

Youth**Action**Net®

CASE STUDY SERIES

Show Time Film Club:

*Empowering Youth to Discover Their
Potential*

A partnership between:



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service
Global Human Development Program



Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation. Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfnet.org

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

<https://ghd.georgetown.edu>

INTRODUCTION

Meet Innocentia Mthembu, Founder of Show Time Film Club

Innocentia Mthembu is a social entrepreneur using the art of filmmaking to inspire disengaged South African youth in exciting new ways. With film as her vehicle for change, Innocentia engages township schools and low-to-medium-income neighborhoods to help young people discover their potential in ways that extend far beyond artistic expression.

Growing up, the daughter of a restaurateur, Innocentia lived in four different cities across South Africa. As she travelled and met many different people, she learned that everyone has a story to tell. Her love of personal narratives eventually guided her to Boston Media House where she specialized in video production and editing.



She later founded her own media company, Blue Lenz Pictures. Blue Lenz Pictures specializes in music and corporate video production, event coverage, and creative video editing for television shows, including the SAFTA award-winning television talk: *Life with Thami*. Innocentia's vision is to produce television programs for children with content that uplifts, sparks change, and guides them to make sense of their world.

In 2013, determined to use her business to create a legacy of change, Innocentia established a new branch of her company called Show Time Film Club (STFC). STFC is a youth videography program offered through workshops, camps, and afterschool programming. Through the program, Innocentia aspires to develop young filmmakers and community change makers. By challenging youth to think analytically and develop empathy in new ways, she seeks to positively affect youth self-perceptions while addressing what many see as a wider culture of indifference.

Show Time Film Club is equipping youth to become active members of their communities.

The Problem

Show Time Film Club employs the arts in response to some of the major issues facing youth in South Africa today: an underperforming education system, lack of extracurricular activities, and high youth unemployment.

South Africa is the third richest country in the African continent, yet its education system has failed to develop alongside its economy. The South African education system ranks 75 out of 76 OECD¹ countries and, in 2017, the results of the International Mathematics and Science Study revealed that

¹ OECD (2016). "South Africa", in *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eat-2016-80-en>



Economist.com

South African students ranked at or near the bottom.² Additionally, significant disparities exist between the quality of education available to rich and poor students, which furthers the nation's socio-economic divides. Failures in the education system also contribute to the high youth unemployment rate in South Africa. In July 2017, Trading Economics reported youth unemployment to be 52.2%.³ These figures have contributed to increased social tension among the South African youth population and perpetuate pessimistic outlooks among current students. The lack of wholesome extra-curricular activities in low-income communities is another impediment to many young people from exploring their interests and possible future careers. According to one study, extracurricular activities provide vital experiences beyond the core curriculum that allow for both the

application of knowledge and acquisition of the concepts of democratic life.⁴ Extracurricular activities are correlated with better student behavior, higher test scores, improved school completion rates, among other encouraging indicators of successful transitions to adulthood.⁵

The Solution

Show Time Film Club seeks to empower youth to overcome difficult social circumstances by developing tools to address internal constraints. These internal constraints include challenges such as poor self-perceptions. Healthy self-perceptions are especially vital for young people facing significant barriers, since individuals' sense of self-efficacy has been shown to increase their probability of success.⁶ Psychologist Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task.⁷ STFC's youth videography program specifically focuses on building a renewed sense of self-perception for its participants.

STFC provides a safe space for young people to explore personal and societal issues and express their thoughts through creative media. They are exposed to a supportive yet challenging classroom and

² The Economist. (2017). *South Africa has one of the world's worst education systems* (Jan 2017 ed.). Cape Town: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21713858-why-it-bottom-class-south-africa-has-one-worlds-worst-education>

³ Trading Economics. (2018). *South Africa Youth Unemployment Rate*. N.p.: Author. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/youth-unemployment-rate>

⁴ Massoni, E (2011). *Positive Effects of Extra Curricular Activities on Students* (Vol.9, Article 27). N.p.: ESSAI. Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/essai/vol9/iss1/27>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Lybbert, T., & Wuepper, D. (2017). *Perceived Self-Efficacy, Poverty and Economic Development*. N.p.: Annual Review of Resource Economics. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6bbe/489d580817661239697a5f3d3e92e587520b.pdf>

⁷ Bandura, A (1994). Self-efficacy. In V.S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1998).

receive instruction from film and television professionals. Students of the program develop technical videography skills while simultaneously acquiring valuable life skills in critical thinking, analytical thinking, communication, and working in teams.

