

Heartlines  
“What’s Your Story?”  
Summative Evaluation  
June 2020  
Final Version



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# Executive Summary

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## 1. About the WYS Evaluation

In 2017, Heartlines brought Singizi Consulting Africa on board in order to evaluate its Templeton Religion Trust-funded “What’s Your Story?” (WYS) programme that would be implemented from July of that year until March 2020. This report is the summative evaluation of WYS. It includes evaluation findings on the implementation of WYS in churches as well as workplaces.

The methodology for the evaluation started with the development of a programme theory (which was later adapted to the specifics of churches and workplaces) and then, using this as the basis for a monitoring and evaluation framework, Singizi used a mixed-methods approach to data collection that included the following: a retrospective baseline survey that gathered data on perceptions of the programme, activities conducted since exposure to the programme, and perceptions of change as a result of the programme; qualitative in-depth interviews; and eight qualitative case studies.

“What’s Your Story?” was designed as an easy-to-implement intervention that could be used in a number of interactive contexts that could readily be adopted and rolled out by others. A key indicator of success, therefore, is whether or not those exposed to WYS take it up and undertake further WYS-related interventions.

## 2. Key Findings

In the formative evaluation, church data from the retrospective baseline showed that after being exposed to the “What’s Your Story?” methodology by Heartlines, 42% of respondents had engaged in further intentional storytelling with others. In comparison to this, in the summative evaluation, a full 80% of respondents reported that they had engaged in further storytelling processes with others.

This increased likelihood of someone adopting the WYS approach amongst respondents that were introduced to WYS in the period after the formative evaluation can, in part, be explained by the issue of ‘dosage.’ That is, the level of exposure that the respondent had to WYS at the point of being introduced to it. In the formative evaluation, 56% of respondents had medium to high dosage. In the summative evaluation, however, this had increased to 84%. These findings provide evidence that the greater the exposure to WYS when it is introduced to participants, the greater the likelihood that it will be taken up as a methodology that participants then introduce to others. This finding also suggests that Heartlines took on board the recommendation in the formative report to support higher dosage options.

Workplace data were only collected once, during the formative evaluation of WYS in churches. Of these workplace respondents, 48,5% reported that they had gone on to adopt the WYS approach and the issue of ‘dosage’ was also an important factor in determining who chose to adopt the WYS methodology.

Once individuals have adopted the WYS methodology, the evidence suggests that the vast majority repeat the methodology more than once and that those who are exposed to it cascade it even further into their homes, neighbourhoods, workplaces and communities.

The findings also give strong evidence for positive changes as a result of being exposed to WYS. These are found at the level of the individual, within churches, workplaces or other organisations, and beyond these organisations into the wider community.

Key factors that promote change identified in the evaluation include: the simplicity and accessibility of the approach; having a WYS champion who believes in the method and is passionate about making a difference; more experience in sharing over time increases ease and comfort; and being able to access the range of resources that Heartlines have made available.

Some hindering factors include the complexity of the change-journey and the iterative nature of change; not being experientially exposed to a story sharing process at the point of introduction to WYS (this is linked to the issue of dosage mentioned previously); discomfort with sharing on the part of some individuals; lack of access to resources (or knowledge of these); and concern about how to respond to some of the revelations made in the course of story-sharing.

### 3. Discussion and Recommendations

In making an evaluative judgement of the programme against the programme theory there is a need to understand both whether the programme was implemented as planned and, if not why this was the case and, whether the assumptions (theoretical basis) and causal chain (that is, the internal logic) for the programme proved to be valid.

With respect to implementation, the findings of the formative and summative evaluations of WYS show that the WYS programme theory was implemented as planned. The data from the summative evaluation suggest that the issues that were highlighted in the formative evaluation with respect to ways to enhance the implementation of the programme were addressed, and that the programme's implementation was strengthened accordingly (that is, Heartlines de-emphasised low-dosage engagements, such as 'promos').

We are therefore recommending that Heartlines should continue to place an emphasis on ensuring that when introducing WYS, everyone present who is willing should have the opportunity to test storytelling out, as this seems to be a very significant factor in determining whether an individual is likely to repeat WYS. Where possible all efforts should be made to provide some additional training.

This still remains a fairly light touch resource intervention, which whilst a formal value-for-money analysis has not been undertaken, appears to be very cost-effective way of realising large scale change (outlined further below).

In terms of the internal logic of the programme theory, this evaluation found that the assumptions made about the willingness of participants to replicate the programme is evidenced. As indicated above, this evaluation found that even with a relatively short initial engagement from Heartlines, the majority of people, particularly those who had a positive experience, are adopting the WYS approach, and are replicating this approach within their communities (including church, family, community-based organisations, schools and workplaces).

