

UNIT SIX

School-based aftercare

Introduction

Early childhood development, improved nutritional provision and keeping children in school for as long as possible are considered to be three key educational investment areas for vulnerable children. Increased participation in schooling has long-term development and social benefits beyond education and employment opportunities in adult life. Children who are able to participate successfully in learning and teaching are less likely to stay away from school (Richter, L. and Chandan, U: 2008)¹. But the dilemma facing large numbers of vulnerable children is that their ability to participate fully in learning is compromised because of their disadvantaged home environment in which their basic needs are not met. As the rates of absenteeism, interrupted schooling and drop out are generally higher for vulnerable children, they often fall behind and this in turn leads to poor performance and a higher likelihood that they will stay away from school. The challenge for schools is to break this cycle. They can do this by offering quality education and supporting vulnerable learners to keep up with their schoolwork and achieve success. In the previous unit we established that a well-run school nutrition programme is a key support intervention since there is a close association between good nutrition and increased capacity for learning. Providing support to vulnerable learners in the afternoon when formal lessons are over is not only a strategy for helping to keep learners safe, but also an effective way of helping them to improve their performance and increase school attendance. But are schools getting involved in this kind of support?

Some of the schools selected for our study had aftercare arrangements as part of their strategy for supporting vulnerable learners. In this unit we take a closer look at these initiatives and discuss the different approaches to aftercare that we encountered. We reflect on the role of school management in aftercare initiatives for vulnerable learners and also on how the community and local businesses can be drawn in to support such initiatives. Considering various contexts, we conclude by reflecting on the kind of aftercare support you can provide at your school.

Key questions

This unit explores the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of aftercare support for learners?
2. What types of aftercare support strategies can be organised?
3. What is involved in managing school-based aftercare support?
4. Which aftercare strategy is most suitable for your school?

Outcomes

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Recognise of the benefits of aftercare support for learners.
- Describe the different types of aftercare strategies and what is involved in organising each one.
- Recognise the role that external organisations and the community can play in school-based aftercare programmes.
- Reflect on your own school context and identify the type of aftercare support strategy that would be most suitable.
- Identify the most suitable approach for your school to set up an aftercare facility.

What kind of aftercare do schools offer?

A number of schools have recognised the need to provide learners with some form of support when formal school activities close for the day. Some benefits of this kind of support are reflected in the words of a learner who attends aftercare.

I like staying at the aftercare because I feel safe and have a place to do my homework. I also have fun playing with other children and enjoy the games we play. Before I came to the centre I was alone and felt very sad.

The examples of aftercare support described in the case studies (below) will highlight the different ways in which aftercare support can be offered and the value that these initiatives can add to the lives of vulnerable learners and the school.



Activity 1

How do principals organise aftercare support at their schools?

As you read the three case studies, you will notice that each of the schools is located in a different context and that their aftercare service reflects the varied levels of resources available to them.

You can compare information about the three aftercare initiatives by writing down your answers to the questions for each school in the table below.

	Oxford	Ndlovu	Ngesi
Who attends?			
What is on offer?			
Who manages the programme?			
Where do the resources come from?			
How does it support the school			

We have already encountered these three case study schools in earlier units of this guide.

In this Unit, we will examine the aftercare facilities that Oxford Girls’ Primary, Ndlovu Primary and Ngesi Primary have established.



CASE STUDY 9 – AFTERCARE ORGANISED BY THE SCHOOL IN AN URBAN SETTING

The aftercare facility at **Oxford Girls Primary School** runs during school time and in the holidays. The Grade R (Reception) teacher runs this facility and she gets help from parents, who volunteer their services to the aftercare programmes in lieu of fees. The aftercare offers a meal and a set period for the children to do their homework. The Grade R teacher liaises with her colleagues if she picks up a need for remediation in any particular area during the homework session. At the end of the afternoon a programme of 'fun' activities which including reading, drawing, playing and sport activities are facilitated.

The aftercare programme is also available to some young children who attend an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre that is situated across the road from the school and whose parents are unable to fetch them when the centre closes at around midday. In so doing, the school's services are extended even further into the local community.

CASE STUDY 10 – AFTERCARE ORGANISED BY AN EXTERNAL ORGANISATION IN A RURAL SETTING

Ndlovu Primary School is situated in a rural area of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The school serves a very poor community where water is scarce and agricultural activity is limited to small-scale cattle and goat rearing. We first introduced Ndlovu Primary in Unit 5 when we discussed its nutrition programme that is integrated into the aftercare facility.

The aftercare programme is run by NOAH (Nurturing Orphans of AIDS for Humanity). The aftercare facility receives funding from NOAH, as well as from the nearby Phinda game reserve and from the Media in Education Trust Africa (MiETA). It is a community-based programme run at Ndlovu school. It serves about 258 vulnerable children from Ndlovu Primary School. It also takes in orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) from the surrounding schools including the local secondary school. Typically, the teachers from the schools alert the aftercare professional staff and volunteers to the fact that specific children are in need of the support offered by the aftercare facility. The children and their care givers (where applicable) are approached by the volunteers and invited to attend the aftercare. The aftercare programme runs from 13H30 until 16H00 during the school term.

The aftercare programme is comprised of:

- a meal served daily
- supervised homework
- sports on a Tuesday (mainly soccer and netball played on an piece of empty ground and supervised by volunteers)
- craft on a Wednesday (the craft work is taught by traditional crafters from the community – beadwork, weaving as well as pottery - some of which is sold to tourists)
- home visits undertaken on Fridays by volunteers from the aftercare facility
- opportunity for counselling

During the holidays the programme of activities continues, usually starting at 12h00 noon with a meal. The programme then ends with another meal at 16h00.

