

MRC-UNISA Safety and Peace Promotion Research Unit

**Report on Child Safety Campaign:
Nomzamo and Broadlands Park, 03 August to 09 September 2010**

Neziswa Titi

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



PHOENIX
BURNS
PROJECT

childsafesafe
KEEP KIDS FREE FROM HARM



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- Cape Town Fire and Rescue Services;
- Childsafe;
- Department of Community Safety: Directorates of Crime Prevention and Road Safety Management;
- Eskom;
- Paraffin Safety Association Southern Africa;
- Phoenix Burns Project; and
- South African Police Services (Lwandle and Strand).

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INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the National Child Safety Month in August, the MRC-UNISA Safety and Peace Promotion Research Unit (SAPPRU), formerly known as the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme (CVI), partnered with various stakeholders in the child safety sector to host a child safety campaign between 3 August and 9 September 2010. The campaign targeted children 14 years and younger, as well as parents and caregivers. The campaign was implemented in Nomzamo and Broadlands Park in Strand, in the Western Cape, which are designated WHO Safe Communities. The campaign was conducted at four schools, namely: A.C.J Phakade, Dr. G.J Joubert, Silukhanyo and Rusthof Primary Schools over a period of three weeks, with each week focusing on a different theme. The themes were: 1) burns prevention, 2) crime and violence prevention, and 3) road safety for children, 4) parental supervision and child developmental milestones focused on parents. A total of 13 campaign-related activities were conducted. Based on school and attendance registers, the campaign reached an estimated total of 4879 learners and approximately 400 adults from Broadlands Park. The national school and organizational strikes during that period made it challenging to organize the parents' session at Nomzamo and it was consequently not held there.

The aims of the campaign were to:

1. Highlight the various child injury risk factors in the home, school and community environment;
2. Promote an integrated approach to children's safety and strengthen the working alliance between the community and different stakeholders;
3. Educate children on injury prevention and safety promotion measures; and
4. Emphasise the importance of child supervision to parents and caregivers by giving them insight into children's abilities and limitations according to their developmental stages.

RATIONALE

The approach followed an initial needs analysis within the two communities, which was undertaken with community representatives and stakeholders. Burn-related injuries, road and pedestrian safety, as well as crime and violence were identified as priority issues related to child safety in their communities. This is confirmed by findings from the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System showing children below the age of 14 years to constitute 9% of all annual injury deaths in South Africa. Furthermore, it is estimated that there are up to 20 hospitalisations per childhood injury fatality that involve burn injuries, road traffic, and injuries due to crime and violence¹. The consequences of these injuries are widespread and involve the

¹ Donson, H. (2008). A profile of fatal injuries in South Africa 2007. Tygerberg: MRC.

child, the family, community, environment, and impact on various governmental sectors. Parents and caregivers play a significant role in protecting children from injuries, hence the importance of focusing on measures that assist and equip them with the skills necessary to protect children from injury in and around the home, the school and immediate surroundings. Based on this information and due to the nature and circumstances that underpin these injuries, an ecological preventative approach was adopted.

METHODS

The nature of the problems in the two identified communities necessitated a multi-method interdisciplinary intervention approach, which called upon researchers, community workers, educators and practitioner groupings to partner and participate in the venture. Seven stakeholders in the child prevention sector responded to the call for participation and joined the venture. The stakeholders were: Childsafe, the City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Services, Eskom, the Paraffin Safety Association of Southern Africa (PASASA), the Department of Community Safety (Directorates of Crime Prevention and Road Safety), the South African Police Services (SAPS) of Lwandle and Strand, and the Phoenix Burns Project (PBP).

Week one targeted learners from grades 1 to 3 and focused on burns prevention. Candle safety, burns management, safety in and around the home, paraffin safety and poisoning, and fire safety were highlighted. In this week an estimated 2528 children were reached. **Week two** targeted learners from grades 4 to 7, and focused on crime and violence prevention. The choice between anger and aggression and peace, as well as the choice between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was highlighted. The consequences in choosing each of the behaviours were explored with the children. The qualities of leading by example and taking responsibility for each other was discussed and followed by a mentorship life-skills programme at three of the four schools. The school visited had a large group and made it difficult to coordinate this component of the programme. The SAPS offered a talk about the consequences of committing crime and violence after which a local drama group closed the session with a play about crime, violence and domestic abuse. In this week, an estimated 4005 learners were reached. The **third week** focused on road safety and highlighted the choice between negligence and vigilance, and traffic rules and safety education by "Danny the Cat". The session concluded with "Pick-a-Box", a quiz show based on the presentation. There were ten boxes spelling "road safety", and upon giving the correct answer, the learners could select a box that contained a prize. In the third week, an estimated 3458 learners were reached. **Week four** activities focused on a "Parent's Evening". Here, parents (approximately 400) were reminded of safe behaviours and strategies in the home via talks and demonstrations. Talks were given on how to light a candle safely, how to manage and treat burns in the home, how to prevent fire and poisoning in the home, which objects and substances are risky in the home, as well as tips on road and pedestrian safety for children. All of these talks pointed to what children are capable and incapable of doing on their own, and to how parents should assist and make their homes safer for the entire family, especially the

children. During this session, PASASA demonstrated cooking safely with a “hot-box” as part of burns prevention in the home, and participants got to taste the meal after the session. There was also an information desk with all the materials presented to parents displayed. Parents could ask questions at the desk and also take away materials that interested them. The table below summarises the four weekly campaign events.

