

# UNIT SIX

## School-based aftercare

### Tool 23: What kind of aftercare service can your school offer?

To find the answer to this question you can organise a brainstorming activity with your school management team. Brainstorming is a well-known and useful tool that we can use to come up with creative solutions to problems. It is particularly useful if you want to break out of the usual patterns of thinking in order to take a fresh look at a problem or challenge. Brainstorming with a group can be particularly effective as it stimulates the members to share their experience and creativity. If well organised, group brainstorming can enable the team to develop ideas in more depth than if individuals are left to come up with ideas on their own.

#### IDEAS FOR ORGANISING A PRODUCTIVE BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

1. Clearly describe the challenge or problem for which you want to find an answer.
2. Make sure everyone understands the 'rules of the brainstorming game'
  - Everyone's contribution is accepted and respected
  - No attempt must be made to evaluate the ideas
  - No sequential train of thought is followed
  - The focus must be on the problem or challenge
  - All ideas are recorded.
3. Encourage people to be creative and to come up with as many ideas as possible, practical as well as impractical ones. All ideas are welcome.
4. Encourage everyone to contribute. One way of doing this is to get people to write their ideas on cards. The participants write one idea per card. The cards can be placed on the wall or stand with prestik. The cards also serve as a record of the ideas and there is no need for someone to record them on flipchart paper.
5. Put a time frame on the brainstorming activity. This helps to keep the momentum alive and prevents people becoming introspective and falling into the trap of evaluating the ideas.
6. Let people have fun with the brainstorming activity. The more they enjoy the activity and relaxed they are, the more their creativity is stimulated.
7. Encourage people to use other people's ideas to create new ones.
8. Once you have completed the actual brainstorming activity, you can shift the cards around and order them under specific headings. You may then want to take a critical look at the ideas and start thinking about how to use them to come up with a workable solution to the problem or challenge that you had identified.

### Purpose

- To use a brainstorming technique to come up with creative ideas respond to the challenge of providing aftercare support for vulnerable learners.
- To use the ideas from the brainstorming session to inform the development of a draft set of ideas for an aftercare strategy.

### What to do

- Introduce the planning activity and make sure that each member of the team understands the purpose described above.
- Explain that the planning activity consists of four parts:

1	2	3	4
Describe the challenge of providing aftercare for vulnerable learners at your school	Brainstorm to come up with creative ideas	Discuss the context report compiled by a SMT member	Compile list of workable ideas for an aftercare strategy

1. Describe the challenge of providing aftercare for vulnerable learners at your school in the table on the next page. Give a detailed description of your reality as you see it. The description of the challenge will help to remain focused when you brainstorm ideas.
2. Brainstorm ideas. You can use the brainstorming guidelines to assist you to organise the activity and to create an atmosphere where everyone can contribute ideas. Record the ideas from members inside the block on the next page.
3. Discuss the context report. The SMT member can give a brief presentation to kick-start the discussion. The purpose of the discussion is among others to find out whether it is possible to link up with existing initiatives and what the implications might be. It is also to probe what types of support the school can harness in its efforts to offer aftercare support.
4. Examine the ideas from the brainstorming session critically. Select those you think are feasible, and use the table provided to record your ideas.



1. Description of the challenge of providing aftercare for vulnerable children at your school	2. Record of ideas
<p>Describe the <b>nature</b> and <b>scope</b> of the challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of vulnerable learners</li> <li>• Their needs</li> <li>• What you need to run the aftercare (people, funds, resources)</li> </ul>	





Questions	Draft ideas for an aftercare strategy
1. How many vulnerable learners would need aftercare support?	
2. What are their most urgent needs?	
3. What aftercare option is most suitable [Check the options diagram on page 131 in Unit 6]	
4. What internal resources can you use?	
5. What resources can you get from the community and external organisations?	
6. What activities could you offer?	
7. Who will get involved in the aftercare programme?	
8. Who will manage the aftercare programme?	
9. What are the biggest obstacles to getting started?	
10. What would you prioritise at the start?	

