the presence of an outlier who had a maximum career decidedness score. On the other hand, Grade 9D indicates a slightly negative skew of -.567 (SE= .567) showing that the majority of scores were clustered on the higher ends of the career decidedness scale.

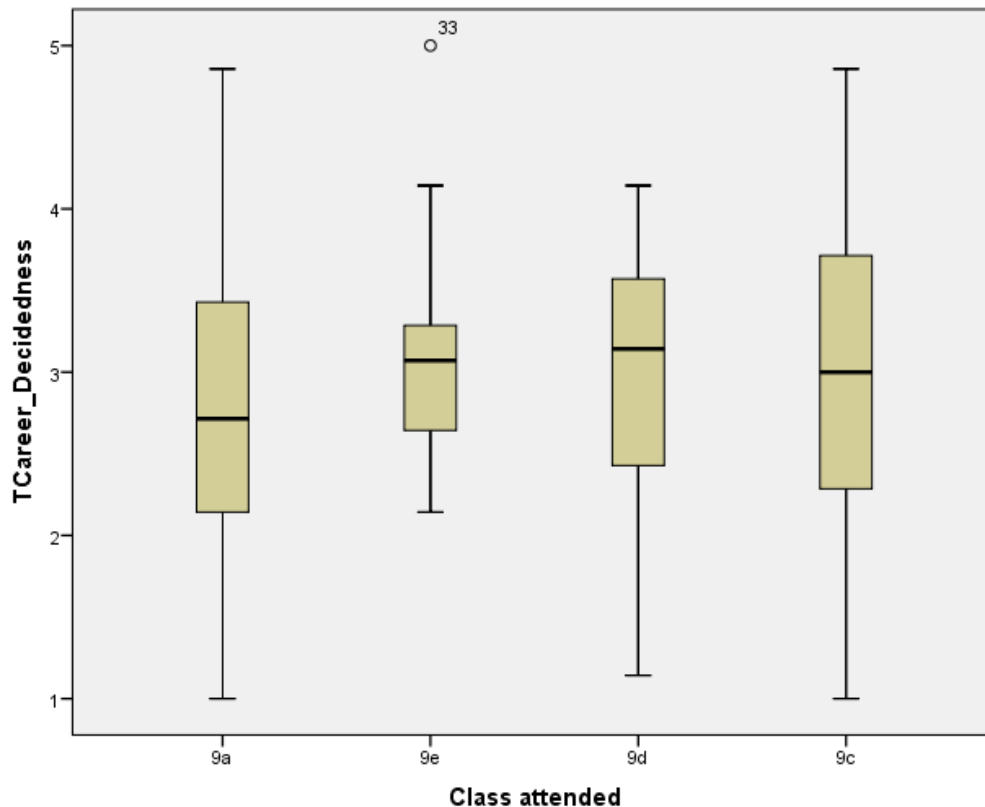


Figure 8. *Boxplot showing distribution of career decidedness per class*

Findings from the analyses also indicated that programme participants exhibited relatively high student engagement mean scores ( $M = 3.88$   $SD = .626$ ). The student engagement scores were non-normally distributed, with skewness of  $-.184$  ( $SE = .222$ ) indicating that the majority of the participants reported higher values on the student-engagement scale.

Results from the short-term outcome evaluation indicate that programme participants demonstrated relatively high scores on self-esteem and student engagement outcomes. The scores were lower for the career decidedness outcomes. It is important, however, to note that this evaluation cannot make any causal assumptions on the PYD outcomes reported here. The findings only suggest the presence of these outcomes amongst programme participants.

This chapter presented the results of the short-term outcome evaluation. The following chapter provides an interpretation of the findings reported in Chapters Three, Four and Five. It also discusses the implications of the findings for DFF and

the Dream Toolkit Programme. The evaluator also suggests some recommendations that could be considered in order to improve programme performance.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion and Recommendations**

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the Dream Toolkit Programme implemented by DFF. Three varied forms of evaluation were carried out: a programme theory evaluation, an implementation evaluation, and a short-term outcome evaluation. The overall goal of the evaluation was to enable DFF to assess the programme's underlying logic and whether the programme was implemented successfully. The evaluation also sought to investigate whether there was any indication that some of the short-term outcomes were present amongst the programme participants. The discussion below is based on the findings reported in the previous three results chapters.

### **Programme Theory Evaluation**

The extensive literature review conducted as part of the programme theory evaluation found that the causal linkages in the proposed theory diagram have been associated with similar programmes. Although it was difficult to find a programme that is implemented in the same way as the Dream Toolkit Programme (e.g. using the same curriculum), the various components of the programme could be compared with other positive youth development programmes and were found to be consistent with social science research. For instance, most PYD programmes adopted purpose-driven approaches to their programming (including goal setting) and incorporated identity formulation and team-work activities as a way of influencing personal and interpersonal development outcomes for programme participants (Hansen et al, 2003; Larson, 2000; Napolitano et al., 2011). Taking content and activities into account, overall the Dream Toolkit Programme was considered to have the likelihood of being able to achieve the expected outcomes.