Moreover, it is evident that the approach is simple and accessible to people of different races, genders and ages, making it particularly easy for individuals to replicate WYS in a number of different contexts, including churches and workplaces.

The findings also confirm the programme theory logic in terms of how WYS would be cascaded, as we found that once an individual had adopted the approach, they were likely to implement it more than once, suggesting a level of buy-in once individuals establish that WYS

had a positive effect. This was also evidenced by the comments made by respondents during the interviews and in the case studies.

Two issues for further consideration emerging from the evaluation are as follows:

The first is that the greater the number of individuals within the organisation who are exposed to the WYS method, the more it is embedded into the institution, and the greater the effect WYS has on levels of cooperation and collaboration. Short ad-hoc interventions are not without benefits, but the findings suggest that the impact is considerably greater where a critical mass within an organisation is reached and where there are groups of individuals who are energised about the approach and can take it forward. This evidence thus also supports the answering of the initial research questions posed.

The second is the need for acknowledgement that any meaningful change takes time and requires reinforcement. Many respondents in this evaluation suggested that they would have valued additional engagements about the programme in order to deepen their understanding and their skills to take WYS forward. In some cases, this refers to slightly longer training and possibly a follow-up session once they had the chance to share WYS. In other cases, respondents would have liked considerably more training in each aspect of the programme.

These findings suggest that Heartlines should ensure that those trained understand how to implement a consolidated approach that considers ways in which a critical mass of members of any one organisation can be inducted into WYS.

Further, it would be valuable for Heartlines to reflect further on ways to ensure that participants who undertake WYS can continue to access support, as they take the process forward in these varied contexts. This could greatly strengthen the overall impact of the programme .

There is also a need to consider how WYS can be augmented with other activities that, over time, will deepen the change that Heartlines seeks to support by reinforcing key values and the key messages associated with them.

Finally, there was evidence that people find the Heartlines resources very valuable and that the different resources were used to share WYS more widely within the community. However, some respondents indicated that they did not have access to the resources that they needed to cascade WYS.

While Heartlines has made valuable materials available online for those who seek to use WYS as a tool to affect change, not everyone seemed aware of these resources and others may not be able to access these online. Ways to involve the champion in creating awareness of these resources could perhaps be explored. Further, and particularly now in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic where much has shifted online, there is a need to create greater awareness of the availability of these resources. In doing so, it would be useful to encourage individuals who may access the site through one avenue (whether the church, their place of work or in their community) to explore the resources that can be used in other contexts.

Finally, going forward Heartlines has a number of issues to consider, as follows:

- Heartlines has had great success with the introduction of WYS in churches and in church communities. This, in turn, has also led to WYS being introduced in other spaces (families, schools, workplaces and the wider community). The issue that Heartlines needs to consider is whether or not it will deliberately expand WYS in other sectors or institutions (as in through direct engagement rather than being taken forward

by members in the churches). As WYS in the workplace has shown, each sector requires differentiated engagement strategies. These, in turn, have implications for Heartlines' overall strategy as an organisation and the sectors in which Heartlines wishes to sustain or build a presence.

- There is also a need for Heartlines to consider whether it can integrate WYS as a methodology within and across its other programmes. While storytelling is core to much of Heartlines' work, WYS is a specific embodiment of that and its potential utility in other programmes is worth considering. This includes a consideration of whether there are ways that WYS can support the development of empathy in more deliberate ways in its programming to address specific challenges with "othering" in communities (such as xenophobia) or to address specific societal issues (such as the role of fathers).
- What kinds of resources are required to enable respondents to take WYS forward in different contexts, given the finding that resources are particularly important when seeking to cement WYS into a particular institution? Tailored resources may also be useful to deal with specific sectors or areas of focus, such as using WYS to address values in schools or working with WYS to build improved relationships in families;
- Finally, what should the balance be between reach and depth? Heartlines has already shifted from providing "promos" to providing opportunities for participants to engage in storytelling and, in some cases, other activities. However, there is a need to determine whether there is cause to deepen engagement even further (at least in some cases). The case study data indicate that there are some calls for a more sustained level of engagement over time.

# Section A: Introduction and Methodology

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## 4. Introduction

In 2017, Heartlines brought Singizi Consulting Africa on board in order to evaluate its Templeton Religion Trust-funded “What’s Your Story?” (WYS) programme that would be implemented from July of that year until March 2020.

At the broadest level, the key questions that the evaluation sought to address were:

1. Can a campaign that encourages people to tell each other their personal stories, in supportive contexts, increase empathy amongst those involved? <sup>1</sup>
2. Does the fostering of greater empathy of individuals for each other in group settings improve cohesion and, therefore, the functioning of the group?