## Tool 24: Some ideas for aftercare activities

It is ideal for any aftercare facility to have a planned programme of activities for each day. These should include a balance of more formal, structured and informal or free activities. Structured activities may include, sitting down together to eat, supervised homework and general academic support, a slot for reading practice (in primary schools) various creative activities like singing, music, drama, visual art as well as organised games and sporting activities. Informal or free activities like playing board games or allocating time for outdoor play should also be included into a weekly programme of activities.

Here are a few ideas for some creative activities that are particularly aimed at also building identity and are therefore not only fun, but are also considered to have some therapeutic value, especially for vulnerable learners.

### Activities to build identity and creativity

Many of these are creative activities and/or are based on the observation of nature. They encourage children to express freely (and value) who they are and what they feel and see. Some of them focus on cherishing memories of a parent or loved one who has died. Most will require:

- **Time:** Enough time to choose, imagine, remember, talk, make and remake. It is especially important to talk with children as they work.
- **Focus:** Noisy, confused or aggressive children may need a starter activity like a bit of deep breathing, or some singing while they work to calm and focus them.
- **A non-judgemental approach:** Facilitators can help children learn some techniques but should focus on meaning rather than accurate or perfect work. (In creative work there is no *right* or *wrong*.)
- **Care:** Some activities need gentle handling as deep feelings may come up.
- **Some free or low-cost resources:** Facilitators and children can collect:
  - recycled material such as: cardboard sheets, cylinders and boxes; bright foil and patterned paper; old glossy magazines and newspapers; bottle-tops, buttons, small bottles, beads wire, scraps of fabric, empty cans and plastic bottles;
  - simple art materials such as coloured chalk, wax crayons, paper (even paper used on one side), pencils, poster paints;
  - natural materials such as seeds and pods, grasses and reeds, clay, leaves, dry flowers, feathers, shells;
  - glue: Make your own by mixing two tablespoons of flour with four tablespoons of water in a bowl until smooth. Then add two cups of boiling water and stir well again. Keep in a cup or jar. (It's not very thick.)



### Some ideas for activities

**SPECIAL NAMES:** Give each child a sheet of paper and put out wax crayons. Children must:

- Bring the two longer sides of the paper together and fold it over.
- Smooth the fold quite flat.
- Open the paper and write their name in big letters on one half, using the fold line as the line to write on. Do clear, strong letters in thick crayon.
- Fold the paper over again with the name inside. Place on a book or desk and rub the thumbnail firmly all over the outside.
- Open the paper and see how the crayoned name has rubbed onto the other side of the paper too so that there is a lovely symmetrical pattern.
- Decorate the name with other colours etc. – but keep the shape clear.
- Make a beautiful display with all the names stuck on the wall. (Use prestik.)

Children love this activity. They can also do it using the names of loved ones to make birthday cards or memory cards. Some may need to learn how to write their name. While they decorate their names, ask who gave them the name and why, what it means, what different forms it has, and so on.

**MEMORY BOX:** Explain What a memory box is: a small box containing things that remind us of someone we love very much. They can be things (often very simple) like something small s/he wore or used, something s/he wrote, a photo, a scrap of fabric from a dress, a card, something s/he made, or things we make ourselves to remember some part of the person. Children/youth and facilitators can bring small strong boxes, one for each person. They can be decorated in different ways: e.g with coloured paper, pieces of fabric, shapes or pictures cut from magazines, seeds and dried leaves, drawings, pretty buttons, shells, paints. The loved one's name could be part of the design. The boxes could also be varnished to preserve the decorations. Each child can collect items that remind them of the loved one to put in the box. Think of a place either a the aftercare centre or where the child lives to store the memory box safely.