Table 1: Summary of campaign events

Campaign Focus	Dates	Schools and Grades/ Venue	Estimated no of learners/ parents	Interventions
BURNS (Total estimated learners =2528)	3 August Nomzamo			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candle Safety - Stop, drop, roll - Cool-a-burn & Burns Management - Poisoning Prevention, Electricity Safety [Eskom, Childsafe, City of CT Fire & Rescue Services, Phoenix Burns Project, Paraffin Safety Association of SA]
	9:00 – 11:00	Silukhanyo (grades 1-3)	555	
	12:00 – 14:00	ACJ Phakade(grades 1-3)	874	
	5 August Broadlands Park			
	9:00 – 11:00	Rusthof (grades 1-3)	600	
	12:00 – 14:00	Dr. G.J Joubert (grades 1-3)	499	
CRIME & VIOLENCE (Total estimated learners = 400)	11 August Nomzamo			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict Resolution: Anger vs. Peace - The Choice Between Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour - Role-play by Children in Community - Consequences of Crime and Violence [Dept. of Community Safety Lwandle SAPS, Strand SAPS]
	9:00 – 11:00	ACJ Phakade (grades 4-7)	673	
	12:00 – 14:00	Silukhanyo (All)	873	
	12 August Broadlands Park			
	9:00 – 11:00	Rusthof (All)	1300	
	12:00 – 14:00	Dr. G.J Joubert (All)	1159	
ROAD SAFETY (Total estimated learners = 3450)	17 August Nomzamo			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Road Safety Education - Vigilance vs. Negligence - Pick-a-box [Childsafe, Dept. of Community Safety: Road Safety Management, MRC-UNISA SAPPRU]
	9:00 – 11:00	Silukhanyo (grades 4-7)	318	
	12:00 – 14:00	ACJ Phakade (grades 4-7)	673	
	19 August Broadlands Park			
	9:00 – 11:00	Rusthof (All)	1300	
	12:00 – 14:00	Dr. G.J Joubert (All)	1159	
PARENTS’ SESSION (Approx adults targeted = 400)	9 September 19:30 – 20:30	Broadlands Park Community Hall	400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risks in low-income contexts - Child Supervision: When, How, Why? - Burns Management - Paraffin Safety & Poisoning Prevention - Road & Pedestrian Safety [SAPPRU, PASASA, PBP, Directorate of Road Safety, Childsafe (in absentia)]

OTHER OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT

The partners in this campaign are very keen that this initiative becomes sustainable so that learners and parents continue to receive valuable and practical information on childhood safety.

Knowledge transfer and evaluation

All schools received materials with the aim that the learners demonstrate, through drawing or writing, what they have learnt. This output will serve as one of the tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign, to be undertaken by the campaign coordinator.

School Life Skills

The Department of Community Safety: Crime Prevention introduced a mentoring programme as part of a larger life skills programme, which involved the selection of 20 learners from three of the four schools visited. The learners will receive leadership training and then train other learners in their schools. In support of an inter-sectorial participatory approach to interventions, community-based organisations will also be involved in this process. This venture is in its conceptual phase and will formally start in the first quarter of 2011.

Road Safety

The Department of Community Safety: Road Safety has offered to implement a free Learners Licence course to the participants who meet the criteria. This programme provides learner licence training to a group of up to 50 participants in a week. The last day of the week is a preparatory class for the learner's test. This class is based on the K53, and is aided by question papers and road signs material. This programme only offers free lessons; participants are responsible for booking their own learner's test appointments and for the relevant fees. The community leadership of Broadlands Park submitted 150 names to the Directorate through the Parents' Session. These classes will commence in November 2010, and will be held over a period of three weeks to ensure all 150 individuals receive the free lessons.

Teacher Training (as a future intervention)

A few possible interventions worthy to consider for the next venture have been noted and the teacher training is one such intervention. This is a course for teachers focused on the skills needed to socially re-integrate learners with burn injuries into the classroom. The PBP has suggested the use of a media supplement called *The Teacher* to distribute information to schools. This poster-sized newspaper supplement is widely used as a teaching aid and will facilitate the dissemination of safety messages to children via the teachers. The PBP reported that 82% rural and 65% urban teachers in South Africa utilise this method and that it has been found to be an ideal method to sustain safety messages. The cost of this

intervention is approximately R120 000 per supplement nationally. With children being a priority concern, and with partnerships being formalised, it is quite likely to be able to secure such funding from sponsors.