In February 2019, Singizi completed the formative evaluation of the WYS programme. This formative evaluation report focused on WYS in both workplaces and churches and included both quantitative and qualitative data. However, the WYS workplace targets were met during 2019 and, as a consequence, the focus of the Heartlines work shifted primarily to the churches. Therefore, this summative report, the fieldwork of which was completed over the last six months of the WYS programme, primarily focuses on WYS in churches although, as is evidenced in this report, WYS cascaded in most cases from the church to different workplaces, as well as more broadly into the surrounding community. This report also makes reference to the formative data where differences or changes emerge.

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. The Programme Theory

Singizi’s first step in the evaluation was to work with Heartlines to understand the WYS programme theory. The team engaged experts in the area of empathy, which allowed the team to explore what values associated with empathy the programme sought to foster. In doing so, we sought to make the assumptions within the programme explicit. This process of examining the programme theory, combined with the formative evaluative work completed by Singizi, allowed Heartlines to test the assumptions and concepts within it. This resulted in a process of refinement, and the recognition that within the broader programme theory (see Figure 1 below) there were two distinct theories of change that took into account the slightly different foci, ways of working and specific intended outcomes for WYS in the workplace and WYS in the church. Diagrams of these are attached as Appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition that Heartlines has adopted for this project focuses on empathy in the sense of empathic concern, which is defined as an other-oriented emotional response elicited by, and congruent with, the perceived welfare of others. Increased empathy is marked by a decrease in negative attitudes and actions around prejudice and racism and increased acts of caring, especially for the “other.”



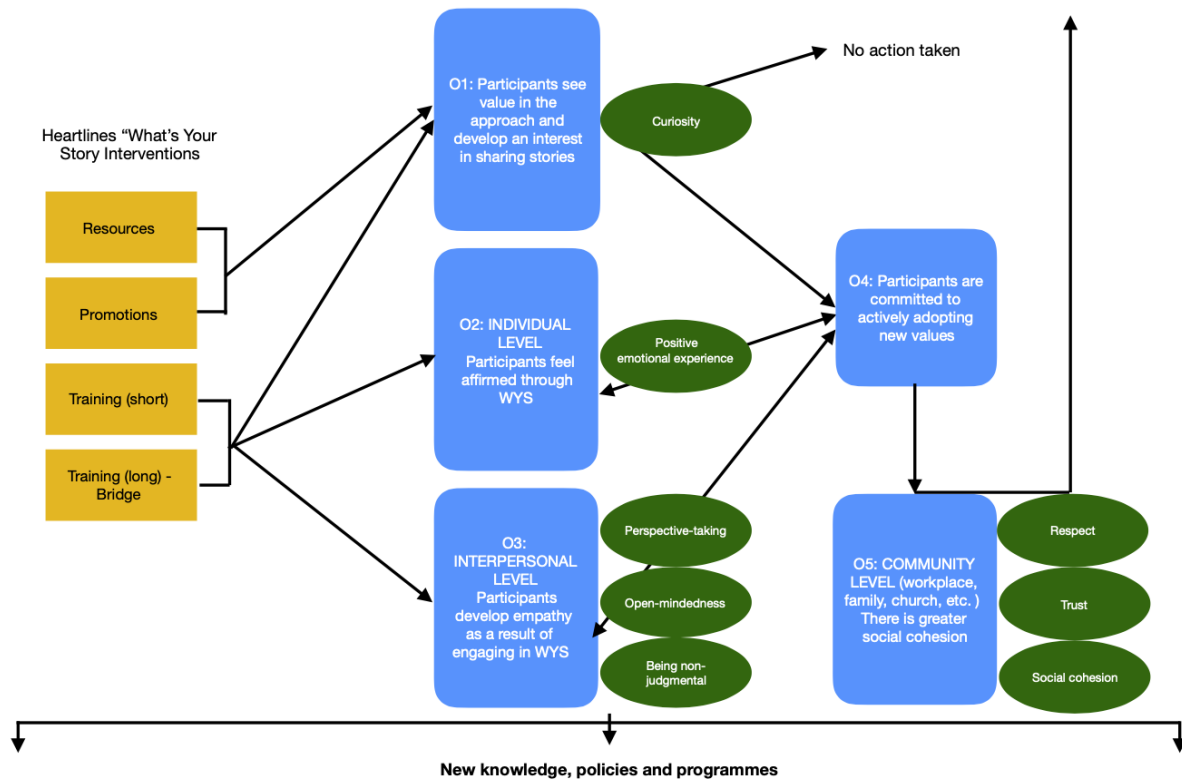


FIGURE 1: OVERARCHING PROGRAMME THEORY

### 5.2. Monitoring Data

In the initial stages of the programme, Singizi assisted Heartlines to put a monitoring system in place for the collection of routine data related to WYS. While Singizi initially assisted with this routine collection, these processes were embedded into the WYS workflow at Heartlines for the remainder of the programme.