CASE STUDY 11 – AFTERCARE ORGANISED BY THE SCHOOL IN COLLABORATION WITH A COMMUNITY GROUP IN AN URBAN SETTING

Ngesi Primary is a fairly large school situated in a township of the East Rand of Gauteng. We have also already read about this school in Unit 4 when we discussed setting up networks of support.

One of the more active committees in the school is the Welfare committee, which spearheads the school's programmes for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children. It is led by Mrs Manana, a Grade 5 teacher. The work of the committee includes the aftercare programme, as well as overseeing the provincial nutrition programme and a food garden.

As we have already read, the aftercare at Ngesi Primary School started as an initiative of some grannies in the township. The grannies were motivated by their concern for learners left to their own devices in the afternoons after school. In particular they were anxious about the young girls, who were vulnerable to abuse by unemployed men who hang out in groups on the township streets. The women approached the school offering to set up an aftercare facility in which learners would be off the streets, in a safe place and have a space in which to do their homework. A classroom was made available for this purpose, and the supervised afternoon homework sessions began. A meal is provided and some Life Skills programmes are run for the learners. The women also encourage the children to talk about their problems and help them to wash their uniforms so they looked neat and tidy every day.

Later, with the involvement of the Department of Education, the aftercare programme became more formalised and the two caregivers were recognised as part of the school staff.



Comment

The principals in all three schools claimed that having aftercare for learners supported the work of the school in fundamental ways. It ensured that the basic needs of children (like safety, food and play) were met. The basic homework routines also helped learners to keep up with their academic work. This meant the teachers could effectively continue with teaching and learning because learners came to the classes prepared. While an aftercare programme cannot solve the problems in the community, it can help to protect the children from harm.

In these and other examples of aftercare that were encountered in this study, we found that in their most basic form the aftercare facilities offered a safe place for children to stay after school. While the best examples offered structured homework support, a programme of extramural activities and recreation as well as an opportunity for psycho-social support.

Here is a quick overview of the different approaches the three schools took.

	Oxford	Ndlovu	Ngesi
Who attends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners from school, and young children from an Early Childhood Development Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners from Ndlovu, and learners from the surrounding schools including the local secondary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners from Ngesi, who do not have a safe place to stay in the afternoons
What is on offer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meal Supervised homework time Safe play and other activities Referral for psycho-social support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meal Supervised homework time Sports and crafts Home visits Counselling and Referral for more support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meal Supervised homework time Informal counselling Washing of clothes
Who manages the programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal, Grade R teacher parent volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside organisations (NGOs) in liaison with the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group of interested outsiders (community initiative) in liaison with the school welfare committee
Where do the resources come from?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two NGOs, local business, outside funders in liaison with the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community and local business in liaison with the school
How does it support the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep children safe and fed Get homework done/ Academic support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep children safe and fed Get homework done Emotional support Home care visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep children safe and fed Get homework done Emotional support

It has been interesting to note that of the three case studies, only Oxford Primary relies on resources from within the school community, using one of its own teachers to run the aftercare programme. Oversight is provided by the school principal. In the other two schools the resources come primarily from outside the school and teachers do not play a leading role, although at Ndlovu the initial liaison with the NGOs and local business was facilitated by the principal's proactive approach. At Ngesi, it was the grannies from the community who were proactive and approached the school, offering their services. At both Ndlovu and Ngesi the aftercare programme is co-ordinated by people from outside the school although the school personnel do liaise with the outside agencies. In these two instances the aftercare initiative is seen as being separate from the school. Also, the programme in the afternoons seems less formal and more pastoral. After attending their lessons in the morning, the children get fed, have an opportunity to do their homework, have a safe place to pursue extra-curricular interests and also have some free time to play. The arrangements at Ndlovu and Ngesi primary schools exemplify the value added by external organisations and individuals and highlight the immense benefit that support networks can add to a school.





The benefits of aftercare support

These examples have shown some of the main benefits of aftercare support for learners and the school.

Benefits for learners	Benefits for the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a safe place in the afternoon which protects learners from possible abuse and exploitation • Space and time to do homework • Possibility of getting help with schoolwork from adults or other learners • Emotional support from caring adults • Have fun with other children by getting involved in games • Strengthen and develop physical and team building skills through participation in sports activities • Learn life skills through participation in a range of informal and structured activities that teach children how to cope with everyday situations • Have access to information about HIV and AIDS • Have access to counselling (psycho-socio support) • Have access to health care support • Receive food in the afternoon • Some access to home care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the needs of vulnerable children • Improved enrolment, attendance, discipline and learner achievement (lower drop out rates) • Strengthened relationships with parents and the wider community • Strengthened links with external organisations that can provide a range of support services to the school • Closer working relationship and sharing of resources with other schools • Improved access to resources for supporting vulnerable learners and teaching life orientation skills.

