Quality elements of after-school programmes: A case study of two programmes in the Western Cape province of South Africa

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The qualitative case study reported on here was commissioned and funded by the Western Cape Government (WCG) in partnership with the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) to inquire into attributes of well performing after-school programmes (ASPs) within the Western Cape province[i] of South Africa. The research question of the study was: What quality elements of ASPs can be identified in 2 purposefully selected ASPs in the Western Cape province? In the multiple (double) case study we used interviews and archival data from the 2 ASPs. Using Mott's Theory of Change (ToC) framework and Socio-Cultural Learning (SCL) theory as analytical lenses, we found that adaptability, strong management, staff commitment, involvement of current and former learners, family involvement, multi-stakeholder partnerships, continuous programme funding, and monitoring and evaluation were central to the success of the ASPs. Upscaling and replication efforts in the province and similar contexts should seriously consider embedding these quality elements in their logic models.

Keywords: after-school programme; programme adaptability; quality elements; socio-cultural learning; theory of change

Introduction
Research on the effects of ASPs on the most critical variable of learning outcomes has not yielded consistent results (Grogan, Henrich & Malikina, 2014; Honig & McDonald, 2005; Pensiero & Green, 2017). On the one hand, positive results have ranged from claims of improved learning outcomes (e.g. improved problem-solving skills), to deepening learners' interest in school (e.g. improved attendance), to a reduction in achievement gaps between historically disadvantaged and advantaged learners (e.g. increased higher education admission rates for learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds) (Bevan, Bell, Stevens & Razfar, 2012; Granger, 2010; Grogan et al., 2014; McLean & Van der Berg, 2016). On the other hand, some studies question the positive effect of after-school programmes (Medlock, 2014; Pensiero & Green, 2017). Through its second provincial strategic goal (PSG), the WCG was convinced that their raft of out-of-school-time activities code-named After-School Game Changer (ASGC) could improve educational opportunities for the youth by narrowing the achievement gap so that more learners can gain access to higher education that can give them a competitive advantage to succeed in a deepening youth unemployment crisis context like South Africa (WCG, 2014). The goal of this research project was to investigate some core characteristics of exemplary ASPs, with a view of sharing models (or designs) of best practice that could be replicated or up-scaled to benefit a greater number of youth within the province in particular and provide insights for similar contexts elsewhere.

This research project was the culmination of a partnership between the WCG and one of the four state universities that constitute the CHEC in the province. As highlighted by Ndlovu (2011), to succeed, university-community partnerships ought to be mutually beneficial in the pursuit of shared (social justice) goals. To that end, the research drew on each partner's commitment to enhancing the youth's educational outcomes by giving them an extra chair to stand on (Ndlovu, 2011).

The WCG's terms of reference included that the research ought to: "… build our (the WCG's) knowledge and understandings of good practice in supporting youth by means of after-school programmes or extended education before, in and after their transition from school" (WCG & CHEC, 2018:2).

ASPs can play a crucial role in bridging the achievement gap between learners in poorly resourced schools (Medlock, 2014; Pensiero & Green, 2017; Thompson-Caruthers, 2012). In the South African context, such schools would be the non- or low-fee paying quintile 1 to 3 schools. ASPs have been a prominent part of Western education systems, most notably the United States of America (USA), for so-called minority learners (Thompson-Caruthers, 2012). Within the South African context, ASPs remain largely undocumented and outside the scope of the formal education system.[ii] This is the knowledge gap that we attempted to fill with this study.

The research problem as distilled from the WCG's call and limited existing literature was that the quality elements of ASPs have not been adequately researched, described and documented to inform replication and upscaling, particularly in a developing country context like South Africa.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study was: What quality elements of ASPs can be identified in two purposively selected academically oriented ASPs in the Western Cape province of South Africa? This prompted the following research sub-questions:

• How are quality elements conceptualised in the two selected ASPs?
• How are the quality elements characterised and operationalised?