There are a few components of PYD programmes that stood out in the review of similar programmes. First, it was shown that PYD programmes were seen to yield several benefits for at-risk youth (Kominski et al., 2001; Edwards, Mumford & Serrardan, 2007). This is consistent with the target population of the Dream Toolkit Programme. It should be noted, however, that recent literature emphasises differences in approach for the different levels of risk. For instance, while such

programmes may prove to benefit middle-risk youths (Deanne & Harre, 2014; DuBois et al., 2011), high-risk youth may require programme implementers that have undergone extensive training and have adequate resources to effectively deliver the services (Deanne & Harre, 2014).

According to Herrera et al (2013) programme staff who served youths with high risk profiles reported that they need extra support to be able to interact with programme participants in a way that would enable them to benefit from the programme. According to these scholars, varied risk profiles may have an impact on adult-youth relationship and the extent to which young people may benefit from the relationship and ultimately the programme in its entirety. The reason for this is that higher risk youth have been seen to exhibit significant challenges associated with social and emotional issues. This has implications for DFF considering that the programme is implemented in relatively high-risk areas. More so, given that the implementation evaluation revealed that sometimes learners would not cooperate with programme facilitators and in the process, disrupt sessions. This indicates that facilitators may not have been adequately trained to deal with this.

In this regard, it is recommended that the extent of training and support for programme staff should be based on the types and levels of risk experienced by young people being served. Herrera et al (2013) advises that implementing organisations should strengthen the capacity of programme staff working with such youth to ensure that they get the most out of these PYD programmes. Therefore, one of the key steps for programme implementers is to assess the risk profiles of programme participants at enrolment. This process would include gathering information on broader youth context (school, family and community) where they live as well as the challenges they face including negative behavioural problems (Herrera et al, 2013).

Second, while the theory evaluation found the causal linkages to be plausible there were a number of implementation considerations cited in literature as having an impact on programme outcomes. Despite having a plausible theory, it cannot be assumed that programme actions will result in the achievement of outcomes (Rossi et al., 2004). Durlak (1998) posits that a well-designed programme can yield

negative results if poorly implemented whereas higher levels of implementation are associated with more positive outcomes. Hence the need to pay attention to the quality of programme implementation including the following: quality of programme staff, quality of programme staff-youth relations, and the nature of youth participation. All these implementation considerations have implications for the Dream Toolkit Programme and are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

### **Quality of programme staff.**

As shown in the Chapter Three, the quality of implementing staff is essential for programme success. There is a strong relationship between programme quality and staff competence in programmes serving youths (Grossman et al, 2002; Heubner et al, 2003). Programmes with skilled and competent staff are often delivered with sufficient quality and higher levels of implementation fidelity. PYD programme participants can also benefit significantly from the learning opportunities provided by competent staff (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006). In this regard, qualifications and training of programme implementers are critical to quality of service delivery and achievement of outcomes (Durlak, 1998; Durlak and DuPre, 2008).

Chen (2004) emphasises that implementers need to be adequately trained and supervised as this can have a direct impact on the quality of service delivery and subsequently affect programme outcomes. There are two main implications for practice that can be derived from this. First it is important for DFF to ensure that programme facilitators implementing the Dream Toolkit are adequately prepared to deliver the programme with sufficient quality. Competence, commitment, and enthusiasm of implementers are some of the factors that can potentially influence the effectiveness of the programme (Chen, 2004; Roth et al, 1998). These factors embody a combination of skill and will amongst implementers and can be enhanced through effective staff development and training.

Currently programme staff training for the Dream Toolkit facilitators only includes goals of the programme and the curriculum. Other aspects can be included to improve the quality of training. For instance, training may also incorporate: a) an understanding of positive youth development (what it entails, its common components and assumptions, and the useful frameworks guiding the success of

such programmes) b) as well as effective delivery methodologies (requisite facilitation skills, group management, and other proven strategies (Huebner et al, 2003; Wilson et al, 2008). This can also be used to develop a framework that guides the requisite knowledge, skills and experience a facilitator would need to effectively deliver the programme.

Second, DFF may have to consider putting in place mechanisms for continued support and supervision of the Dream Toolkit Programme facilitators. There is evidence in literature that shows that on-going supervision and retraining of implementing staff increases implementation fidelity for many programmes (DuFrene et al, 2005; Durlak, 1998; Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Supervision and sometimes additional training may be needed once implementation commences. According to Durlak (1998) some implementing staff may face challenges transferring some of their newly acquired skills or face difficulties implementing some parts of the programme. Therefore, it is important for organisations to monitor the performance of implementing staff and address their shortcomings at early stages as this could potentially influence programme quality.

### **Quality of programme staff-youth relationships.**

The quality of relationships between implementing staff and programme participants emerged as being primary for achievement of outcomes in most PYD programmes (Aschenbrener & Johnson, 2017; Catalano et al, 2004). This has implications for DFF because these relationships can influence programme outcomes. There is evidence that programme participants who report strong relationships with implementing staff produce better outcomes (Rhodes et al., 2005). Indeed positive, supportive and sustained adult youth relationships have been regarded a key ingredient to successful programmes and some of these benefits include increasing attendance and engagement outcomes of programme participants (Rhodes, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2015).