School-based aftercare support strategies

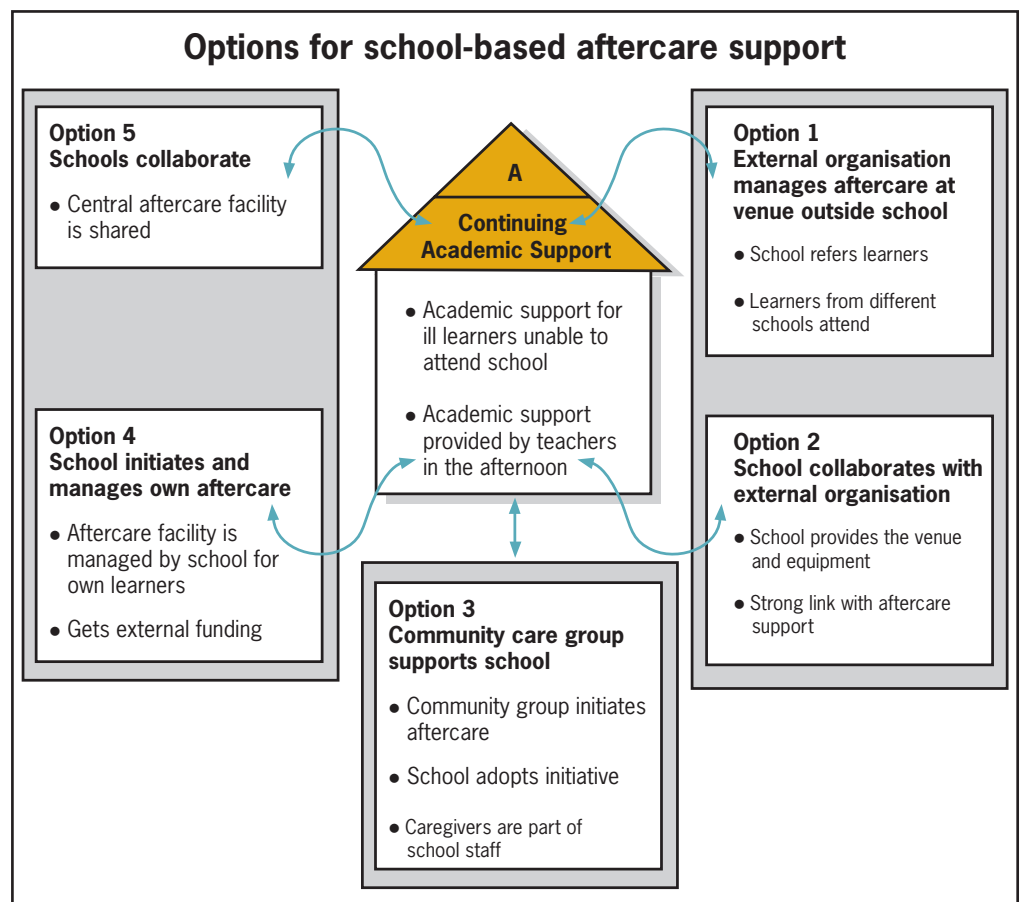
Should aftercare be considered an optional extra? Or should schools seriously see it as an integral part of providing access to quality education for vulnerable learners? In Unit 2 we discussed the implications for schools of several policies that clearly state that schools are responsible for providing quality education for all. This means that schools are required to maximise the participation of **all learners** in the curriculum and to minimise barriers to learning. In short, the education must be inclusive. Since barriers to learning and development are predominantly socio-economic in origin, schools have to make the necessary adjustments in the way the school programme is managed in order to meet the needs of vulnerable learners affected by HIV and AIDS or any other socio-economic barrier to education.

It is a known fact that vulnerable children often stay away from school not out of choice but because of the challenges in their home environment. During the course of this study we found no instances of academic support for learners who were unable to attend school either due to their own illness or for any other reason. While the *National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners, Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions* (DoE:1999)² clearly states that schools are obliged to support continued learning where possible, none of the schools we visited had developed a system of how they would offer academic support.

Providing homework support is a common feature of the aftercare programmes we have looked at so far. In most cases, however, this is limited to setting a fixed time during which the learners can get the homework done. Only Oxford Primary offers a system where learners could get some form of academic and remedial support. The approach used by Oxford Primary is a simple one that could easily be instituted in any school. All it entails is that each teacher be required to stay on in their classroom for one hour after formal classes have ended each day and to purposively spend that time supporting learners who need additional academic support.

Adequate academic support to learners is intimately linked to the school’s mission and core business of learning. Committed teachers integrate academic support in their day-to-day teaching. But when schools are faced with large numbers of learners who are unable to cope or who cannot always attend lessons, management is obliged to find alternative ways of providing academic support.

The following diagram gives an overview of the options that schools can use to provide additional academic and other important support to meet the needs of vulnerable learners.



Strategy A: Continuing academic support

We view strategy A as an extension of the school's responsibility to provide adequate academic support to learners. The strategy is two pronged and is comprised of:

- Academic support provided by teachers who are available in their classes for a specified time in the afternoon. During this time teachers are able to offer remedial support to learners as necessary. Many of the learners who participate in remedial support will probably be vulnerable learners.
- A clear plan that specifies how the school intends to accommodate the needs of learners who are unable to participate regularly in the school programme due to illness or for other legitimate reasons.

Academic support in the afternoon

Teachers are required to stay on for extracurricular activities in the afternoon and academic support could be included in the afternoon programme of activities. The burden can be shared among the teachers with teachers being allocated specific days on which they are to be on duty.

Academic support for vulnerable learners who are unable to attend school regularly

According to the National Policy on HIV and AIDS for Learners, Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions:

If and when learners with HIV or AIDS become incapacitated through illness, the school should make work available to them for study at home and should support continued learning where possible.... Or provide older learners with distance education (Ibid pp 9-13).³

This applies to all learners who are unable to attend school for health or other legitimate reasons. This kind of support is probably more challenging to organise. In the first place you would have to identify those learners who would qualify for this kind of support. In Unit 3 we saw that by analysing the attendance records, the performance of learners on assessment tasks and the teacher's observations of learners during lessons, it is possible to get an idea about which learners may be at risk. A home visit would reveal the learner's home situation and could serve to confirm their vulnerability status.