The significance of the study lies, firstly, in its contribution to robust evidence of the efficacy of extended/supplementary/after-school education of learners as a concept. It also provides contextual evidence for a growing trend of ASPs as part of out-of-school-time education programming (CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice, 2005; Hanlon, Simon, O'Grady, Carswell & Callaman, 2009; Maynard, Kremer, Polanin, Vaughn & Sarteschi, 2015; Moodie, Carter, Swinburn & Haby, 2010; Vadeboncoeur, 2006). Territoriality or context is an important factor to consider in research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), especially in programmes that touch on personal lives (Tomoaia-Cotisel, Scammon, Waitzman, Cronholm, Halladay, Driscoll, Solberg, Hsu, Tai-Seale, Hiratsuka, Shih, Fetters, Wise, Alexander, Hauser, McMullen, Scholle, Tirodkar, Schmidt, Donahue, Parchman & Stange, 2013) such as ASPs do. Secondly, as noted previously, the project aligned with the WCG's Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2019 (PSG 2) of improving the educational outcomes and opportunities for youth development in the province (WCG, 2014). Some quantitative ASP impact evaluations have been conducted in the past (e.g. McLean & Van der Berg, 2016; Spaull, Burger, Burger, Van der Berg, Van Wyk & Dzivakwi, 2012). This qualitative research seeks to spotlight key processes and attributes needed to make an ASP effective. We begin our inquiry with a literature review.

Literature Review
Definition of an after-school programme
We adopted Medlock's (2014) definition of ASPs as programmes available for learners with the aim, among other things, to promote positive academic, emotional, and social development. The author also adds that a large majority of these programmes are held outside of the normal school day, particularly during the hours after school.

The WCG (2014) interprets ASPs to be programming that involves learners registered in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) system, is run after the end of the WCED teaching day (excluding break-time programmes and holiday activities), conducted on a regular (once or twice a week for at least 1 hour) and consistent (over a period of 1 year) basis. This is a more succinct (local) definition based on time (duration and frequency), structure and multi-stakeholder involvement.

Rationale for a sociocultural learning theory lens
Research on the effect of ASPs on learners' social and academic outcomes has been mixed (Grogan et al., 2014; Honig & McDonald, 2005). While some studies have shown no effect, others have shown small but significant effects (Grogan et al., 2014). Others have shown that the quality and intensity of such programmes accounts, at least in part, for the social class gap in children's academic achievement (Pensiero & Green, 2017).

Honig and McDonald (2005), however, argue that the polemics on the effect of ASPs on learner outcomes is not a function of their effectiveness, but weak conceptualisations of the relationship between after-school programming and learning. Honig and McDonald (2005) propose SCL theory as a more suitable lens for analysing the critical variables within ASP structures with a bearing on learners' learning outcomes. This shifts the focus from looking for causal relationships between ASP interventions and learner outcomes to processes and contexts that enable change. In other words, Honig and McDonald (2005) provide a SCL-oriented framework for looking into why and how effective ASPs cause change. This is a power of qualitative research and ties in well with the research problem pursued in this study where the focus is on ASP quality elements or salient features of best practice.

Socio-cultural learning framework
Socio-cultural learning (SCL) theory stems from the seminal work of Vygotsky (1978) who postulates that learning awakens a range of internal developmental processes, which are able to function when children interact significantly with their environment and in cooperation with peers. This position suggests (as does Haenen, Schrijnemakers & Stufkens, 2003; Honig & McDonald, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978) that there are environments or contexts that foster, support or encourage learning. In this study we view learning as the individual learner's construction of knowledge and development of skills in a setting or context. Socio-cultural leaning (SCL) theory has socio-constructivist underpinnings in that it assumes knowledge to be socially constructed. In Vygotskian thinking, the SCL theory assumes that consciousness is a derivative of social processes and structures that are accessed through interaction with others (Haenen et al., 2003; Scott & Palincsar, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). The privileging of processes and conditions that foster development makes SCL theory relevant to this ASP study. In this regard, Honig and McDonald (2005) identify four overlapping and intertwining SCL features of ASPs elaborated below.

Social interaction
A Vygotskian sociocultural perspective posits that individual development and learning have social origins (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). That is, the learner's mental development occurs at first at the social (intermental) stage and then at the psychological (intramental) stage (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). In other words, it is through participating in a learning community or engagement in social interactions that the learner acquires knowledge (Honig & McDonald, 2005:6; Wenger, 1998). Hence, ASPs that foster learning take deliberate steps towards creating environments of social interaction.

