

SWARTLAND MUNICIPALITY

YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

REPORT

OCTOBER 2011



Compiled by



**REPORT OF THE YOUTH SYMPOSIUM HELD IN MALMESBURY BY THE SWARTLAND
MUNICIPALITY**

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

The symposium and the corresponding report were requested by Swartland Municipality early in April 2011.

Ms. Looock and Ms. Terblanche requested that ClimbX Development Agency facilitate a Youth Symposium for 120 participants from secondary schools from the area, including the members of the current Junior Town Council.

Their specific instructions were to:

- ❖ Facilitate a symposium covering a broad range of issues addressing relevant youth issues today;
- ❖ Present two sessions on Entrepreneurship as one of the discussion topics for the two days;
- ❖ Ensure that the atmosphere in the symposium remain as creative and accommodating as possible to improve participant involvement;
- ❖ Work with the Junior Town Council in delivering a quality, well-planned event for young people;

Conclusions of the Symposium:

In view of the findings of the workshops, the following conclusions may be drawn:

- ❖ **The Symposium has been a huge success again** - The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive in general. The participants enjoyed the different approaches to getting them involved and were particularly pleased with the variety of topics covered at the symposium.
- ❖ **Attendance and general conduct from participants** – Between sixty and seventy learners attended the two-day event on a daily basis. Some schools were well represented while others were either totally absent or weakly represented. The conduct of young people right through the two days was impeccable and every school can be very proud of their learners. A unique characteristic of this symposium was the fact that participants bonded across school boundaries very quickly and I believe lifelong friendships have been established.
- ❖ **Speakers and Presenters** - The overall feedback indicated that participants enjoyed the approach of the different presenters and definitely learned a lot from the program. Speakers were well prepared and delivered their messages at a level that learners could understand. Speakers were also extremely approachable and open to answer questions from the floor, making the sessions lively and well received.

Recommendations:

As a result of the findings and conclusions of this report, the following recommendations are made (based on the feedback from participants and observations by the Facilitator):

- ❖ **Workshop Length and relevance** – In many evaluation forms there was a request for a longer symposium. I believe that the current format is perfectly suited for maximum effect on young lives;
- ❖ **Workshop material and handouts** – The T-shirts were a hit as participants did not expect anything from the symposium. At the end of the second day, these T-shirts became a symbol of the unity experienced by all;
- ❖ **JTC Involvement** – These young people have so much potential and made the symposium. Hanru, with his excellent play on life and the challenges faced, Nelmarie, Zani, Sune, Leighton and Yolanda were excellent in creating the space for other youngsters to enjoy themselves and grow at the same time. Some of the JTC members are still not involved enough – they should be co-workers and not just attending the event.

1. Introduction:

The Swartland Municipality has been at the forefront of finding ways to involve young people in the planning and management of youth services in their municipal area for a long time. In 2010, a Youth Symposium was introduced as another example of innovative thinking and development for young people from the area. The ultimate responsibility of the success of the symposium rested with a group of enthusiastic young members of the Junior Town Council.

With the learning of the 2010 Youth Symposium firmly entrenched they set of to make this one an even bigger triumph. The symposium was scheduled for the September holidays and took place on 5 and 6 October 2011.

Matzikama Junior Town Council, represented by Llewellyn Stevens and Alain Afrika, attended the symposium. The objective was to establish a strong link with the Swartland municipality and to explore ideas that they could use for implementation in their area.

2. The Symposium Facilitation Process

Day One

The ClimbX Development Agency facilitator used a participatory process to establish the current knowledge and confidence level of every participant, determine potential areas of improvement and creating the space for young people to initiate future development.

The house rules of the symposium for the two days were the following:

- ❖ *Respect other people's stuff – do not take anything that is not yours;*
- ❖ *Listen when somebody else is speaking – no interruptions;*
- ❖ *Can we use one common language;*
- ❖ *Respect opinions – everybody has a right to their own opinion;*
- ❖ *Clean up the hall when we finish on a day-to-day basis;*
- ❖ *Create space for people to grow and make people feel comfortable;*

The Expectations of the participants:

- ❖ *I want to learn something new, improve my skills and be able to experience new and exciting things;*
- ❖ *I want to have fun and meet new people, develop new friendships;*
- ❖ *This is a space for me to grow and develop;*

- ❖ *I think we can learn a lot from other people's culture and I am open for that;*
- ❖ *I hope the topics will be fresh and interesting;*

Nelmarie Louw got the symposium on the way by welcoming all the participants on day 1. Sixty five learners registered and an air of anticipation could be sensed in the air. Ms Madelein Terblanche, Director: Corporate Services welcomed the learners and encourage everybody to participate fully in the program. After all the introductions, Zani Scholtz broke the ice by taking the attendees through a few lively ice-breakers. Soon laughter could be heard in the corridors and as one balloon after the other popped, the smiles started to emerge.