After the initial assessment, various options for academic support would then have to be sought. Here are some ideas:

- A parent, caregiver or other suitable member of the community can be approached to visit the learner and assist him/her to complete specified tasks set by the teacher. The tasks are part of a learning pack that also is comprised of helpful guidelines and other supportive learning materials. Completed tasks are sent to the responsible teacher who marks them and provides feedback to the learner. This feedback is mediated by the parent or caregiver for primary school children.
- A peer support group could be formed if there are a few vulnerable learners who live close together. Members of the group receive the learning packs and work together on specified tasks. A parent, caregiver, or other suitable member of the community could provide support to the group and oversee the completion of tasks.
- Vulnerable learners can attend an aftercare facility at the school or at a centre in the community. The school can organise remedial classes as part of the aftercare programme.

By providing additional academic support for vulnerable learners you can increase their chances of keeping up with the work, and strengthen their confidence and motivation, which are important internal factors for achieving success. These simple support actions by committed teachers can have a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable learners.



ACTIVITY

Activity 2

How can you implement Strategy A in your school?

Strategy A is not considered an optional extra but an integral part of the school's programme of academic support, especially for vulnerable learners.

Discuss the following questions with your management team and record the main points of your discussion.

1. What is your reaction to the notion that Strategy A is an integral part of the school's responsibility to provide academic support to learners?
2. What kind of resistance do you expect from teachers with regard to providing remedial support in the afternoon? How will you counter this possible resistance?
3. How would you go about implementing remedial afternoon support?
4. What ideas do you have for providing academic support to learners who are unable to come to school regularly?

You can draw on these ideas when you prepare the care and support plan in Unit 8.

Comment

Making Strategy A work will require strong leadership and an ability to mobilise the right kind of support. Whatever ideas you come up with must be workable in your context. So it might be useful to start implementing something that you have a fairly good sense will work well with minimum effort. Our visits to schools that offered aftercare showed that even homework supervision where little or no remedial academic support was offered was beneficial to vulnerable learners.

You will obviously have to deal with resistance on the part of teachers, since they would be reluctant to get involved in any activity that they perceive would extend their school day. Their initial reaction may also be negative, for they may think that this is yet another burden that they have to carry. You will have to pre-empt this type of reaction by preparing how you will communicate this new initiative to them. Help them to understand that academic support is required as part of the school's responsibility to vulnerable learners, and involve the teachers in coming up with ideas on how this might work. The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution No 7 - Workload of School Based Educators⁴ – requires that “all educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than seven hours per day”.



For most primary school teachers, an extra 45 minutes to one hour spent in the class room each day supporting learners with homework or helping them to catch up missed work after formal classes are completed, will not require additional time over and above the required seven hours.

The equivalent type of support for secondary school learners may require teachers to stay on at school a little longer. However this type of academic support/extra and co-curricular duties, including pastoral duties, are in fact assumed in terms of the ELRC Resolution 7 to be part of the workload of school-based educators anyway!

Academic support for learners who are unable to attend school regularly needs a more considered approach and plan. You may want to set up a small task team under the supervision of the SMT to investigate what methods might be appropriate. A draft set of ideas can be discussed with teachers and can result in a definite plan of action.

School-based aftercare options

Academic support is not the only kind of support that vulnerable children need. Aftercare facilities are able to meet other important needs such as safety, nutrition, play and companionship as well as psycho-social support. We noticed in the diagram above (*options for school-based aftercare support*) the various aftercare options that can be implemented to offer vulnerable learners support. Let's examine the three main options and find out:

- what is involved in each aftercare option ?
- what kind of support external organisations can offer?
- what the role of school management is in successfully implementing any of these options?

1. External organisation manages the aftercare support (Options 1 and 2)

External organisations like NOAH, MiETA and Save the Children run aftercare programmes in different provinces in South Africa. Programmes are run at centres outside the school grounds as well as at school venues. In the next activity you can reflect on an initiative organised by Save the Children (UK) in the Free State.



ACTIVITY

Activity 3

What is the relationship between the external agency and the school in this aftercare programme?

When you read Case Study 12 focus your attention on these three main questions:

1. What activities take place?
2. What is the organisation responsible for?
3. What is the school management responsible for?

We have already looked at the Zama Intermediate School case study in Unit 2 when we examined the principal's role in managing a range of external interventions. This time we will be considering how the aftercare programme was established, and the SMT's collaboration with the NGO in running it.



CASE STUDY 12 – COLLABORATION WITH AN EXTERNAL ORGANISATION

The **Zama Intermediate School** aftercare programme started after a Department of Education official introduced the principal to Save the Children (UK). The NGO was already running support programmes for vulnerable children in some school districts of the Free State. In 2006 a contractual agreement between Save the Children (UK) and the school was signed and the *Caring Schools Programme* was introduced. Approximately 200 learners attend the aftercare programme, which always starts with a meal in the afternoon. Afterwards, a programme of activities begins. The programme is facilitated by the Save the Children Youth Facilitators and includes a homework slot.

During homework time the learners are grouped according to their grade and the Youth Facilitators and some teachers (members of the School-based Support Team) help learners with their homework. They also listen to the learners' reading. Once the homework is done the children can take part in a range of activities including drama, sport and games. Gardening activities are also undertaken.

On the basis of the contract that the school signed with Save the Children (UK), the school management team (SMT) and the school-based support team (SBST) are required to play an active role in supporting and guiding the Youth Facilitators to run the aftercare programme. This agreement encourages greater ownership and participatory decision making on the part of the school. The fact that the aftercare programme is a formal, contractual agreement seems to ensure that the care and support offered in the programme serves the needs of the learners and the needs of the school.

As part of the contract, Save the Children provides the school with specified funds per year. This payment is made in three parts: the first payment is made immediately after signing the contract; the next two payments are contingent on the school supplying the necessary progress reports to Save the Children. The school also receives materials, which can be used in the programme.