Genuine participation
Participation is a key element of most ASPs (CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice, 2005). However, under SCL the emphasis is not on mere attendance or interaction with more knowledgeable others but also what the learner himself/herself brings to the interaction and how the interaction is shaped by the historical setting (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). This makes participation within the ASP decision-making processes relevant to learners' goals and bestows on them a genuine sense of ownership.

Co-construction of knowledge
In SCL co-construction of knowledge involves the joint creation of knowledge with the mediation of tools and signs such as language, number systems, mnemonic techniques, etc. (Scott & Palincsar, 2013:2). This feature focuses on activities that allow learners in ASPs to determine their own curriculum, to define what they are required to learn. Knowledge thus, is viewed as negotiated, consensual and collaboratively constructed among the learners and the ASP staff. This resonates with Honig and McDonald's (2005) view of learners and facilitators as situated within and between their own understandings and experiences. Bransford, Brown and Cocking (1999) concur that from an SCL perspective learning is enhanced when facilitators pay attention to the prior knowledge and beliefs that learners bring to their learning tasks. Prior knowledge and beliefs are, in turn, a (historical) product of learners' socio-cultural milieu.

Theory of change logic framework
The CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice (2005) is an independent trust that invests in education around the world. From its long history in community education initiatives, it has developed an SCL-oriented ToC logic framework for identifying or mapping quality in ASPs. The Foundation acknowledges that effective ASPs combine academic enrichment, cultural, and recreational activities to guide learning and engage learners in (holistic) activities that promote the development of the whole person (CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice, 2005:7).

The Foundation's logic model begins with setting out of programme goals outlining what a programme seeks to accomplish. The goals lend purpose and direction to ASP actions/elements. The programme elements/actions can be broken down into desired short-term and long-term outcomes. The outcomes are measured via appropriate instruments and data sources which inform the strategic and tactical elements, thus forming an operative loop (CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice, 2005).

In tandem with the SCL theory, the ToC logic framework shuns causal inferences between ASP activities and learner outcomes and prefers a focus on ASP processes and activities that foster learning. It identifies nine conditions (for change) that ensure optimal success of a programme, viz:
- Partnerships that promote learning and community involvement
- Strong programme management
- Qualified staff (including volunteers)
- Augmented/blended learning
- An extended or maximised school day
- Attention to safety, health and nutrition
- Participation of parents in the learning process
- Sustainable funding
- Embracing evaluation for continuous programme development and learning (CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice, 2005:7).

The ToC conditions for success align well with SCL's (internal) preconditions for learning (Scott & Palincsar, 2013:2) and provide a simplified analytical framework for this study.

Research Methodology
We adopted a qualitative research approach within the interpretive paradigm and adopted a multiple case study design involving two purposively selected ASPs. We sought answers to the research questions through interviews of key informants (programme coordinators well versed with the ASPs), which we triangulated with document analysis and some archival data. Key informants' narrative accounts gave us humanistic insights into their own lived experiences of the internal workings of their ASPs. Our reality thus primarily consisted of the subjective and situated interpretations of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

IkamvaYouth and Vision Afrika constituted the purposive sample for the case study of ASPs. The first selection criterion was that they were at the top of the WCG's priority list of best practice ASPs. Secondly, their activities coincided with our research interests and expertise. Thirdly, the ASPs had previously undergone and reported impact evaluations. We drew data mainly from open-ended interviews with the coordinators of the two purposively selected ASPs and their archival data.

The interviews, site visits, and archival data were conducted/collected between November 2018 through April of 2019. Two in-depth interviews were conducted and archival data dating from 2011 to 2018 were used to triangulate the findings. The interview with the IkamvaYouth coordinator was done telephonically, while the one with the Vision Afrika coordinator was face to face. Both interview formats enabled the collection of rich, narrative data.