In the case of DFF, programme staff relates to programme facilitators who have direct contact with the learners. It is therefore important that DFF pays attention to relationship building between facilitators and learners to maximise benefits. Although this is largely dependent on facilitators themselves, DFF may have to

include aspects of relationship building and how to foster developmental relationships with young people as part of their facilitator training. A developmental relationship is responsive to the needs of young people and values their opinion and is opposed to prescriptive relationships where adults (programme staff) have high degree of control and are seen as authoritative figures (Li & Julian, 2012; Morrow & Styles, 1995). Training on this may encourage programme facilitators to place importance on establishing relationships with learners as well as sustaining these relationship enhancing behaviours.

In addition, facilitators may also build relationships with participants through open communication and maintaining stable contact between a facilitator and the same group of learners for the entire duration of the programme. In order to establish quality relationships between programme participants and staff there is a need to ensure that both spend time together on a consistent basis and over a long period of time (Spencer, 2007; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Given that the Dream Toolkit programme has several facilitators, it is important that each facilitator maintains the same group of learners till the end of the programme as this would provide the stability that is considered necessary for relationship building.

### **Nature of youth participation.**

Participation in PYD programmes can influence both personal and interpersonal development outcomes of youth. Some of the outcomes associated with participation in PYD programmes include academic achievement, positive self-image, a strong sense of belonging to a group and positive youth behaviours. According to Weiss et al (2005) participation should be understood as a three-tier construct including attendance, enrolment and engagement. All these facets of participation are crucial for developing youth competencies. Overall reach (attendance and enrolment), however, has received more attention in the literature because it is considered the most important measure of participation (Mahoney et al, 2007; Weiss et al, 2005). Organisations implementing these programmes often concern themselves with enrolment and average attendance of participants, however, it is argued that a focus on these two without engagement does not give a true reflection of participation.

Although all three components are important tenets of participation, participant engagement can be considered as the key ingredient for programme success. According to Weiss et al (2005) the extent to which programme participants can significantly benefit from PYD programmes rests on active engagement. Therefore, it is essential for PYD implementing organisations like DFF to pay close attention to issues of engagement in addition to enrolment and attendance. One of the key implications for practice in this regard is to ensure that programme participants meaningfully engage with programme activities. Programme quality has been considered to be one of the ways to effectively improve engagement levels of participants. The most important features of programme quality include quality relationships with staff and use of a variety of challenging and engaging activities (Mahoney et al, 2007; Weiss et al, 2005). Both have been discussed extensively in previous sections.

## **Implementation Evaluation**

### **Service utilisation and programme plan.**

Overall, the Dream Toolkit Programme was implemented with relatively low fidelity. Implementation fidelity is concerned with the extent to which a programme is implemented as was intended (Mihalic, 2002; Carroll et al., 2007). First, the programme was meant to be implemented in three high schools but not all of them benefitted significantly from the programme. Salt River High School was dropped from the programme and therefore could not be serviced. Programme management staff explained that the school had to be dropped from the programme because learners were behind schedule in terms of the school life orientation curriculum. As a result, the life orientation teacher at the school had to cancel the agreement they had with DFF.

On the other hand, Maitland High School was included but the programme started late which meant that only two introductory sessions were delivered. As was the case with the other school, reasons for these shortcomings were beyond the control of DFF. Given that the programme had previously been implemented at Maitland High School as an afterschool programme, DFF needed approval to implement the Dream Toolkit programme during formal school hours and this was

only granted in September 2017. According to their programme plan implementation was scheduled to commence in May.

Finally, Phoenix High School got a substantial number of sessions compared to the other two schools. The implementation evaluation was based on what transpired at this school. Despite having received the most sessions learners did not receive the full version of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Learners only completed five out of eleven sessions. This means that learners did not cover all the topics of the programme and this has implications for programme outcomes. Given that the outcomes outlined in the theory evaluation were largely based on learners covering the Dream Toolkit in its entirety, failure to complete the full programme may reduce the likelihood of achieving intended outcomes.

According to Nation et al (2003) sufficient dosage is one of the key principles of effective programmes and interventions that do not provide a sufficient dose of programme services presumably cannot successfully influence outcomes. Dosage refers to the extent to which participants have been exposed to enough of the programme for it to have an effect. These scholars identify session length, number of sessions, spacing of sessions and the duration of the programme as key aspects of dosage. Therefore, it is important for DFF to ensure that learners receive the full programme in order to realise the positive youth development outcomes.

Despite having implemented the programme in all five classes the results show that the classes were served differently. First, there were large disparities in the dosage (number of sessions) between the classes. The lowest number of sessions was 13 while the highest was 23. When the evaluator questioned programme management staff about this they explained that they had to continuously adapt the number of sessions to a) suit the needs of low performing classes and b) make up for sessions where facilitators were not able to complete toolkit content within the specified time. DFF should interrogate the reasoning behind the disparities more in depth and based on the findings of their investigation devise a strategy to prevent the same issue from occurring again.