Comment

The aftercare initiative at Zama was started by an outside organisation and did not grow from an initiative within the school itself. This means that at first the school played a more passive role, providing a site where the Caring Schools Programme could take shape.

The contract with Save the Children, however, soon put the school into a more active support role. The school not only provided the location for the programme, but also made teachers from the SBST (School Based Support Team) available to help with written homework. In this way they could share their skills with the Youth Facilitators and also make sure the aftercare programme supported the curriculum of the school. The management of the school (principal and SMT) did not actively participate in aftercare. They were asked to support the programme in a different, more developmental way. They were given the task of supporting and guiding the Youth Facilitators, developing their capacity to organise the aftercare. This developmental role is crucial for making the programme sustainable, should Save the Children pull out. By supporting the Youth Facilitators it is hoped that the local community develops the capacity to support the school through the aftercare intervention.

The previous case study shows the role a school can play in an aftercare initiative that was set up and is managed by an external organisation. The school can collaborate in a variety of different ways with these types of initiatives. Here is a detailed description of another externally initiated aftercare programme, the NOAH’s Ark Programme. It shows what the programme offers, what the organisation is responsible for and how the school can collaborate. The example below is taken from the Ndlovu Primary School Case Study in Kwazulu Natal.

The NOAH's Ark Aftercare Programme	
What the programme offers	<p>The aftercare programme runs from 13H30 until 16H00 during the school term. It is comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a meal served daily, • supervised homework • sports on a Tuesday (mainly soccer and netball played on an piece of empty ground and supervised by volunteers). • craft on a Wednesday (the craft work is taught by traditional crafters from the community – beadwork, weaving as well as pottery- some of which is sold to tourists) • on Fridays volunteers from the Ark undertake home visits • opportunity for counselling <p>The meal provided daily is a key component of the programme. The learners are also served food at 09h00 every day during the school holidays. Sometimes food parcels are provided for the children to take home in the holidays (instead of a meal being served at the school). Typically the meal consists of rice or samp or pap accompanied by red meat or chicken or soya mince or vegetables. E-pap, highly fortified mealie meal is also served.</p> <p>A structured homework session is built into the afternoon programme. A volunteer group of out of school youth that have matriculated, and some teachers help the learners with this. However, it appears that this is only done once a week.</p> <p>Additional activities, some with a therapeutic purpose facilitated by another NGO DramAidE⁵, are undertaken to help vulnerable learners to cope with their situations. This includes building memory boxes, participating in drama activities and role-play and having guest speakers speak on a range of motivational topics.</p> <p>On a Friday the Ark volunteers visit the homes of vulnerable learners. Each volunteer is responsible for three homes. They have a form called the HomeVisit Checklist, which they fill in to record what they observe and on which any necessary follow up actions are recorded. This form covers a range of information from the appearance of the child and the home conditions, to who is present at the home and their relationship to the child. The form also covers information pertaining to any social assistance the child receives.</p> <p>The Ark manager employed by NOAH is a trained counsellor and is able to provide a counselling service.</p> <p>During the holidays the programme of activities continues usually starting at 12h00 with a meal. The programme then ends with another meal at 16h00.</p>
The roles and responsibilities of the organization	<p>The Ark has three paid employees: the manager, a child minder and a cook, who prepares the food daily. NOAH pays these three staff members a modest salary. In addition there are some community-based volunteers who do home visits and some out of school youth you have completed their Matric who offer homework support and supervise sporting activities. Although they are volunteers, NOAH has a policy of paying a small stipend or providing food parcels as an incentive to volunteers.</p>

The NOAH's Ark Aftercare Programme	
The roles and responsibilities of the school	<p>The teachers are most often responsible for identifying vulnerable learners and alerting the NOAH staff as to which learners need to be part of the aftercare programme.</p> <p>SGB members and other parents are responsible for collecting the firewood that is used for cooking the meals. The SGB chair makes sure that this is done.</p> <p>A large, empty classroom at Ndlovu Primary School is used as a dining room and the school has provided all the necessary crockery and cutlery.</p> <p>The Ark uses the school computer room as its activity room for both homework as well as the other activities such as the craftwork.</p>

We can see from both the above examples that the level of collaboration between the external agency and the school can be minimal or it can be more involved. Where schools play an active role it is possible to create a stronger link between the aftercare programme and the school's efforts. The close collaboration can be of benefit to both the school and the aftercare project, and increase the chances of long-term sustainability of a programme such as this.

2. Community supported school-based aftercare initiative (Option 3)

We have already been introduced to the example of the caring grandmothers. This group of concerned *Gogos* organised themselves into a community care group called *Itso seng*, which was later registered as a CBO by the Department of Social Development. Let's look at how this small initiative developed into a school-based aftercare project. Here is a detailed description of what the programme offers, what support the community provides and how the school is involved.

Community supported school-based aftercare programme	
What the programme offers	<p>Participation in the aftercare programme At the time that this case study was done, there were 72 learners, identified as vulnerable learners who participated in this programme. Children without parents or whose parents are unemployed were given preference. A register recording the names programme participants was kept and updated annually.</p> <p>The programme The Aftercare programme starts at 14H00 and operates from Monday to Friday during the school term. An empty classroom has been furnished for the Aftercare programme to use. A weekly schedule is followed at the Aftercare programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A register is taken of who is absent and who is present. • The learners are then provided with a meal. The menu consists mainly of porridge, rice, vegetable, mince meat, beef, chicken, fruit and fruit juice. • The activities undertaken include singing and prayer (usually before eating). Supervised homework is scheduled three days a week, while on the other two days reading is scheduled for thirty minutes. After the homework or reading, learners do gardening once a week, storytelling, sports and music appreciation activities. • Facilities are set up for boys and girls to wash themselves on alternate days. The caregivers also collect school uniforms that need to be washed and shoe polish is provided daily for the learners to clean their shoes.