Archived data of the ASPs included published research findings (e.g. McLean & Van der Berg, 2016; Spaull et al., 2012) and data from the respondents' own records such as audited financial statements, annual reports and websites which the ASPs had kept to answer the research questions. Thematic coding was employed to analyse the qualitative data with the aid of Atlas.ti software and Microsoft Excel.
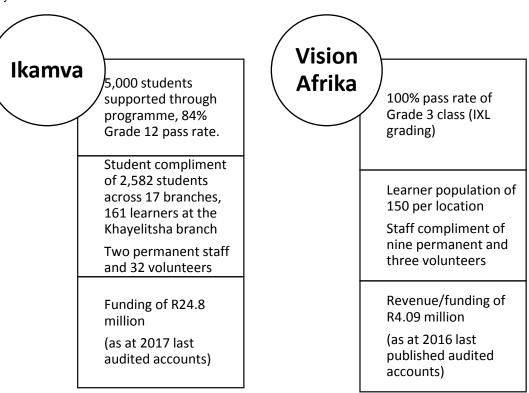
Findings and Discussion
Previously Used Indicators of Effectiveness

Figure 1 Previously used indicators of ASP effectiveness

Indicators in Figure 1 show that the two respondents were vastly different – not only in operating structures but in scale as well as metrics of success. However, the processes that sustain the metrics were the objective of this study. A drill-down of the processes highlighted in the interviews follows.

Key Talking Points: First Level Analysis
Using Atlas.ti software, the most recurring nodes of conversation were identified (as indicated in Figure 2. These nodes became the codes of analysis. Figure 2 shows the top 11 codes/matters that were raised the most by the interviewees, rated by density of appearance in the interview. They give an indication of the topics that populate the interviewees' concerns and/or their programmes. The 11 points became the nodes of analysis in this study.
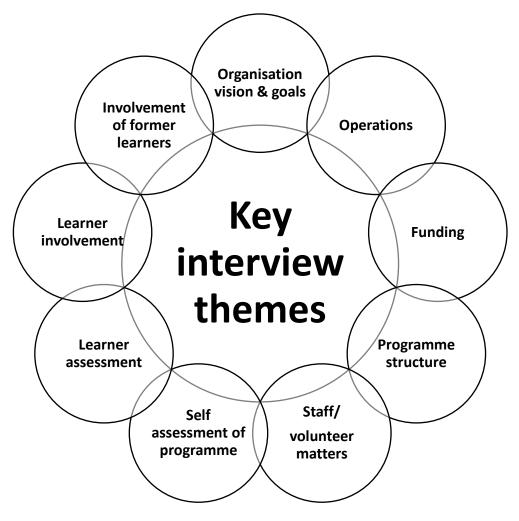
Figure 2 Key themes that emerged from the interviews

The CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice (2005) recommends a close analysis of conditions that promote success rather than a search for causal linkages between learner outcomes and ASP activities. We applied the framework to the two respondent organisations as follows.

ASP Mission Statements, Time Management and Programme Activities

Table 1 shows the defining criteria of IkamvaYouth and Vision Afrika in relation to their mission statements, time management strategies, and the nature of programme activities.

Table 1 Defining criterion of mission statement, time management and programme activities

MISSION STATEMENT, STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE PROGRAMME	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
"To enable disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty and into tertiary education or employment. We have a track record of achieving this mission."	*"With education I can give them the tools to work themselves out of poverty and out of its vicious circle."*

TIME MANAGEMENT: Including scheduling of activities, length of programmes.	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Runs after-school tutorials three times a week. The cohort also decides on the meeting days, some branches also meet on Saturdays. The exact start time is dependent on what time each branch cohort completes the school day. *"IkamvaYouth is a learner driven thing."*	Day begins at 7am and ends at 3pm. The day starts earlier than most schools and ends much later than early childhood development centres or schools *"That is why we don't want to lose any of the teaching time. We cannot lose teaching time because it is that important."*

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES: The core activities that the ASP is involved in.	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Focuses on tutoring/repetition of main class concepts to assist learners to keep up with the national curriculum. Also fosters soft skills which are outside the national curriculum such as financial knowledge, health and personal development. *"We look at what is happening in the classroom, see the gaps then our volunteers (who are the core) step in to tutor at a ratio of 1:5."*	Works within the national school curriculum. Tutoring or repetition is built into the school day. Offers extramural activities and care services such as health care, day care. These are also built into the school day and not demarcated as school or non-school activities. *"We are very privileged because we have incorporated many more facets of school life to enrich and uplift our children."*

From the structuring of IkamvaYouth and Vision Afrika it can be seen that an effective ASP programme can either be fully augmented into formal schooling (like Vision Afrika) or augmented beyond formal schooling (like IkamvaYouth). After-school activities such as repetition or homework support are fully integrated into the day at Vision Afrika. At IkamvaYouth, extra-school support extends beyond the time that learners are in formal schooling in the form of assistance with university admission applications, volunteering opportunities and social training even after participants finish high school. These findings were particularly important in our interrogation of situational and territorial relevance. Both programmes are re-mapping the boundaries of what defines an ASP through continuous innovation and response to their immediate community and/or participants' needs. The chosen activities or what the CS Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice (2005) term "strategic elements" have shifted over time adapting through feedback as in the case of IkamvaYouth or community commensurability as in the case of Vision Afrika. As the IkamvaYouth respondent noted "*we look at what is happening in the classroom*", when they see gaps, they adapt their programme accordingly.