Media Coverage

The MRC Corporate & Public Affairs coordinated the media coverage for the campaign. They facilitated the presence of external media and provided the photography, video-recording, and reporting. Interviews were conducted with Radio Cape Talk and Heart FM, and a report of the Burns Week was published for the public on the MRC Website. The reports have been disseminated to the Cape based media.

DEBRIEFING AND INITIAL EVALUATIONS

Two weeks following the success of the final campaign activity, SAPPRU and its partners held a debriefing and evaluation meeting. Discussions at the meeting focused on the highlights and challenges of the campaign. Based on these discussions, several suggestions were made about how to improve the initiative and are detailed below.

Highlights and Lessons Learned

1. The co-operation and team-spirit among the stakeholders, in pursuit of the stated aims and objectives, was outstanding. As one partner commented, “What was planned to be a muffin blossomed into a cake”. The sense of ownership is believed to be the result of all stakeholders being present at an initial planning meeting where each partner offered its contribution. Nothing was prescribed and there were no expectations. There was one vision and one goal.
2. The first campaign activity started on a high-note. Its success set the tone for the upcoming campaign events and the school principals invited us back as a result.
3. There was a unanimous sense of satisfaction in having reached more than the expected number of children over the three weeks. This excited all the partners that children get the required attention due to their vulnerability. As most of the partners usually reach out to adult audiences and offer support to agencies, some of them found it fulfilling to convey the safety messages directly to children and parents.
4. Some of the partners, such as the SAPS found this venture to be particularly useful to help them in accessing the community to deliver key safety messages.

5. Partnerships are important and very essential to address community needs. This team agreed that the campaign would not have had the same impact or success without the input of all the partners.
6. From the Parents' Session it became apparent that for a satisfactory level of attendance and participation, there has to be a strategic intervention (an issue important to the community) to draw the attention of the community to the campaign. In this regard, word got out to the community that free learner licensing classes would be offered via the workshop. With this being the initial appeal, the participants then got the opportunity to learn about other important safety strategies.
7. Proper scheduling was recognized to be critical. The campaign was planned and coordinated in less than a month and from one central point. From a coordination perspective however, further success may be achieved through delegation of some of the logistical tasks

Suggestions and Recommendations

The team as a collective is drawn to an annual collaboration for the Child Safety Month initiative and calls for this partnership to be sustained. Should this materialise, it is suggested that in future there be a central coordinator who will delegate various key responsibilities. Additionally, partners will be required to consider budgets for planned activities, as well as seek out sponsorships for the campaign.

The campaign would also have benefited from further media attention and prioritization by key community stakeholders. In future, efforts in expanding media coverage should be targeted at community counselors who will ensure community mobilisation, as well as from the Department of Health and Social Services. It would then be beneficial to initiate planning well in advance to ensure participation of all relevant stakeholders including school safety officers and community leaders.

In order to improve media coverage for 2011, the following is recommended:

1. A press release before the campaign to be broadcast on relevant radio stations.
2. Regular announcements via the media about the date on which the Child Safety Campaign is to be launched.
3. A press release every week in accordance with that week's theme. This information must be provided to communities and local newspapers.

WAY FORWARD

This was a highly successful and fulfilling initiative, which also birthed a potential partnership with all the stakeholders for an annual Child Safety Month Campaign. All participating stakeholders are keen to sustain

this initiative and SAPPRU (via the current coordinator) has been tasked to coordinate ongoing efforts at collaboration.

HIGHLIGHTS

Children will surprise you with what they know

Burns Prevention

- Candle Safety – Childsafe
- Burns Management – Phoenix Burns Project
- Paraffin Safety – Paraffin Safety Association of Southern Africa
- Fire and Safety – CT Fire & Security Services

Safety and peace promotion for children works better when you involve them

Crime and Violence Prevention

- Conflict Resolution: Anger vs. Peace – SAPPRU
- The Choice Between Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour – SAPPRU
- Drama about Crime, Violence and Abuse – Local Nomzamo Drama Group
- Being a Leader: Living by Example – Dept of Community Safety: Crime Prevention
- Consequences of Crime and Violence – Strand SAPS

Learning and teaching doesn't have to be all that serious

Road Safety

- Traffic Rules and Safety Education – Dept of Community Safety: Road Safety Management
- The Choice Between Vigilance vs. Negligence – SAPPRU
- Pick-a-Box – Dept of Community Safety: Road Safety Management

Parents sometimes know these things, but need to be reminded

Parents' Session

- Risks in Low-Income Contexts – SAPPRU
- Burns Prevention – Childsafe
- Burns Management – Phoenix Burns Project
- Safe Use of Paraffin & Poisoning Prevention – Paraffin Safety Association of Southern Africa
- Road Safety – Dept. Community Safety: Road Safety Management