Community supported school-based aftercare programme	
<p>The roles and responsibilities of the external organisations (local business, community-based organisation (CBO) and local government structures).</p>	<p>Emperor's Palace (Hotel and Casino):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides funds for running the aftercare and organises regular audits. • pays the employees who run the aftercare facility directly <p>The Department of Social Welfare assists the school with home visits, referrals of learners to relevant service providers, and facilitates access to social grants.</p> <p>Women from the community who started off the aftercare programme on a voluntary basis are now paid for their services by Emperor's Palace.</p>
<p>The roles and responsibilities of the school</p>	<p>The School Governing Body, principal and deputy principal are responsible for managing the funds. The deputy principal is responsible for keeping records and writing income and expenditure statements and an annual report accounting for the monies spent. The SGB then allocates money to the employees of the aftercare facility (the two caregivers and the cook) to buy food, soap, washing powder, gas, seeds for the garden etc.</p> <p>The school-based welfare committee, headed up by a Grade 5 teacher, provides guidance and support to the staff of the aftercare programme. In particular, they liaise with <i>Itsoseng</i> (which has grown into a well established CBO) around referrals and grants for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>The Welfare committee is responsible for establishing and maintaining the vegetable garden at the school. The vegetables are used both for supplementing meals in the aftercare programme as well as for making up parcels to be sent home with needy learners.</p> <p>Two other teachers assist wherever they can. They generally come in to ensure that the aftercare programme is running smoothly and they monitor the quality of the food. They also present motivational talks on interesting topics.</p>

This is a good example of an aftercare programme that started informally as a small venture by a group of concerned grandmothers and has now become integrated into the school set up, where regular funding from a large business makes it possible to offer a structured programme which has a daily schedule of activities and support for vulnerable learners. Links between the aftercare facility and the welfare committee of the school are strong and well managed and the staff involved show a high level of commitment. Effective accounting and financial management ensures that the funders stay happy to continue supporting the programme.



3. The school initiates and manages the aftercare programme (Options 4 and 5)

The aftercare programme organised at Oxford Primary School is a good example of an initiative started by the principal who is actively involved in managing the programme.

School initiated and managed aftercare programme	
What the programme offers	<p>The aftercare programme runs from 13h30 – 18h00 daily during the school term and also operates during the school holidays. Approximately 30 children attend the aftercare.</p> <p>It is run by the Grade R teacher at the school with the help of one parent volunteer who comes in before the children get there to prepare the afternoon meal and then stays to assist with looking after the children.</p> <p>The aftercare facility is accommodated in a house on the school property which was originally built for school staff many years ago. It is fenced off from the rest of the school property and is a secure area with its own access gate and dedicated playing area with swings and various other types of playground equipment.</p> <p>The facility is also made available to some young children who attend an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre (nursery school) that is situated across the road from the school and whose parents are unable to fetch them when the ECD centre closes at around midday.</p> <p>The aftercare offers a structured programme which consists of having a meal, a set period for the children to do their homework and a programme of activities including playing in the garden.</p> <p>The Grade R teacher supervises the homework and signs the children’s homework book. She also liaises with the parents regarding any important school notifications. Additionally, she also links up with other teachers in the school if she picks up a need for remediation in any particular area, thus forming a useful feedback loop, which helps to ensure that learners are supported in both teaching and learning.</p>

School initiated and managed aftercare programme	
Funding and external support	<p>There is a monthly charge of R 250.00 to parents who make use of this facility for their children, but even this fee is negotiable and parents pay what they can.</p> <p>Since most of the parents – 65 - 70% – are unable to pay the school fees, the principal has set up a system whereby parents are asked to volunteer their services to the school in lieu of fees. This works on a rotational basis with ten parents working at the school for one term at a time. The principal assesses the parents’ skill and language levels and deploys them in the school accordingly. Some parents help with cleaning, some look after the garden including the vegetable garden, two work as teachers, assistants in the classroom and even do substitution when a teacher is ill, and one assists with the school aftercare programme.</p>
The roles and responsibilities of the school	<p>The proactive nature of the principal has resulted in a range of initiatives being implemented to support vulnerable learners in this school. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff receiving training around a range of issues pertaining to HIV and AIDS • Implementing a process for identifying vulnerable learners and following through with the necessary support actions • Making and maintaining records regarding vulnerable learners and follow up actions taken • Undertaking home visits where necessary • Facilitating and managing a counselling service • Putting in place a systematic process for vulnerable learner referrals • Establishing a large vegetable garden to provide food to the most needy learners • Running a clothes bank – a system for collecting items of the school uniform and providing them to needy learners • Integrating a schoolwork/homework support system in the daily school programme • Offering an aftercare facility at the school that runs during school time and during the holidays.

This is an example of what is possible when management plays a visionary leadership role, which is backed up by good management practice. As a result of the aftercare intervention organised by the principal, the school enjoys a positive relationship with the community. This is particularly apparent in the way that parents are willing to participate in the volunteer system at the school.

A variation on the above option is for schools that are located within close proximity of each other to collaborate and share an aftercare facility, which is open to all vulnerable learners from their schools. The aftercare programme could be delivered at one of the schools that is central and easily accessible to all learners. A collaborative agreement will specify the nature of the programme offered, where funds will be drawn from to pay for the expenses of running the aftercare support, and what the responsibilities are of the partner schools.

Critical success factors for managing aftercare programmes

All the examples we have examined show what schools can do and how communities and external agencies can assist the school to offer a variety of support services after school for the benefit of vulnerable learners. We can learn both from the successes that were achieved as well from the shortcomings that were noticed. It seems that factors, which increase the likelihood of successful management of an aftercare initiative, include the following.