Both organisations showed a great deal of adaptability and willingness to change their structures in order to enrich their programmes. At the time of interview IkamvaYouth was in the process of a new vision roll out. Vision Afrika has made many programmatic changes over the years to counter poor results, for example, cutting out a high school programme in order to focus on areas of speciality in which they have had a positive impact such as early childhood development. It is this observed element of adaptability that has made us challenge the traditional definitions of an ASP based on time or activities (Medlock, 2014). The organisations have evolved over the years to take advantage of "gaps" as the IkamvaYouth respondent noted, in formal school to provide a better social-value offering. To this end, it gives a situated (South African) understanding of an ASP as a programme that augments the offering of formal schooling. The programme can either be fully augmented into formal schooling like Vision Afrika or augmented beyond formal schooling like IkamvaYouth that continues to work with learners beyond Grade 12 (Matric phase). The boundaries of an ASP remain on intent – programming that seeks to offer education and development services not offered in formal schooling.

ASP Operations, Staff Management and Funding Model

Table 2 shows key elements of the IkamvaYouth and Vision Afrika programmes in relation to their operational staff management and training, and funding matters.

Table 2 Strong management, staffing and sustainable funding

STRONG MANAGEMENT: Measured in staff size, staff to learner ratios, and commitment of staff (subjective measure).	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Has a large staff complement (mostly volunteers) allowing for small tutor-learner ratios and greater attention to each learner. *"Our volunteers (who are the core) step in to tutor at a ratio of 1:5."* *"Now about 60% of our volunteers are ex-learners or come from the communities that were once in the programme."*	Has a relatively small class size compared to national/regional averages. *"We have an average of 26 students per class. We do not exceed that number because each child deserves personal attention."* *"Everybody that we bring here has to be someone who can show that they share what we believe and can fit into our system and help us to continue the work that we have started here."*
AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED STAFF: Traced through interviews, learner feedback, planned training.	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Staff complement largely volunteer students from nearby tertiary institutions. IkamvaYouth has a training department that ensures *"quality customised NQF-aligned* (National Qualifications Framework) *training and learning resources as well as supporting and strengthening the delivery of after-school programmes."*	Staff well trained in the key focus areas of the programme: mathematics, English and information technology (IT). *"Every year we get IT training. That is why it is working because we are so involved."*
SUSTAINABLE FUNDING Measured using audited financial results from both organisations e.g. revenue, staff investment and surplus/deficit ratio	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
According to the 2017 published records, the ASP is operating at a surplus.	According to the 2015 and 2016 published audited records the ASP is operating at an income deficit. *"We do not have funding for a cooked lunch. We would love to give them a balanced meal, but we cannot afford that."*

Both organisations had strong management and operational bases to support programme implementation. Both respondents highlighted the commitment of staff to the vision and cause of the organisation as key hinges in delivering their programming. For Vision Afrika, a shared sense of vision is built into the recruitment and interview process so that incoming staff are aware. For IkamvaYouth, strong commitment is inculcated through an alumni retention system. For example, an alumnus currently sits on their national board, so retention runs throughout all the levels of the organisation. From self-assessments, both organisations seemed to rely greatly on staff who are willing and fit to do the programming. As the respondent from IkamvaYouth noted, their volunteers who deliver the programmes are "*at the core*" of their work.

Both organisations prioritised training, albeit in different ways. Vision Afrika used its partnership system to obtain international training and staff support; IkamvaYouth used a dedicated in-house training department. Outcomes can only best be evaluated from learner feedback. Vision Africa used the IXL international online platform to give vital content-related feedback to staff. IkamvaYouth used learners' Matric results and qualitative feedback from parents and learners to inform their processes.