After a short tea break on Day 1, Entrepreneurship was introduced as the first topic. The facilitator quickly explained what entrepreneurship was and then proceeded to introduce the focus of the entrepreneurship session.

The participants were all owners of a Swartland Tourism Agency, catering for students visiting the Swartland. A group of South Korean students were expected in their area and they had to sell the "fantastic" Swartland to these students by creating menus, completing a touring plan to the area and looking after the entertainment of the students. Students immediately started working in preparation for their presentation the next day.

Many young people brag about what they can do when presented with the opportunity to cook something "nice". One of the highlights of the symposium was introduced when for the first time, these claims were being measured. Cherry Lane, a local restaurant and deli, partnered with the Junior Youth Council for the first time, to organize a pasta "cook-off". Participants received cooked pasta, different ingredients and could select a "secret ingredient" to make their dish special. Within seconds sauces were mixed, vegetables cut and "would-be chefs" gave instructions left and right.

Kara De Beer, Liza Marie and Madelein Lottering from Cherry Lane, along with Zani, Sune and Elsje had the unenviable task of tasting and then pronouncing the winner. While participants waited for the results, some eagerly displayed their creations. Lunch was served immediately after the competition as the winners were announced the next day.

Jeanne Steyn, a big hit at the previous symposium with her self defense program, went to work after lunch and the food was soon forgotten. Moving from warm-up exercises to Tai-chi movements the hall was transformed into a mess of moving bodies, moving to the beat of the beat. Members of the municipality popped in from time to time to see what the commotion was all about, then left again. After a while, with legs tiring and arms becoming sore the energy levels dropped and Auntie Jeanne made the participants sit down to talk about the importance of regular exercise and motivated the group to join the local gym in town.

The Youth Advisory Centre (YAC) forms an integral part of government's solution to bring services to young people. Representatives from the YAC provided information on bursaries,

opportunities and services that are offered at the centre. Learners listened attentively and then asked relevant questions. Some of the questions included:

- ❖ *How do we apply for a YAC bursary?*
- ❖ *What's the difference between a bursary and a loan?*
- ❖ *What are the criteria for approval and which courses are funded?*

Ceaghan Goliath is a well-known Ballroom and Latin Dancing Instructor in the Swartland. He was approached to share his dancing talent with the group and to train them to do the basic cha-cha. This is an exciting challenge for young people as they can select a partner and do something they love to do, dancing. The purpose of the training session was to prepare couples to participate in a dancing competition the next day. An hour was spent on learning the cha-cha steps and then groups were asked to select their music, fine tune their moves before the day was concluded.

Yolanda Mlandlale evaluated the day and the following feedback was received:

- ❖ *Today I had great fun and enjoyed myself;*
- ❖ *I made new friends – everybody is so friendly! No discrimination at all in this place.*
- ❖ *The program was well put together and never boring!*
- ❖ *Great job, JTC! You guys rock!*
- ❖ *There was not a separation between schools – everybody worked well together;*
- ❖ *Cooking competition was a good idea; got really tired when doing the exercises – but enjoyable;*

Evaluation of the JTC contribution to the program:

- ❖ **JTC members were on time and available right through the day for any assistance the facilitator needed;**
- ❖ **The registration process went off without a hitch and JTC members took turns in registering people;**
- ❖ **The Task Team was excellent in identifying potential problems and came up with solutions rather quickly.**
- ❖ **Certain members of the JTC took the responsibility to use the microphone when necessary with great aplomb. Zani, Nelmarie and Sune must be mentioned here.**
- ❖ **Jason John did not attend the first day and did not submit an apology for his absence. This is unacceptable as he has a responsibility towards the team and the municipality.**

Day 2:

Day two started earlier to get as much out of the day as possible. Participants looked focused and several discussions about the previous day could be picked up from the small groups at the start of the day. A sense of excitement dawned as Sune and Siliswa got the energy flowing with a few ice breakers.

Entrepreneurship was the first item on the agenda for the day. Final preparations were done for their Korean guests and soon the presentations started. Breakfast included Idombolo, Weetbix and several other culinary items included in the lunch and supper menus. The travel itinerary looked equally impressive with tourist attractions covering the whole West Coast. Group three was not to be outdone as they demonstrated the entertainment prepared for our visitors. The presentations were concluded by group four staging true West Coast hospitality on the stage.

