



Scalabrini
Centre of Cape Town

UNITE

IMPACT REPORT 2020

by Jade Henderson, UNITE Programme Manager



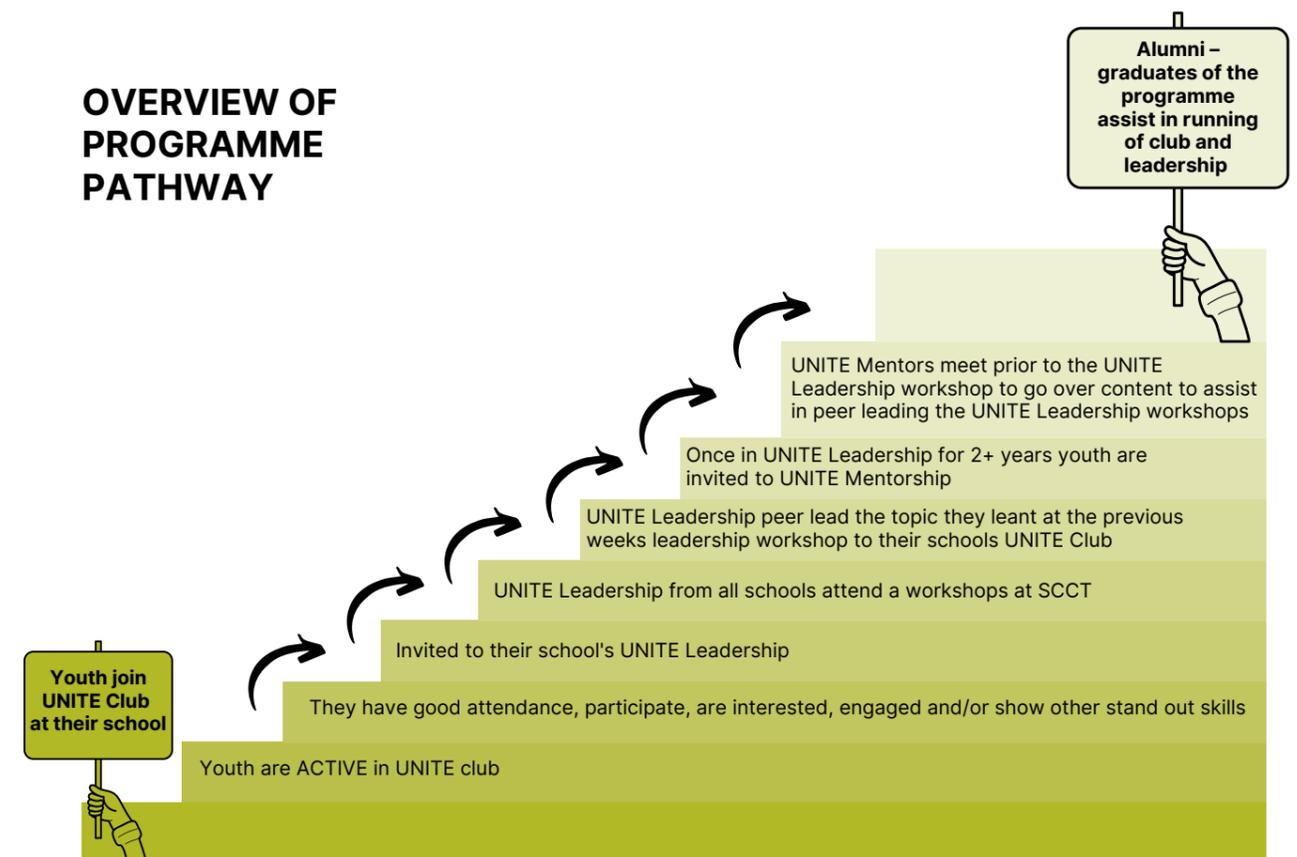
OVERVIEW

UNITE is a programme focused on creating conscious, prudent, and engaged citizens who are able to make informed decisions and live a life that is an example of acceptance and inclusion. We strive to provide the youth we work with, with tools and skills to be able to question norms, dismantle systematic injustices, and fight against discrimination to create a South Africa that is a place for all.

2020 forced UNITE to step up, to continue to provide not just a programme of predesigned topics to learn and apply, but also a place our youth could come to explore the very real social and societal injustices the year highlighted and they faced first hand. UNITE went from having our strength come from human connection: rapport, trust, safety and openness we have built across our outreach clubs at schools and in our leadership and mentorship workshops, to trying to replicate this through a screen. Instantly the team knew it wouldn't work. There is no substitute for looking into someone's eyes as you share knowledge, seeing minds work in real time, experiencing joy, frustration, and the full array of the emotions of learning, or seeing someone step from the shadows into the light with confidence to lead their peers.