Show Time Film Club fosters connections and engagement in the community through its showcases and local partnerships. Upon completing a production, students hold a screening to display their work to their friends, family, and fellow community members. The screenings aim to inspire attendees and affirm the motto of the organization: *Discover your potential.*

In 2016, STFC reached 120 students through its workshops. It also formed a production team with its weekly film club attendees and produced four films: a documentary, television show, music video, and short film. In the 2017 school year, STFC implemented a videography program in one public school and opened a weekend class in the heart of Johannesburg’s city center, where children from any school can attend.



As the reach and impact of STFC continues to grow, the organization hopes to reach the most isolated communities through a mobile classroom initiative. If students cannot reach STFC classrooms, STFC will bring the classroom to them.

“We want to empower a child to empower the next child and on and on until the entire community is transformed by young people who have had a glimpse of what their future can be.”

Innocentia Mthembu, Founder

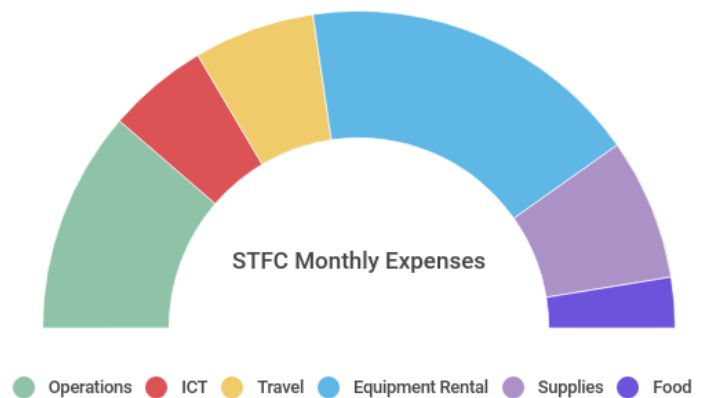
OPERATIONAL MODEL

Team Structure

The Show Time Film Club team is comprised of four full-time employees, and is further supported by a team of volunteers. Innocentia serves as the Director of Business Development, heading efforts in prospecting and connecting SFTC with new partners to expand the capacity of the organization. Other team members serve as classroom facilitators who lead classrooms, assist on production sets, and modify curricula as needed. Beyond the STFC classroom, staff members serve as mentors to students and as liaisons between parents and school administrators. Volunteers include guest speakers and industry professionals who bring valuable knowledge as practitioners to the classroom as well as assist in administrative and social media marketing responsibilities.

Funding

At its outset, STFC relied heavily on self-investment and the support of Blue Lenz Pictures. Now, as a registered private company (Pty) Ltd, the organization is supported by revenue-generating activities and donations. Currently, the sole source of revenue is program fees. Donations come in various forms, including in-kind donations such as broadcast monitors from Sasani Studios, film equipment from Magic Lightbox Company, and office space from ICRD Group Foundation. These gifts from partners allow STFC to reduce the cost of the program to its students. Presently, the organization's most significant expenditure is monthly equipment rental. STFC is working to develop corporate funding streams and partnerships with educational institutions that will fiscally integrate the program fees into the ordinary schooling fees. As STFC continues to scale, it hopes to offer its programs free of charge to participants to reduce barriers of entry for low-income students.



KEY ASSETS & SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

STFC is distinctive in its use of film production as an outlet for expression. Its comprehensive videography curriculum and the two-fold skillsets that the students acquire are the key assets of the program. Supplementing these key assets is the value of community partnerships: the networks of film professionals, public schools, and companies.

Comprehensive Curriculum

Show Time Film Club caters to youth ages 8 to 18 by individualizing its curriculum design in ways adapted to meet its students' many needs. With contributions from industry professionals, the organization works to ensure that the curriculum is student-centric, relevant, and interactive. Production projects are selected according to the interests of students and are offered at the beginner and intermediate levels. The curriculum is delivered in intimate classroom settings made up of 5 to 20 students. Each class session is 2-hours long and takes place at the convenient locations for students. Each of the four terms of the academic year features a different genre of media: documentary, television show, music video, and short film.