The ability to attract funding consistently was one major difference between the two organisations. At South African Rand (ZAR) 24 million, IkamvaYouth's 2017 audited revenue base was six times that of Vision Afrika in 2016. This could explain why IkamvaYouth was able to support 17 branches across South Africa. Sustainable funding should thus be a critical factor in any efforts to upscale. Vision Afrika noted that inconsistent funding sources limited some of its programme aspects, such as provision of meals.

ASP Participant Involvement, Family Involvement and Ownership of Programme Facilities
Table 3 shows that IkamvaYouth participants were involved, not only as beneficiaries, but also in the planning and operations of the programme. The respondent explained that "*IkamvaYouth is a learner driven thing*." This was in line with the SCL framework of what determines a successful ASP. IkamvaYouth parents provided feedback on the social/character development of the learners via quarterly sessions. Vision Afrika, on the other hand, did not involve beneficiaries in decision making about programme design and implementation due to age constraints. In that way, Vision Afrika conformed minimally with the SCL framework.

Table 3 Involvement of participants, facilities, enriched learning opportunities

INVOLVEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS: Measured through retention of former learner as volunteers, learner input in programme design & peer-to-peer learning	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
The organisation thrives from learner returns. One of the core values of IkamvaYouth is paying it forward. *"IkamvaYouth is a learner driven thing."*	Due to the age of participants/learners (3–9 year olds) their participation beyond beneficiary status is limited at Vision Afrika.
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Regular feedback from parents, meets learners' parents four times a year for feedback sessions and learners behavioural outcome triangulation. IkamvaYouth has a feedback metric and report for parents to triangulate development of learners.	Parents not heavily involved in programme but consent to the operations of the school.
PROGRAMME FACILITIES	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Operates independently from schools but uses public school facilities. Enrolment is by word of mouth from mostly teachers in schools in areas of practice.	Uses one premises, which it owns. However, the space is limited, and plans are in place to expand via construction.

Ownership of facilities did not seem to have a significant influence on programme delivery. IkamvaYouth did not own any of the programme facilities but still delivered quality services from multiple rented/co-shared sites. Although it moved from place to place at inception, this did not hamper service delivery. Vision Afrika, by contrast, used one base to deliver its programme. Availability of facilities, however, did determine growth potential. With its 17 locations across South Africa, IkamvaYouth could muster 2,582 beneficiaries while Vision Afrika had less than 200. The respondent from Vision Afrika noted that "[w]*e are actually going to build more classrooms to go up to Grade 7, but we want to build upwards to save playground space*."

ASP Partnerships for Learning and Community Involvement

As Table 4 shows, both organisations engaged in partnerships to strengthen delivery and impact of programmes.

Table 4 Strong partnerships for learning, community engagement and family involvement

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Measured in learner enrolment	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Has created linkages through community collaboration programme to share own knowledge with other ASPs in areas of practice; track the success of learners in partner organisations; IkamvaYouth has a rich portfolio of partners. According to its website, the organisation has partnerships with 20 leading corporations and governmental arms in South Africa. *"When we were wondering how to reach many more learners, we realised that it is only through working together with other organisations that we can achieve collective impact."*	Has created partnerships with neighbouring private school to extend facilities of school beyond Kayamandi for learner experience. They also enjoy partnerships with several international organisations that give valuable services such as eye care, IT training and sports facilities. *"We have a very good relationship with Rhenish Primary school."*

For IkamvaYouth, partnership worked both as a funding source and as a means of empowering similar organisations in the communities served. It had partnerships with leading corporations in South Africa and government structures such as the WCG. IkamvaYouth supports other ASPs by providing staff training. For Vision Afrika, partnership was done through piggy-backing on an established school to extend value to their learners.

Continuous Evaluation, Safety, Health, and Nutrition in ASPs

Table 5 shows that both organisations had several continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place. Our observation was that the adaptability raised in Table 1 was made possible by evaluation feedback.