The reality of the new world we were all thrown into meant UNITE needed to change to not just survive the year, but adapt into something that could now and in the future serve its youth better than ever. It did! UNITE became an adaptable space to re-volt and then re-imagine what it means to be a person informed, engaged, aware, and active in re-imagining the status quo. The UNITE team provided an online platform for very real and raw conversations focused on developing positive, confident, seen, heard, and held individuals. The youth of UNITE are resilient, they are strong, they are powerful, they are both individuals and a collective prepared to learn and show what it means to move forward positively. They are the reason our future is bright.

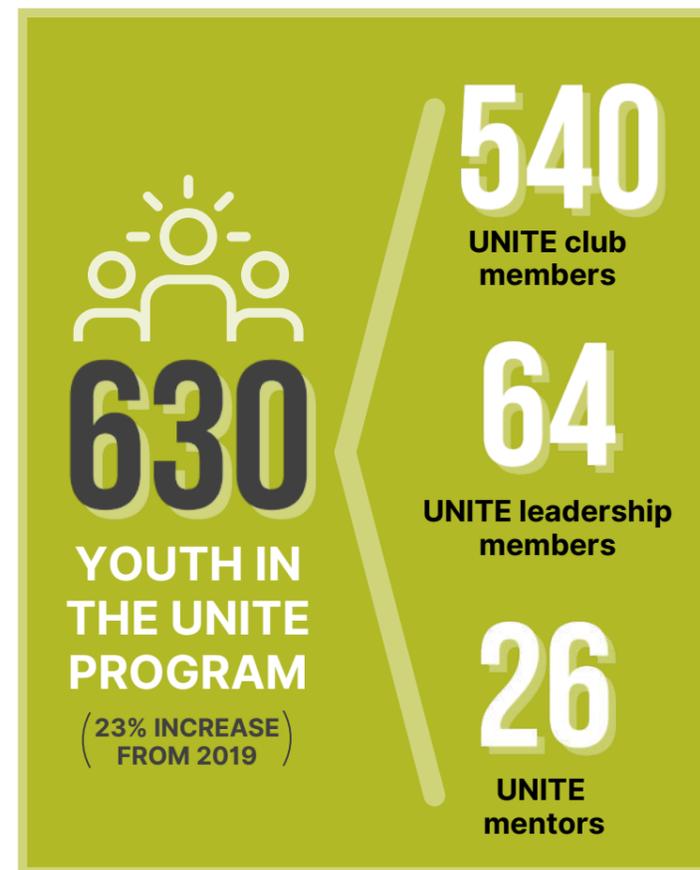
OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME PATHWAY



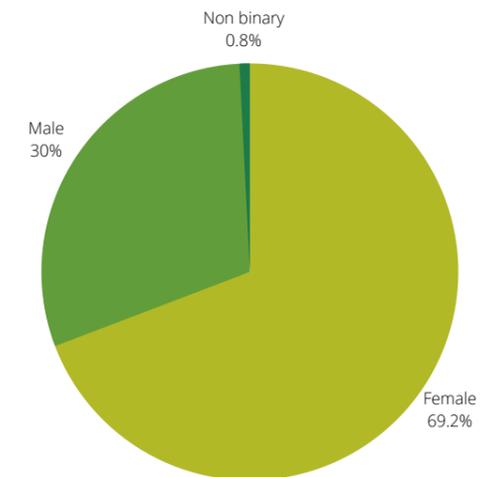
HIGHLIGHTS

- New Levels added to UNITE**
 UNITE Club, UNITE Leadership, UNITE Mentorship and now UNITE Alumni - UNITE had 26 grade 12s in the programme in 2020. 25 chose to write their final exams and 1 has opted to redo the year as a result of the pandemic and interrupted school year. Once 2020 Matric results are released, those who have matriculated will form part of our new Alumni group. The purpose of the Alumni group is to allow past UNITE members to remain as involved/engaged in the programme as they wish, to be included in all spheres (from Club to Mentorship) as much or as little as they wish to be.
- Alumni**
 The key highlight for us is that these Alumni have gone through the programme themselves, have now graduated from school and are choosing to give back and participate further. Alumni are now assisting us in facilitating sessions on their own in the UNITE Clubs. The current alumni are founders of the programme i.e. were the first group of youth to be part of UNITE four years ago.
- Development of online curriculum**
 Person-centered and focused on addressing the personal, introspective needs of the person, each person before exploring any topics. Addition of self-care practices into the online curriculum and the promotion of their importance: such as breathing, meditation, stretching, exercise etc. As done during online sessions and encouraged to be continued at home.
- Use of WhatsApp to not just communicate but teach**
 Used a variety of WhatsApp groups to continue teaching/discussions from the online workshops. Allowed conversations to extend beyond the workshop allowing for deeper exploration and conversation. Also used these groups to pre send workshop content.
- Parent/caregiver contact**
 Increased contact through phone calls and messaging allowed the UNITE team to grow greater buy-in from the parents/caregivers of the youth in the programme. Being at home under lockdown required a greater level of understanding of both the content of the programme and its importance for their child/children resulting in the attendance of the workshops being seen as a priority. This allowed for greater and more consistent attendance and space (physically, emotionally, and mentally) for the youth to be able to not just attend but continuously visit and work through the content and how it manifested during the time period and beyond.
- Development of a new UNITE hybrid model**
 Taking the online learnings for 2020 and combining them with the 'typical' UNITE in-person model, UNITE will run both Club sessions and Leadership workshops with a combination of each platform: an in-person offering with online aspects such as having Alumni and/or other Clubs, stakeholders etc. joining in virtually.