Finally, while it was clear that the programme was implemented with limited fidelity, research does demonstrate that expecting high implementation fidelity for

new programmes is unrealistic. According to Rossi et al (2004) it takes time for a programme to be fully implemented as intended. Very few new programmes have obtained fidelity levels greater than 80% (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Sometimes programmes may be forced to deviate from the original plan due to unforeseen challenges. As was shown in the above sections, some of the deviations to the original plan of the Dream Toolkit Programme were beyond the control of programme management staff. For example, delays in start dates for some programme sites and the continual postponement of some sessions to make room for other school programmes. The achievement of a high level of implementation fidelity under such circumstances becomes difficult. Nevertheless, such changes may affect programme success and should be taken seriously as poor implementation of the programme plan can contribute to poor programme outcomes (DuFrene et al., 2005). Therefore, the evaluator recommends that programme management staff consider starting the programme during the first term of school as this could assist them to continue to deliver the sessions as planned if started early.

### **Service delivery.**

Overall, learners were satisfied with the programme content and the manner in which it was delivered. Results demonstrate that the majority of learners found the Dream Toolkit topics to be of importance to them. The topics that had been covered at the time of the evaluation were centred on identity formation, purpose mapping and goal setting. Evidence in literature demonstrates that these make up key components of PYD programme activities and may have significant personal and interpersonal benefits for programme participants (Hansen et al, 2003; Kahne et al, 2001; Napolitano et al, 2011).

Although programme participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the programme, findings from Dream Toolkit programme facilitators indicate that they felt that the training did not adequately prepare them to deliver the Dream Toolkit to learners. The importance of facilitator training was discussed extensively as part of implementation considerations and several researchers emphasise that it is an important ingredient for successful implementation. Facilitators need to be well equipped with all the requisite skills they need to feel competent enough to deliver

the programme. Durlak and DuPre (2008) propound that programme implementers who feel confident in their competency to deliver the programme and have the requisite skills are more likely to implement the programme at higher levels of fidelity and dosage. In light of these arguments it is clear that facilitator training may influence the extent to which the Dream Toolkit Programme can be implemented with high fidelity.

In this regard the evaluator also recommends that DFF provides adequate support to its programme facilitators. Support strategies may include providing adequate training, detailed training manuals, and on-going supervision. Durlak and DuPre (2008) emphasise that such support strategies prepare programme staff for their new tasks and enhance their motivation and self-efficacy.

In addition, DFF should also put feedback mechanisms in place to collect information on facilitator experiences as they implement the programme. According to Carroll et al (2007) there is evidence that shows that feedback systems help to increase the likelihood of higher levels of implementation fidelity. Collecting feedback data may assist programme management staff to immediately identify implementation problems and provide timely solutions.

### **Short-term Outcome Evaluation**

The short-term outcome evaluation sought to assess the extent to which the three short-term outcomes of interest were present amongst the programme participants. Short-term outcomes included self-esteem, career decidedness, and student engagement. Given that the evaluation was done when participants had received some of the programme services the evaluation was more concerned with determining the outcome levels. Rossi et al (2004) defines outcome level as the status of an outcome at some point in time. Outcome levels simply tell us whether or not an outcome variable is present without making any causal inferences or attributing change to programme efforts.

Findings from the short-term outcome evaluation indicate that self-esteem and student engagement outcome levels were high for the majority of programme participants. Career decidedness scores were slightly lower than the midpoint of 3 of

the 5 Likert scale. Although we cannot confidently link these results to the Dream Toolkit Programme, the evaluator notes that topics that were largely associated with career development had not yet been covered. This includes topics on developing dream or vision boards and action plans detailing the processes that learners needed to go through in order for them to realise their dreams. Therefore, it is important for the programme to ensure that programme participants receive the full programme.

## **Recommendations**

Given that the purpose of this evaluation was to provide information that could be used for improvement of the Dream Toolkit Programme this next section provides recommendations that could be used to improve programme performance. The recommendations are based on findings from all the three evaluation scopes and some have already been discussed in the previous section. Below the key recommendations suggested by the evaluator are highlighted:

- The evaluator recommends that it is important for DFF to assess the risk profiles of programme participants at enrolment. Different risk profiles have been seen to influence the extent to which young people interact with the programme as well as programme staff. Therefore, risk assessment would ensure that programme managers determine whether or not programme facilitators require additional support to deal with youths with higher risk levels.
- The evaluator also suggests that DFF documents data on participant demographic characteristics such as age, gender and race. These characteristics have been seen to influence the way programme participant relate with the programmes. Therefore, it is important for programme staff to collect adequate data on programme participants. Current programme records only indicate participant names and number of sessions attended.
- DFF should put in place support strategies for its programme facilitators to ensure that they deliver the programme effectively. Some of these strategies include: providing adequate training, ensuring access to detailed training manuals, and ongoing supervision or monitoring.

- DFF should also put in place an effective monitoring and feedback system for facilitators. This system would ensure that DFF management provide timely assessments and solutions of challenges faced by facilitators during implementation.
- DFF should also put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation system for continual collection of programme performance data. This would include monitoring programme plan implementation and continuous monitoring of programme participation (programme attendance and engagement) given their importance in programme success.
- The evaluator also recommends building and sustaining quality relationships between programme facilitators and learners. This is important because evidence has been cited in this evaluation that proves that quality relationships can influence programme outcomes.
- Finally, the evaluator recommends that DFF puts in place measures for continual outcome monitoring. This would require that they a) identify and define indicators for each of the expected outcomes, and b) routinely collect data on those indicators. Information collected over time can be used to make decisions on how they can deliver the Dream Toolkit sessions better and ultimately improve the programme. Durlak (1998) suggests that implementation organisations should have designated staff whose primary responsibility is planning and monitoring programme implementation.