Table 5 Continuous evaluation and attention to safety, health and nutrition

CONTINUOUS EVALUATION: Various metrics used here e.g. impact evaluations, annual reports, learner exam/results	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Has several evaluation mechanisms such as teacher, tutor and parental feedback, independent impact evaluations (two by Stellenbosch University).	Accounts (as at 2016) are audited independently. Learners tested daily using IXL platform.
ATTENTION TO SAFETY, HEALTH AND NUTRITION: Tracked by targeted themed programming.	
IkamvaYouth	Vision Afrika
Health forms part of the learner training programme. *"We realised that these leaners need life skills, health, career guidance, mentoring. Our programmes are now broader than just tutoring."*	Safety is an important focus at the school. Property is well secured, and learners cannot wander onto the busy street in front of the premises. For Vision Afrika, nutrition is tracked by the number of meals offered to learners. *"The parents want their children here because of the English, the safety that we provide."*

There was a sense that for both programmes evaluation was central to organisational learning. Given the low socio-economic status of the communities served, both organisations also prioritised safety, health and nutrition. This relates to the element of situational adaptability from learning.

Conclusion
The main purpose of this study was to identify and describe key elements of ASPs that create conditions for success. This meant that we were more focused on outlining what the processes were than the ways of measuring them. Because of this, we drew from narratives and self-assessment from the interviews, which were triangulated with other data such as annual reports and impact evaluations before being plotted in the analysis above. The question of a metric for elements of success was shown to be context specific; with some indicators being more quantifiable than others. The first level analysis was an Atlas.ti-guided extraction of key talking points which highlighted the issues that the two respondents raised the most. These were collated to the ToC framework and culminated in Tables 1 to 5, which show strong links between the Mott foundation's ToC and the respondents' key talking points.

With this study we have shown that traditional definitions of an ASP can be limiting given the adaptability of organisations like the two respondents targeted for the study. A definition based on mission and organisational intent is far better suited for this purpose. We also demonstrated that the SCL framework, while highly effective and recommended for USA programmes, proved less suited to South African ASPs. The Mott Foundation's ToC approach was a better fit giving guidance to identify elements and to closely analyse processes associated with the elements as well as their metrics. The targeted respondents for the study showed that many, often interconnected, elements contribute to the success of an ASP. These elements range from adaptability, sustainable funding sources, strong management, well-trained and committed staff, and partnerships for growth and continuous evaluation for learning.

Our recommendations to ASPs drawing from the findings of the study are that, firstly, programmes need to draft clear vision and mission statements of intent/activity. The ASP needs to be lucidly defined based on being responsive to the immediate benefactor's environmental or situational circumstances. The findings suggest that, while each programme in the study was uniquely defined, a common theme was on designing the programme activities around augmenting what their benefactors (learners) lack in formal schooling rather than more of the same mainstream schooling routines. For successful ASPs, programming is not only responsive to the immediate environment, it is also adaptive over time. A second key success factor that we recommend is the ability to leverage external funding support. Availability of funding delimits both the nature and the quality of services that an ASP can offer. A diverse portfolio of income streams proved critical in the ASP's survival as well as the depth and diversity of its programming. Lastly, we recommend a committed and qualified staff. From the study it can be seen that ASPs are not run on good intentions alone. Having a staff that is sold on the vision of the ASP and equally qualified to implement programming effectively is fundamental to the success of an ASP. The coming together of these elements largely contributes to the success of an ASP in the Western Cape province of South Africa and may do so in similar contexts elsewhere. While the elements exist in varying degrees within the two programmes under study, their existence may be pivotal for replication and upscaling purposes.

Acknowledgement

Authors' Contributions

The first author conceptualised the study and submitted a research proposal to the funders. The second author collected the data for the study. Both authors jointly analysed the data, wrote the manuscript and both reviewed the final manuscript.

Notes

i. The Western Cape (WC) is one of nine provinces in South Africa with approximately 6.3 million people living over 12,9370 km^2 of land (WCG, 2020). The WC has also performed above average in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) international benchmark studies in mathematics and science achievement as well as reading and mathematics educational quality respectively (Reddy, 2006; Reddy, Prinsloo, Arends, Visser, Winnaar, Feza, Rogers, Janse van Rensburg, Juan, Mthethwa, Ngema & Maja, 2012).

ii. A literature review of relevant research shows limited scholarly work on after-school programmes in South Africa with Le Roux and Hendrikz (2006), Mathews, Eggers, De Vries, Mason-Jones, Townsend, Aarø and De Vries (2015), McLean and Van der Berg, (2016) and Spaull et al., (2012) being the few exceptions.

iii. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

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