**PORTRAITS:** Children can form pairs and do drawings or paintings of one another. For drawing they can use wax crayons, pencil crayons, pencils, or pieces of charcoal from the fire or bits of coloured chalk that has been dipped in a glass of sugar water which helps to make the colours brighter! They should look carefully at each other and do an outline of the other person that nearly fills the page. Then they can take time to fill in details. Encourage them to talk about the shapes on someone's face and how to draw parts like noses, shadows under the chin or lips etc. They should try different effects. Display the portraits.

### Some ideas for activities

**NATURE PICTURE:** Let children make pictures using only natural materials like clay, seeds, grasses, leaves, bark, flower heads – use flower heads to draw with – as you press them the colour comes out, charcoal, soft clay mixed with water to produce earthy colours etc. rather than man-made materials. You will need glue to stick some items on. Collecting the materials could make an interesting outdoor activity by itself. The pictures could be of landscapes – mountains, trees, fields etc. – or the materials could be used to depict a house and garden, or a person.

**OBSERVING PLANTS/ANIMALS/BIRDS/INSECTS:** (This can be done at home or in aftercare or workshops.) Together find a place such as a clump of bushes, the edge of a forest or a swampy area that is used a lot by birds, animals or insects (for food, for making nests or homes, or for resting in). Use children and adults who do watch nature to help show the others such a place. Watch what is happening there over time. Children can do so every day, every week or just two or three times.

- They can observe one plant or animal especially closely, or they can observe everything.
- They can report back on what the plant (s) or animal(s) look like and what they do, and find out their local names and uses from adults who know.
- They can describe what changes take place overtime. They can watch to see what animals eat, how they make nests or homes, which plants are used or eaten etc.
- If they can write, some may enjoy making short written reports (just a sentence, perhaps with a drawing), or they can just tell. Help them make a list of the animals and birds they see.
- Make the children aware that all creatures need one another, and the more that are destroyed, the more danger the world is in. Also, the knowledge they may have of their local natural life has economic value in the wider world (e.g. in eco-tourism).

**CARD-MAKING:** Regularly collect thin cardboard from packaging (soap powder, cereal and tea boxes etc.) and get others to help collect or donate sheets of white or coloured card. Children can use it for card-making in workshops and at home for birthdays, Christmas and other religious occasions and especially for loved ones or friends who are sick. They can use the name patterns, portraits, nature drawings etc. or new drawings as cards. They could draw their home and/or family, the person the card is for, something that person likes to eat or do, a picture of themselves with the person. They can stick things on the card e.g. seeds, leaves, dried flowers, buttons, paper cut-outs etc. to decorate it. Talk to them about the pictures and the messages they want to write. (Write messages for those who can't write.)

### Some ideas for activities

**SPAZA STORE:** Collect lots of strong cardboard boxes and old containers and ask families to keep theirs. Get the children to make their own spaza stores in groups. Each group will need some boxes and containers to set up their store. They can decorate the store with drawings and signs, and act out sales transactions together. They can make money from bottle-tops and scrap paper and be encouraged to add up purchases and work out change.

**AN 'I CAN' AND 'I LIKE' STREAMER:** (For young children) You need 6-10 metres of coloured plastic cord or string and sheets of A4 paper for the children. Question and talk to the children about things they can do (e.g. stand on their head, climb a tree, tie a bow, run fast, write their name, braid hair, make a wire car, sew etc.) or what they like especially well (soccer, cake, skipping, etc.) Help each child to fold the paper in half with the short ends together and make a sharp fold. Each child can then draw something s/he can do on one half and something s/he likes a lot next to it on the other half. As each child finishes, hang their picture over the string at the fold and stick or staple the two halves together so that the pictures are on the outside. Hang the pictures all along the string/cord in this way so that it looks like a gaily coloured streamer. Hang it up for all to see (also at a community function).

(Source: MiET Africa (2006) *HANDBOOK A resource for turning your school into a centre of care and support*. Africa Ignite: Kwa Zulu Natal).