



Social and emotional learning and navigational capacities

**Prof Sharlene Swartz
HSRC and University of Cape Town**

Social and emotional learning (SEL)

- Children become increasingly disengaged as they progress through their school life
- High levels of drop out
- Increasing participation in risk behaviours

Causes

- Poverty
- Interpersonal violence
- Poor quality education
- Effect of the AIDS pandemic in caregiving
- Results in poor social and emotional skills
- Necessary to negotiate school and later life



Social and emotional learning (SEL)

- SEL is a promising approach to reduce risk and promote positive adjustment, and enhance academic performance
- For children it results in knowing what behaviours are expected, curbing impulses to misbehave, being able to wait, following directions, knowing how to ask for help, expressing needs and getting along with others.
- SEL is the process of integrating thinking, feeling and behaviour to achieve important social tasks, meet personal and social needs leading to a productive relationship with self and society.

What is the theory of change?

1. Change influenced by cognitive and biological propensities and predispositions
2. Also by the child's ecological context
 - Interactions with parents, teachers
 - Time a parent spends away from home working
3. Implementation at scale
4. In systems in which impoverished rural children find themselves (home and school)

What is the aim of this project?

Aim 1: Develop SEL expertise in the (South) African context drawing on international experiences

Aim 2: A large-scale SEL intervention

- To include schools, teacher training colleges, government departments, and international and local children's NGOs.
- Multi-year intervention with M&E
- Outcomes for curriculum, teacher training
- Whole school development incl. communities and families
- Quasi-experimental design using repeated measures
- Process evaluation observation and interviews

Details

- Grades 1-4 (ages 6-10) (appropriately randomised)
- Sample size 20 schools (3000 learners) plus equivalent sample group (crossover)
- 5 years
- R9.5 million over five years - €950,000

South African team leaders

Professor Arvin Bhana

Professor Sharlene Swartz

Dr Arianne DeLannoy

Dr Rachel Bray

Professor Linda Richter

Professor Andy Dawes

International advisors

Larry Aber – NYU

Mark Greenberg - Penn State

Roger Weissberg - Illinois Chicago

Davide Antognazza – SIP Swiss

Stephanie Jones – Harvard

Navigational capacities for youth employment



- Youth unemployment 51% among 15-24 olds in South Africa (Statistics SA, 2010)
- Higher than other developing countries
- Age of first job in South Africa, 24 for men and 27 for women

Nav caps...

- Addressing complex 'soft' environments in which youth transitions occur
- Focus the meander from school to work for 15 to 24
- Drawing on Rao & Walton (2004), Mary Douglas (2004) and Arjun Appadurai (2004).

Defining nav caps...

By navigational capacities is meant:

- ‘The aspirations, motivations, resources, connections, opportunities available to youth (or obtainable) in the pursuit of employment.
- Navigational capacities reflects the ability of youth to navigate personal, institutional and environmental factors in order to find and keep employment.
- It relates to prevalent notions of personal aspiration, ‘desire lines’, motivation, and cultural and social capital young people possess, but also include the effect of individualist and collectivist cultures on unemployment.

Research questions

1. What navigational capacities do individual young people living in impoverished communities require in order to successfully negotiate a pathway from school to employment?
2. Is there some consensus about what navigational capacities youth need?
3. Who are the institutions and agents that offer youth navigational capacities for the transition between school and employment?
4. What effect, over time does the presence or absence, of a set of navigational capacities have on youth's ultimate outcomes?
5. How best might the agencies and institutions that aid them provide these capacities?

Stage 1

What navigational capacities are needed?

- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders
- Including service providers, policy-makers
- Review of literature

- Aim to understand what are the navigational capacities that young people need to make a successful transition, however defined, into employment.

Stage 2

Mixed methods longitudinal study of youth transitions (3-5 years)

- Mapping pathways, desire lines and outcomes
- Measuring navigational capacities along the way
- And its impact on transitioning pathway and employment outcomes.

Stage 3

Mapping available capital and generating strategies

- Capital available to youth through key 'stakeholders'
- Parents, educators, employers and policymakers
- Strategies for how each stakeholder may increase support

Integrating

- SEL at primary school
- Navigational capacities at secondary school and beyond
- Whole school development



THANK YOU