### **Contribution to knowledge**

This evaluation contributes to limited literature on implementation and programme theory driven evaluations in the PYD context. While there is extensive evaluation literature on PYD programmes, very few studies focused on assessing programme implementation and programme design issues as most evaluations are outcome and impact level evaluations.

In addition, there is limited research on PYD programmes in the African context including South Africa. In South Africa, several evaluations have been conducted for programmes adopting the traditional prevention approach and less

has been done on PYD programmes. Therefore, this evaluation sought to contribute to PYD literature in the African context.

Given that this was the first evaluation for the Dream Toolkit Programme, this evaluation also provides new knowledge to DFF. It is hoped that the results of the evaluation will provide information that will contribute to programme performance improvement and also facilitate organisational learning.

### **Limitations**

In terms of the theory evaluation the limitation is that because of a lack of South African publications on PYD programmes, the plausibility assessment was based on mainly USA and Europe research. Although this can be considered a limitation, the reasons behind the formulation of such programmes including the population they seek to serve are similar. Most of these programmes serve at-risk youth with the aim of helping them transition successfully into adult life. Given that the goals and target population of the Dream Toolkit Programme were found to be similar to those of reviewed programmes, the programme theories could be compared with evidence from PYD programmes based in the USA and Europe.

Another limitation of the theory evaluation has to do with the use of prior research to determine the plausibility of the programme theory of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Given that most youth programmes are somewhat distinct, use different terminologies and may be operating in different contexts, it was difficult to find programmes that mirrored the Dream Toolkit programme in its entirety. Deane and Harre (2014) also encountered similar challenges when conducting a theory driven evaluation of a youth programme in New Zealand. They argued that overlapping concepts and slight differences in names made it difficult to directly verify the programme theory with existing literature. Despite these challenges, the evaluator was able to do the plausibility assessment by focusing on each component of the Dream Toolkit Programme and comparing it to relevant literature. Rossi et al (2004) also posits that breaking down the theory into component parts and linkages may help to overcome such limitations.

Finally, the evaluation design employed for the short-term outcome evaluation had its own limitations. Given that no pre-test was done to measure the outcomes of interest the results of the evaluation cannot be used to draw any causal assumptions. It should be noted, however, that the evaluator had initially wanted to do a pre-test but continued changes to the programme start dates made it difficult to do so. The evaluator was then informed at a much later stage that the programme had started. Therefore, results from the short-term outcome evaluation must be interpreted in light of these design limitations. This means that no inferences can be made pertaining to outcomes being a result of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Despite this limitation, Rossi et al (2004) postulates that the results can be of some value to programme management as a way of monitoring programme performance.

### **Conclusion**

This evaluation concluded the positive youth development approach provides a useful framework for achievement of personal and interpersonal development outcomes needed for young people to lead success and purpose driven lives. The theory underlying the Dream Toolkit Programme was found to be plausible and consistent with PYD literature. This indicates that the Dream Toolkit Programme has an increased likelihood of achieving its expected outcomes. Evidence in literature, however, demonstrates that having a sound logic alone is not sufficient for the success of PYD programmes. The evaluation demonstrated that it is also essential for PYD programme implementers to pay attention to programme quality when implementing PYD programmes. Key programme quality features included: the quality programme staff, quality of adult- youth relationships, and high-quality programme activities. High levels of participant attendance and engagement with programme activities were also seen as key ingredients for achievement of positive outcomes. In this regard, it was concluded that positive youth development occurs when youth participate in several high-quality activities in the presence caring and competent programme staff.

In terms of the implementation, the research shows that higher levels of implementation fidelity are associated with programme success. Service utilisation and programme plan results indicated that the Dream Toolkit Programme was

implemented with limited fidelity. In addition, programme facilitators felt that they had not been adequately prepared to deliver the programme. Despite these shortcomings in implementation, programme participants indicated high levels of satisfaction with the Dream Toolkit content and the manner in which it was delivered. The evaluator concludes that it is important for programme staff to improve on programme plan management to improve implementation fidelity.

The short-term outcome evaluation focused on self-esteem, student engagement and career decidedness variables. The results indicated that all three outcomes were present amongst programme participants. Learners reported higher outcome levels for self-esteem and student engagement than career decidedness. These results, however, cannot be used to infer any causal assumptions between the programme and outcomes. Despite this limitation, programme management can utilise these findings to inform and guide programme improvement efforts.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Programme Theory Evaluation Questions

1. What is the overall goal of the Dream Toolkit Programme?
2. Who is the target population?
3. What are the short-term and medium-term goals of the Dream Toolkit Programme?
4. What are you doing to achieve these outcomes? What are the activities of the Dream Toolkit Programme?
5. What are the outputs of these activities?
6. What are the available resources to ensure these activities are carried out as intended in order to achieve programme goals?
7. What are the underlying assumptions of the Dream Toolkit Programme? (i.e. the causal linkages)
  - Which activities of the Dream Toolkit Programme lead to which outputs logically?
  - Which outputs lead to which short-term outcomes?
  - Outline which short-term outcomes lead to the medium-term outcomes logically?
  - Do the short and medium-term outcomes lead to the long-term outcomes logically?