Cool Sexuality, presented by Elsabe Aldrich, a well known author and bestseller, was sure to be an enormous hit with the crowd. Her funny and engaging way of transferring crucial and sensitive information to learners made her an instant success. Through the chuckles and smiles kids learned about:

- ❖ The responsibility of making sexual decisions;
- ❖ Being cool, not common – related to choices made;
- ❖ Sex can be wonderful if practiced within safe boundaries;
- ❖ Be true to yourself and have the courage to say no;

Several participants bought her book, *Is jy cool of is jy common* immediately after the talk. I am convinced that Elsabe will form an important part of future Symposium events as she truly informed and inspired learners to make the right choices.

Drug abuse is a reality in communities today. The symposium would have been irrelevant if this issue was not addressed here. The CLARO Clinic, represented by Dr. Scholtz, revealed the stark reality of the effect of drug abuse on young lives as a patient shared his heartbreaking story about his addiction and the loss of his eyesight, during that time. His father, accompanying him to the session, elaborated on what parents can look for to identify drug use in their children's lives but also warned that many times this cannot be picked up easily. The session brought a sobering sense of how cruel life can be if you're making the wrong choices. Mr. Scholtz, The Municipal Manager, The Mayor and other Councilors, attended this session as well.

Jeanne Steyn got a second crack at the participants on day two. The topic this time revolved around self defense and soon the hall was filled with murderous shouts and screams as they joyfully unleashed their fists on fellow participants. Much care was taken not to hurt anybody and learners participated with gay abandon while working up a stiff hunger just before lunch. Several suggestions were provided for participants when they are

in a dangerous situation but with the safety of the learner in the situation always as the key concern.

Ceaghan Goliath returned after lunch with his team to evaluate the dancing competition. It became a serious competition as the couples were whittled down to the final four. Zani and Mia emerged victorious and received their prizes to rapturous applause from the other dancers. As a special treat Ceaghan and his dance partner, demonstrated how it should be done and mouths opened wide in surprise as these two glided over the floor.

T-Shirts were handed out, team photo's taken before the facilitator completed the final evaluation of the two days.

Evaluation forms were completed by the participants at the end of the workshop. Some of the individual feedback was captured:

- ❖ *I learned about drug abuse, are you cool or common and enjoyed the self defense. I would have liked more information on alcohol abuse. We could have invited more children – Asakhe Mzini;*
- ❖ *My self confidence grow tremendously, I communicated and enjoyed the dancing thoroughly. Nothing have to be changed –perfect as it is – Mia Van Graan;*
- ❖ *I learned what cool sexuality is, why one should not use drug and that three or four heads are better than one. Everything was done perfectly and it was a FANTASTIC experience – Llewellyn Stevens (Matzikama JTC);*
- ❖ *Respect others and yourself, have fun, make a difference. The JTC can include more activities for participants to mingle – it was awesome – Tayme;*
- ❖ *The info on drugs and teenagers was adequate and I learned how to be a fantastic me, but the symposium can be longer; should definitely be done again – Leighton Jansen;*
- ❖ *My lessons learned – never have unprotected sex, stay away from the wrong crowd, sex is not a sin but a blessing; there is no way that the symposium could have been improved; I had fun, it was unreal - Van Wyk Hanekom;*
- ❖ *Be a fantastic you; “ek is grander as dit”; I enjoyed every moment of this. I thank all who made it possible and will surely encourage others to come next time – Alain Afrika (Speaker-Matzikama JTC);*
- ❖ *My lessons learned at the symposium – have fun, you are fantastic, don't be scared to get to know new people. The symposium can be longer and is a great way to gain confidence and make friends – Curwan;*
- ❖ *I am fantastic and we must enjoy our youth. Thank you for everyone who made this possible – Kim Leigh;*

I want to extend my gratitude to the Swartland Municipality and the JUNIOR TOWN COUNCIL, who entrusted ClimbX Development Agency with the responsibility to impact young people in this way again. I would also like to extend a very special word of thanks to Ms. Looock, Ms Pretorius and Ms Terblanche for organizing a very special two days with young, energetic and vibrant people.

The logistical arrangements for the workshops were exceptional and the JTC and the staff of Swartland Municipality anticipated every need of both the facilitator and delegates beforehand and acted accordingly.

Thanks again!!

Johnny Philander

ClimbX Development Agency