IMPACT



Gender distribution of UNITE youth



9 Club sessions (pre-Covid)

56 Leadership/Mentorship workshops

500+ phone calls (approx)

49 Zoom sessions/workshops. Each session/workshop was between 1-3 hours

5000+ WhatsApp check-ins/sessions (approx)

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON BEING A LEADER

To Aza, a leader has always been “a person in the spotlight” – someone who leads from the front. Joining UNITE has given Aza a new perspective on what it means to be a leader. She now believes that a leader is someone who pushes others forward and offers them the support to believe in themselves. This has been Aza’s experience of UNITE. Although 2021 has had an uncertain start, Aza is looking forward to being able to begin her first year of university

A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

Aza was in her final year of high school when South Africa announced its first Covid-19 cases. Schools closed down and students were left uncertain. “It was hard to believe at first!” explains Aza. “This was my matric year – how could this happen?” Aza felt like her life had come to a standstill and she was filled with feelings of frustration.

Although times were difficult, Aza learnt to value the things that she has. She was surrounded by support structures; her family, UNITE and other school clubs. Aza knew that when times were difficult, she could contact any of the UNITE facilitators. For example, when Aza and her family were running low on food supplies, UNITE quickly stepped in to assist. “I felt very supported by UNITE during the lockdown.”

Aza has been provisionally accepted to study Business Management, but she is waiting for her matric results to be released before she can get started. “It seems like it’s still 2020. I feel like my year hasn’t really started because I haven’t started university.”

LESSONS LEARNT

Aza joined UNITE as a way to combat low confidence. “In primary school, I’d always seen myself as inferior. When I got to high school, I wanted to change that – I wanted people to recognise that I can make a difference.”

“I grew up and saw other learners with determination and drive, but I didn’t have that. I wanted people to recognise me and I wanted to recognise myself.”

Through activities and sessions, UNITE “encouraged [us] to be a person who looks at things differently.” This shift in perspective has encouraged Aza to pursue her life goals. “From that moment, it made me realise that I can do anything that I put my mind to. All of these teachings have made me realise that it’s all about being you.

You can add value to the world just by being yourself.” Because of this, Aza began to see herself as someone who can make a positive impact: a leader.

BEING A LEADER

Aza has always viewed a leader as a person who leads from the front. But in Grade 11, Aza’s perspective on this changed. In that year, it came to the surface that Aza had been struggling with substance abuse. The day that she was caught smoking at school, she was heading to Scalabrini for a UNITE meeting. “I told myself to accept the fact that they were going to kick me out [of UNITE], I am supposed to be a leader yet I am doing these things.”

Instead of being kicked out of UNITE, she was shown love, support and encouragement. In what was a collaboration between UNITE, her school (Heideveld) and her parents, Aza was given support and the strength to stop smoking. “You know when you have a line – something that prevents people from getting close to you – that day the line was completely broken. I knew that I was loved.”

“We all make mistakes but being given the opportunity to understand the causes of those mistakes - or difficulties - and be able to overcome them with support is what matters most” says Jade, the manager of UNITE. UNITE has been able to use this as a learning tool – not only for Aza, but UNITE as a whole.

It was after this that Aza’s idea of what a leader should be, changed. “UNITE has taught me that leadership is not about leading from the front, it is about pushing others to go forward. It is not about you or the spotlight. It’s about being there for others like UNITE has been for me. It’s made remarkable changes in my life. It’s been a long journey and I’ve experienced some real family.”



LOOKING FORWARD...

Developing, launching, adapting, and fine-tuning a new UNITE in-person and virtual combination model. Taking the online learnings for 2020 and combining them with the 'typical' UNITE in person model, UNITE will run both Club sessions and Leadership workshops with a combination of each platform: an in-person offering with added online aspects such as having Alumni and/or other Clubs, stakeholders etc. joining in virtually.

The continued use of WhatsApp groups for both communication and teaching as well introducing an added peer led initiative of school specific Club and Leadership groups managed by Leadership (for Club groups) and Mentorship (for Leadership groups).



The centre is registered with the South African Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation (021-079 NPO), as a youth and child care centre (C7569) and as a Public Benefit Organisation with the South African Revenue Services (930012808) and governed by a Trust (IT2746/2006).
Auditors: CAP Chartered Accountants.

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