## Appendix B: Participant Questionnaire



Dear Student,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your perceptions of the Dream Toolkit Programme. Information obtained from this research will be used to improve the programme.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire and all responses will be anonymous to protect your identity.

The questionnaire should take you about 20 minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking part in the study.

## SECTION A

### 1. Student Rating of the Dream Toolkit Training Topics

On a scale of 1-5 please indicate your level of importance placed on each topic of the Toolkit.

| No. | Topic  | Not at all important | Less Important | Not Sure | Important | Very Important |
|-----|--|----------------------|----------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | What is a Dream                                |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 2.  | The Bucket List and Bucket List in Perspective |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 3.  | My Identity                                    |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 4.  | This is essential to who I am                  |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 5.  | This is who I am                               |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 6.  | Presentation of Dream Boards                   |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 7.  | Let's put our dreams into action               |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 8.  | Plan the Action                                |                      |                |          |           |                |
| 9.  | Community Curtains                             |                      |                |          |           |                |

### 2. Overall Satisfaction with Dream Toolkit Training Sessions

On a scale of 1-5 please tick the most suitable response to demonstrate your overall satisfaction with the Dream toolkit sessions.

| No. | Item  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 10. | I enjoyed the Dream Toolkit Sessions                                      |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 11. | Through the programme I was able to identify my dreams                    |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 12. | The class presentations helped me to complete the dream toolkit tasks     |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 13. | The videos shown during sessions enhanced my understanding of the topics. |                   |          |          |       |                |

**SECTION B****3. Rating of Programme Facilitators (Adapted from Ready Tool, Klein et al, 2006)**

*Please think about your relationship with the programme facilitator and your experience being coached through the sessions and rate your level of agreement with the following statements.*

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Participant views of programme facilitators</b>                             | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Not sure</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 14.        | Facilitators knew what they were talking about                                 |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 15.        | Facilitators were willing to respond to questions during the training sessions |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 16.        | Facilitators made the training sessions interactive                            |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 17.        | Facilitators treated all learners fairly                                       |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 18.        | Facilitators expected me to try my best  |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 19.        | I would talk to programme facilitators about my problems                       |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 20.        | Facilitators respected my opinions   |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |
| 21.        | Facilitators made me feel important  |                       |              |                 |                 |                          |

**SECTION C: Positive Youth Development Outcomes**

**4. Self-Esteem (Adapted from Owens, 1994)**

*Please read the following statements carefully and tick your most appropriate response.*

| No. | Self- Esteem   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 22. | I feel that I am a person of worth.                  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 23. | I feel that I have a number of good qualities.       |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 24. | I am able to do things as well as most other people. |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 25. | I have a positive attitude toward myself.            |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 26. | I feel I do not have much to be proud of.            |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 27. | Sometimes I think I am no good at all.               |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 28. | I feel that I can't do anything right                |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 29. | I feel that my life is not very useful.              |                   |          |          |       |                |

**5. Student Engagement in Class (Shui-fong, 2014)**

*How much do you agree that the following statements accurately describe your learning experience in class?*

| No. | Student Engagement in class  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 30. | I try hard to do well in school  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 31. | When I'm in class, I participate in class activities.  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 32. | I pay attention in class.  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 33. | When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working.  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 34. | When I'm in class, my mind wanders   |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 35. | When I run into a difficult homework problem, I keep working at it until I think I've solved it. |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 36. | I take an active role in extra-curricular activities in my school.                               |                   |          |          |       |                |

## 6. Career Decidedness (Crites, 1978)

The following statements are about choosing the kind of career that you will probably do when you finish school. Read each statement and tick the most appropriate response.

| No. | Career Decidedness   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 37. | There is no point in deciding on a job when the future is so uncertain.            |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 38. | I know very little about the requirements of jobs.                                 |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 39. | I'm not very concerned about my future occupation.                                 |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 40. | I am having difficulty in preparing myself for the work that I want to do.         |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 41. | I keep changing my occupational choice.  |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 42. | I don't know what subjects I should take in school.                                |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 43. | I can't understand how some people can be so certain about what they want to do.   |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 44. | I don't know whether my occupational plans are realistic.                          |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 45. | I often daydream about what I want to be, but I have not chosen an occupation yet. |                   |          |          |       |                |
| 46. | I'm not going to worry about choosing an occupation until I am out of school.      |                   |          |          |       |                |

47. Could you provide some general feedback that you think would be important for us to know?

## SECTION D: Demographic Information (for descriptive purposes)

I. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

II. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

III. Gender:            F             M             Prefer not to say

IV. Race             White             African             Asian             Indian             Coloured             Prefer not to say

## Appendix C: Facilitator Interview Schedule



### SECTION A

#### **Basic Information**

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*Respondent Code*

*Site where you facilitate*

*Number of sessions you have facilitated*

---

### SECTION B ACTUAL SESSIONS

1. Were you able to deliver all the intended eleven sessions of the Dream Toolkit Programme?
  - 1b. If not, what hindered the successful completion of the intended services?
2. Were there any changes made to the programme activities during implementation?
3. Were the activities delivered in the same sequence as outlined in the facilitator's guide?
4. In your opinion, what possible changes would have led to more effective delivery of the dream toolkit sessions?