- *Dedicated and strong leadership and management.* Where principals were dynamic and showed good management practices they were able to recognise external opportunities and negotiate beneficial agreements with external agencies. Frequently schools that experience the biggest challenges are the least equipped to deal with them. Building leadership and management capacity at schools is thus of critical importance for the success of any initiative to provide support for vulnerable learners.
- *Active involvement of the school* in small community initiatives as well as large projects run by external organisations can build a symbiotic relationship that is beneficial for both the project and the school. A sound collaborative relationship can also promote long-term sustainability of the aftercare support.
- *The importance of contractual agreements* between the school and external agencies. For example the agreement used by Save the Children (UK) requires participation in the project by every level of school management. Their active involvement is directly linked to funding becoming available. Clear terms and roles and responsibilities create a solid framework for collaboration between the school and the external provider. This also applies to initiatives in which schools collaborate to organise a central aftercare facility.
- *The importance of getting sufficient funds* to cover all the costs of the aftercare programme. The aftercare programmes we looked were all reliant on external sources of funding. It is essential for the success of the venture that the sources of funding are diverse and reliable.
- *The importance of skilled financial managers.* Building the relevant skills of those who are vested with the responsibility of budgeting, raising and managing the funding is critical. Capacity building courses such as 'Finance for Non-financial Managers' should be prioritised.
- *The central role of nutrition.* The benefits of providing food for learners at the aftercare facility cannot be underestimated. It offers a huge incentive for learners to participate in the programme.
- *The importance of offering a multi-faceted programme.* Since the needs of vulnerable learners are varied and complex, it is necessary to offer a variety of services such as play activities, homework supervision, meals, life orientation skills training, gardening, counselling, home visits and referral system for grants.

What aftercare strategy is suitable for your school?

The case studies that we have examined have shown that aftercare is separate from the programme of learning and teaching that takes place at schools during the day. It is helpful to see the two sets of programmes as distinct. We have already reflected on the academic support role that schools are expected to carry out in their normal daily schedule. We referred to the academic support that teachers could provide for a short period in the afternoon as *Strategy A*. Where feasible, teachers from the school could get involved in offering academic support in an aftercare facility. But it is essential to see the academic support as an integral part of the school's core responsibility and not as an optional extra. By now you will have some idea of how you might implement an academic support strategy at your school.

In addition to the academic support provided by teachers in the afternoon, the school can get involved in collaborating with an existing aftercare programme, working with other schools in the area to set up a common aftercare facility, or set up and manage their own aftercare support programme for vulnerable learners. This programme offers varied support activities designed to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. You have seen what others are doing to provide aftercare for vulnerable learners. The ideas can stimulate you to reflect on what you can do at your school given the resources and capacity you have, and the opportunities that exist in your community.



Activity 4 Identify an aftercare strategy for your school

The challenge for you and your management team is to come up ideas for a workable aftercare strategy. This is essentially an initial planning activity that consists of two main tasks:

Task 1

This is a simple research task that a couple of members of the SMT can carry out. An important first step in finding the most suitable strategy is to investigate what kind of aftercare support exists in your community, and how individuals, businesses and organisations in the community can support the school in an aftercare initiative. These questions can be used to guide the investigation. The findings are recorded in a short written report.

1. What kind of aftercare support exists in the community? Ask teachers, parents, caregivers, leaders of Faith based Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs operating in your area, clinics, and community development facilitators. Record your findings and give a clear description of the support that is being provided, who is involved, and what their contact details are.
2. What kind of support can you expect from individuals, businesses and organisations in the area? Use similar contacts to get this information and give details about the nature of the support that is potentially available, names and contact number of relevant people.

Task 2

The management team meets for a planning activity, which entails brainstorming, critically reflecting on the written report, and compiling an initial set of ideas for aftercare.

The resources you need for the planning activity include:

- Use **Tool 23: What kind of aftercare service can your school offer?** to record your ideas
- The written report prepared in Task 1
- Ideas from the case studies in this unit.



TOOLKIT

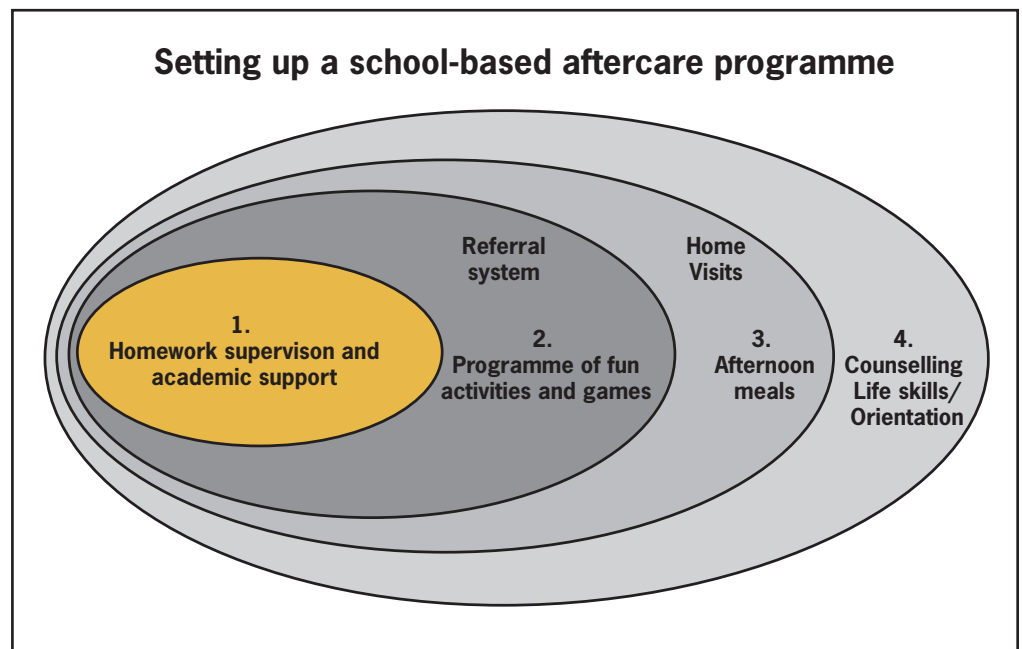
You can draw on the ideas you compiled about aftercare when you prepare the care and support plan in Unit 8.