Acquired Skillsets

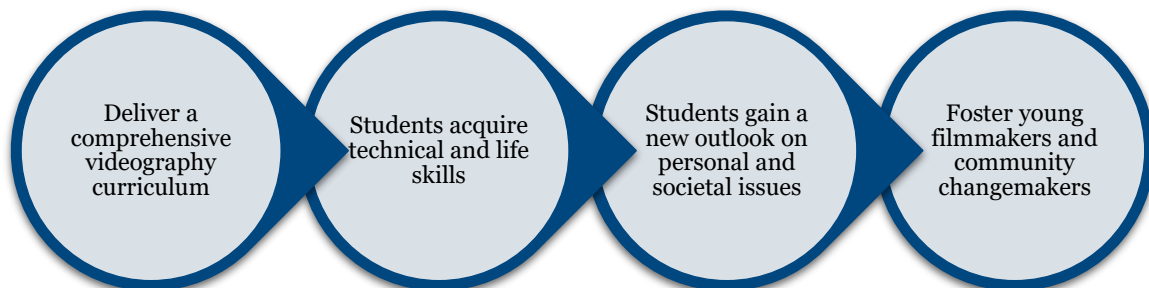
Students acquire technical skills in videography as well as vital life skills. Skills related to the film industry include camera operations, lighting techniques, creative video editing, script writing, photography, and animation. However, STFC differentiates itself with its focus on developing life skills that are essential to youth development, such as public speaking, teamwork, discipline, and punctuality. These life skills translate into increased productivity and success across students' academic and personal lives. In contrast to the rote memorization of public school curricula, STFC promotes analytical and critical thinking in its programming. At the end of the academic year, students return home with four completed videography projects and an improved capacity to work

with people from different backgrounds, to take initiative, and to present their ideas with confidence. STFC aspires to produce a generation of leaders and conscious problem solvers capable of starting powerful new ventures.

Community Partnerships

Prospecting for new partnerships for financial support, sourcing equipment, and recruiting industry speakers are continuous efforts for STFC. Its curriculum would not have been able to take its interactive form without networks of film professionals and the generosity of partners like Magic Lightbox Company and ICRD Group Foundation, who have made in-kind sponsorship of film equipment and office space. Their expertise, connections, and resources are essential to the success of the program.

The integration of the STFC curriculum into local public schools has also been a major accomplishment for the organization. In March 2017, STFC joined a local chapter of BNI, a global business network. At a BNI chapter meeting, STFC connected with Liberty Community College (LCC), located in Johannesburg. As of 2018, STFC is an extracurricular offering at LCC, with 15 students attending the first workshop. Liberty Community College is now considering including STFC program fees within its school fees, as the institution has observed the program's early successes on its campus, and wishes to further increase access to participation. In addition, STFC students serve as the media team for various school functions, which cut costs to the school while also providing a quality service. Another valued partner is Sasani Studios, a local television and film production company that has opened its doors to STFC students for tours. In 2017, 40 students explored the lively behind-the-scene world of the television industry.



CONCLUSION

Show Time Film Club challenges students to discover their potential. Its nurturing classroom environment equips students with both technical skills and a wide range of life skills, all while promoting healthy self-perceptions among cohorts of young people who face a wide range of obstacles to educational and professional opportunities.

Show Time Film Club actively challenges social norms and stereotypes. The issues considered by student films examine pertinent issues within their communities. The class then produces work that

provides a refreshing outlook through the lens of youth. STFC believe that amplifying youth voices is an essential element to shaping youth futures. In a context where educational disparities are commonplace, STFC hopes to set an example of what classroom education can and should be not only for South Africa, but also across the entire African continent.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SHOW TIME FILM CLUB

- [Show Time Film Club Website](#)
- [Show Time Film Club Facebook Page](#)
- [Show Time Film Club Instagram Account](#)
- [YouthActionNet Fellow Profile of Innocentia Mthembu](#)
- Video: [Quality Comes First](#) with Fellow Innocentia Mthembu
- Video: [Madrid Talk](#) by Innocentia Mthembu

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