### SECTION C TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

5. Tell me a little bit about the training that you received to be a Dream Toolkit facilitator?
6. What would you say about the quality of the training?
  - a. When was the training?
  - b. How long was it?
  - c. Who facilitated the training for you?
7. Based on the training that you received do you think that you were adequately prepared in order to now facilitate the sessions?
8. Thinking back to your experience of facilitating the Dream Toolkit sessions, do you think the facilitator training adequately prepared you for that?

9. When you had the training, were the goals and objectives of the Dream Toolkit covered in detail?
10. Would you like to give any additional feedback about the facilitator training?
11. Would you like to give any additional feedback about the Dream Toolkit programme?

## Appendix D: Letter of Agreement (DFF, UCT & Evaluator)

### UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



#### School of Management Studies

University of Cape Town, Private Bag,  
Rondebosch 7701  
Telephone: +27 21 650-5218  
Fax: +27 21 689-7570  
8 February 2016

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Thank you very much for your willingness to enable one of our Master's students to work with a programme from your organization. I appreciate your contribution to the education of our students.

The student will need programme information from you and we request that you or a designated person meet with them regularly to provide access to this information. Your cooperation in this regard will ensure that the student meets deadlines and provides you with a high quality evaluation. In order to keep track of the student's interactions with your organization, we request that you copy the supervisor on all correspondence to the student.

Please note that our students are required to work within the ethical framework of the Faculty of Commerce when collecting information from programme documents or programme recipients. This framework deals with anonymity of data sources, sensitivity when requesting information from people and responsible reporting of results.

We also undertake and ensure you that the student will display professional behaviour at all times while working in your organization or on your programme. At the end of the process, you will receive a useful report which will enable you to make informed decisions regarding your programme.

In order to comply with the rules of the Faculty of Commerce, we request you to sign below to indicate that the student will have access to programme data and records and where applicable, to programme recipients.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Adilah Boodhoo'.

ADILAH BOODHOO  
ACTING CONVENER: MPHIL PROGRAMME EVALUATION

#### AGREEMENT TO ACCESS PROGRAMME RECORDS AND/OR RECIPIENTS:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Adilah Boodhoo'.  
.....  
AUTHORISED PERSON

DREAM FACTORY FOUNDATION 14/02/17  
.....  
ORGANISATION DATE

## Appendix E: Ethics Clearance



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**  
 Igniting Knowledge and Opportunity



### Ethics Clearance

Ethics Approval Request for the Study entitled:

Signed by:

|  | Full name and signature | Date                       |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Principal Researcher/Student:<br><br>Brilliant Bhebe | <br><br>Brilliant Bhebe | 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 |

This application is approved by:

|                |                      |                            |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Supervisor     | <br><br>Carren Field | 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 |
| Co- Supervisor |                      |                            |

**This application has been approved 17 July 2017**

## Appendix F: Consent Letter for Programme Theory Discussion



Dear Interviewee

My name is Brilliant Bhebe and I am postgraduate student from the University of Cape Town. I am conducting a formative evaluation for one of your programmes, the Dream Toolkit Programme. I would like to invite you to participate in this research study because of your position as a key staff member in the Organisation.

You will be required to answer a couple of questions about the programme theory of Dream Toolkit Programme. If you consent to participate in this study, please sign the consent section of this letter. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee.

The following interview will require approximately 40 minutes of your time. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. I assure you that all the information obtained from the research will remain confidential.

The data collected will provide useful evaluative information regarding the theory assessment of the Dream Toolkit Programme. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me on the e-mail address provided below.

Sincerely,  
Brilliant Bhebe ([brilliant.bhebhe@gmail.com](mailto:brilliant.bhebhe@gmail.com))

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the course convener, Associate Professor Sarah Chapman ([s.kaschula@gmail.com](mailto:s.kaschula@gmail.com)).

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I am a willing participant for this research project and had the opportunity to ask any questions

|                              |               |                    |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| -----<br>Name of Participant | -----<br>Date | -----<br>Signature |
| -----<br>Name of Participant | -----<br>Date | -----<br>Signature |

## Appendix G: Consent Letter for Interviews with Programme Facilitators



Dear Participant

My name is Brilliant Bhebe and I am postgraduate student from the University of Cape Town. I am conducting a formative evaluation for the Dream Toolkit Programme. I would like to invite you to participate in this research study because of your position as a facilitator of the Dream Toolkit.

You will be required to answer a couple of questions put forward to you. The questions are based on your

If you consent to participate in this study, please sign the consent section of this letter. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

This research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee.

The interview will require approximately 40 minutes of your time. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk.

The interview will be recorded in order to enable the interviews to be transcribed. I assure you that all the information obtained from the research will remain confidential.