Comment

Before you even consider aftercare support it is necessary to examine the nature and the scope of the challenge of providing such support at your school. How many vulnerable learners do you have at your school? How do you establish whether they are eligible for participating in the aftercare programme? What are their most urgent needs? What are the implications of setting up, managing and maintaining such a programme? The examples you looked in this unit will have given you a good idea of what is involved.

Your choice of aftercare option is dependent to a large extent on the environment in which your school is located. If there is already an existing aftercare programme run by an external agency, the community or even another school, you could decide that it would be beneficial to look for ways of collaborating with this programme. If no aftercare support exists, then a strong option would be to set up an aftercare programme. You could work with another school in the immediate area, or with the community and involve various people such as parents, out of school and unemployed young people and retired people. Use whichever option you think is most appropriate given the opportunities and constraints of your context. Consider carefully how to use the ideas you have generated to create a workable plan that will result in positive actions.

You do not necessarily have to implement an aftercare programme that offers the full range of services at once. You can use a phased approach whereby you build up the programme gradually as depicted graphically in the diagram below.



You could start with a few activities that you can manage easily with resources that you are assured of. For example, you could begin with afternoon homework supervision, since this might be quite easy to organise. You may be able to get willing parents involved at the start and one of the teachers could liaise with the parents regularly. It might also be possible to get sponsorship from a local business to offer children fruit, a cool drink and sandwiches at the beginning. Later, as you are able to raise regular funding, you can offer light meals. In a phased approach you build the programme up step by step. A challenge in a phased approach is to keep your eye on the big picture and keep expanding the range of support and services and not become complacent by sticking with a programme that offers minimum support.

You could, of course, plan the full range of activities right from the start. This approach requires that you have the necessary funding and capacity to do so. It demands careful planning and a huge input of time and effort on the part of management, because there is so much to organise at once. A challenge in this approach is to 'fly' too quickly without having the necessary resources or the required infrastructure; in the process you might set yourself up for failure.



Tool 24

Some ideas for aftercare activities

This Tool will help you think about a possible range of creative activities that could be offered as part of an aftercare programme at your school.

Despite the obvious possibilities and advantages of having an afterschool programme, there are many educators in management positions and teachers who are resistant to the idea of setting up school-based aftercare. Although they worry about the needs of vulnerable children in their midst and want to respond, they feel incapable of extending themselves because they are barely coping with their existing school and home responsibilities. If they start an aftercare initiative they are afraid that they will be overwhelmed by the new demands. It is helpful to pay attention to these reservations and to find creative ways of working with external partners and harnessing support from the community. Principals must always be careful not to overextend their teachers since this would seriously undermine their ability to carry out their teaching responsibilities.

However, we have seen how principals and teachers in other schools across the country have managed to get support from outside agencies and individuals and have worked with a range of partners. Successful aftercare partnerships can provide a more varied programme of support to vulnerable learners than is possible for an individual school. Well-managed aftercare programmes do not benefit only vulnerable learners and the school but they have a positive knock-on effect on the community.

Key points

Several aftercare initiatives we examined revealed the different ways in which aftercare programmes are set up and managed, the activities and support that are organised, the roles and responsibilities of school management, and the nature of the support provided by NGOs, government departments, businesses, parents and the community.

In Unit 6 we explored:

- What the benefits of aftercare support for learners are.
- What types of aftercare support strategies can be organised.
- What is involved in managing school-based aftercare programmes.
- What aftercare strategy is likely to be most suitable for your school.

Some important insights we gained:

1. Aftercare and support with schoolwork is considered to be one of the interventions, together with basic nutrition and psycho-socio support, that is a precondition for successful learning and teaching. By getting involved in organising aftercare for vulnerable learners, schools can enhance their learning capacity, increase the likelihood of improved performance and boost school attendance.
2. It is part of the school's core responsibility to provide academic support for learners who are not coping or who do not attend school because of illness or for other legitimate reasons. Many of these will be vulnerable learners. But remedial academic support is not the same as aftercare. The aftercare programme is much broader and could incorporate academic support, which remains the responsibility of the school.
3. The successful aftercare programmes we looked at were multi-faceted and integrated a range of support services such as homework support, a nutrition programme, food garden, a referral system for grants and home visits to families of vulnerable children.
4. A variety of approaches can be used to organise aftercare programmes. Schools can link up and collaborate with existing aftercare facilities organised and managed by external organisations; they can integrate community support initiatives into the school system; and they can set up and manage an aftercare programme internally. Given the opportunities and constraints that exist in the school's environment, management has to decide which option is most suitable.
5. School management has to look for assistance with funding and other forms of support both from within and outside of their communities to implement aftercare support for vulnerable learners. Regular funding is a prerequisite for organising a successful aftercare programme and therefore proper budgeting and planning are important.
6. Contractual agreements that specify terms and clarify roles and responsibilities are essential for successful collaboration between the school and external partners.
7. Recognising that good leadership and management are the key to successful and sustainable after care programmes, building leadership and management capacity at schools is critical.