The data collected will provide useful evaluative information regarding the implementation of the Dream Toolkit Programme. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me on the e-mail address provided below.

Sincerely,

Brilliant Bhebe ([brilliant.bhebhe@gmail.com](mailto:brilliant.bhebhe@gmail.com))

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the course convener, Associate Professor Sarah Chapman ([s.kaschula@gmail.com](mailto:s.kaschula@gmail.com)).

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I am a willing participant for this research project and have had the opportunity to ask any questions.

|                     |       |           |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____               | _____ | _____     |
| Name of Participant | Date  | Signature |
| _____               | _____ | _____     |
| Name of Researcher  | Date  | Signature |

## Appendix H: Frequency Statistics for Student Dream Toolkit Topic Ratings

Table H1

Frequency statistics for the topic ratings of “What is a dream?”

| <i>Response</i>      | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Cumulative Percentage</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Not at all important | 2                | 1.7               | 1.7                          |
| Less important       | 6                | 5.0               | 6.7                          |
| Not sure             | 28               | 23.5              | 30.3                         |
| Important            | 83               | 69.7              | 100                          |
| Total                | 119              |                   |                              |

Table H2

Frequency statistics of the ‘My identity’ topic

| <i>Response</i>      | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Cumulative Percentage</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Not at all important | 1                | .8                | .8                           |
| Less important       | 10               | 7.6               | 8.5                          |
| Not sure             | 25               | 21.2              | 29.7                         |
| Important            | 83               | 70.3              | 100                          |
| Total                | 119              |                   |                              |

Table H3

Frequency tables for “This is essential to me” topic

| <i>Response</i>      | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Cumulative Percentage</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Not at all important | 5                | 4.2               | 4.2                          |
| Less important       | 5                | 4.2               | 8.4                          |
| Not sure             | 53               | 44.5              | 52.9                         |
| Important            | 56               | 47.1              | 100                          |
| Total                | 119              |                   |                              |

Table H4

Frequency tables for “The bucket-list” topic

| <i>Response</i>      | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Cumulative Percentage</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Not at all important | 5                | 4.2               | 4.2                          |
| Less important       | 15               | 12.6              | 16.8                         |
| Not sure             | 35               | 29.4              | 46.2                         |
| Important            | 43               | 36.1              | 84.4                         |
| Very important       | 21               | 17.6              | 100                          |
| Total                | 119              |                   |                              |

## Appendix I: Frequency Statistics for Overall Satisfaction with the Dream Toolkit Responses

Table I1

*Frequency table for responses to the statement “I enjoyed the dream toolkit sessions”*

| <b>Response</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1                | .8                | .8                           |
| Disagree          | 2                | 1.7               | 2.5                          |
| Not sure          | 19               | 16.0              | 18.5                         |
| Agree             | 67               | 56.3              | 74.8                         |
| Strongly agree    | 30               | 25.2              | 100                          |
| Total             | 119              |                   |                              |

Table I2

*Frequency table for responses to the statement “Through the programme I was able to identify my dreams”*

| <b>Response</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1                | .8                | .8                           |
| Disagree          | 1                | .8                | 1.6                          |
| Not sure          | 13               | 10.9              | 12.5                         |
| Agree             | 43               | 36.1              | 48.6                         |
| Strongly agree    | 61               | 51.4              | 100                          |
| Total             | 119              |                   |                              |

Table I3

*Frequency table for responses to the statement “The videos shown during sessions enhanced my understanding of the topics”*

| <b>Response</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 4                | 3.4               | 3.4                          |
| Disagree          | 7                | 5.9               | 9.2                          |
| Not sure          | 23               | 19.3              | 28.6                         |
| Agree             | 54               | 45.4              | 73.9                         |
| Strongly agree    | 31               | 26.1              | 100                          |
| Total             | 119              |                   |                              |

## Appendix J Frequency statistics of responses for learner perception of facilitators

Table J1

*Frequency table for responses to the statement “Facilitators knew what they were talking about.”*

| <b>Response</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 5                | 4.2               | 5.0                          |
| Disagree          | 4                | 3.4               | 10.9                         |
| Not sure          | 12               | 10.1              | 30.3                         |
| Agree             | 66               | 55.5              | 80.7                         |
| Strongly agree    | 32               | 26.9              | 100                          |
| Total             | 119              | 100               |                              |

Table J2

*Frequency table for responses to the statement “Facilitators made the training sessions interactive”.*

| <b>Response</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 6                | 5.0               | 5.0                          |
| Disagree          | 7                | 5.9               | 10.9                         |
| Not sure          | 23               | 19.3              | 30.3                         |
| Agree             | 60               | 50.4              | 80.7                         |
| Strongly agree    | 23               | 19.3              | 100                          |
| Total             | 119              | 100               |                              |

Table J3

*Frequency table for responses to the statement “I would talk to programme facilitators about problems”.*

| <b>Response</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | 9                | 7.6               | 7.6                          |
| Disagree          | 21               | 17.6              | 25.2                         |
| Not sure          | 37               | 31.1              | 56.3                         |
| Agree             | 35               | 29.4              | 85.7                         |
| Strongly agree    | 17               | 14.3              | 100                          |
| Total             | 119              | 100               |                              |