The monitoring data that Singizi used for the retrospective baseline (see below) included contacts for 4860 individuals who had signed attendance registers for WYS trainings, promotions or ‘Bridges’ (longer engagements that included storytelling, but also other activities, and that generally sought to break down one or more barriers between the attendees). We used this data for our survey sampling as follows: in the formative evaluation we attempted to contact all respondents who had been exposed three months or more before the administration of the survey (this is explained further in the next section). In the summative evaluation, we drew a stratified sample that would allow an analysis of ‘dosage’ – that is, the duration of initial exposure to WYS, as well as exposure to different aspects of WYS programming. These data were also used to estimate the numbers reached by these individuals as shown later in this report.

### 5.3. Retrospective Baseline

The survey was largely administered by Singizi researchers telephonically, although a few individuals opted to complete the survey online. The retrospective baseline was applied to all participants who had signed a WYS register at the point that the formative evaluation was completed. This included participants from churches, workplaces, as well as a small number from educational and other institutions. The data from the educational and other institutions were used within the case studies. However, they were not included in the analysis of the changes within the churches or workplaces so as to avoid blurring the results.

The retrospective baseline was then applied to new respondents – those respondents who were trained by Heartlines between February 2019 and March 2020 - at the point of this summative evaluation. All of these new respondents were from churches, as per Heartlines' focus in this period.

For the formative evaluation, Singizi completed 798 interviews with survey respondents from a total population of 2324 respondents who had been trained at that point. Those who did not complete the survey were either uncontactable, declined to participate or had been exposed to WYS only recently (the evaluation sought to only gather data from people who had been given enough time to implement the methodology after initial exposure. Those who has been exposed for three months or less were therefore not included.) Of the 798 surveys completed, 624 were from churches, 87 were from workplaces, and 87 were from educational or other institutions. As indicated previously, the latter data were not analysed as part of the quantitative analysis. The workplace data are summarised in Section C of this report.

For the summative evaluation, Singizi sampled 910 respondents from a total population of 2536 respondents who had been trained in the last year of the programme. These individuals were all from churches, as the workplace component of the programme had reached its target at that point.

#### 5.4. Qualitative Interviews

For the formative evaluation, Singizi conducted interviews and/or focus group discussions with individuals who had been involved in WYS interventions. This included religious leaders from 21 institutions, as well as interviewees from workplaces. These data were integrated into the summative report.

#### 5.5. Qualitative Case Studies

As part of the summative evaluation, and in order to better understand the trajectory of cascading WYS and the changes that this contributes towards, Singizi, in consultation with Heartlines, identified ten potential case studies from the churches within different communities across South Africa.

After initial interviews were undertaken in order to ascertain the feasibility of building a substantive picture of WYS implementation, we agreed to develop eight case studies. Of the eight case studies, two were based in Gauteng, three in the North West Province, two in KwaZulu Natal, and one in the Western Cape.

The case studies involved multiple interviews and focus groups beginning with the individual/s responsible for the implementation of WYS, and then determining additional interviews and focus groups using a snowball methodology. These generally included church leaders, parishioners, and other members of the community reached through the cascading of WYS.

The eight case studies are available as eight separate and self-contained documents. This report also includes an analysis of the themes and issues that emerged across the case studies.

#### 5.6. Structure of this Report

The structure of the report is as follows:

Section A (this section) provides an overview of the methodology employed in this evaluation;

Section B this is the largest component of this report, and it focuses on the new data gathered in the course of 2019 and 2020, which are from churches.

Comparisons are also drawn with the data emerging from the formative evaluation. This section also provides insight into the ways in which WYS was replicated;

Section C this summarises the findings on WYS in the workplace based on the data collected in the formative evaluation phase;

Section D provides a discussion and recommendations.

## Section B: WYS in Churches

### 6. Profile of Respondents

The profile of the 1534 church respondents (624 from the formative and 910 from the summative) who completed the retrospective baseline as part of either the formative or the summative evaluation is as follows:

- 44% were female and 56% were male.
- The mean age of respondents was 45 years old, and the mode in terms of age (most frequently occurring) was 50 years old.

As per Figure 2 below, 65% of respondents were Black/African, whilst 11% were Coloured, 20% White and 4% Indian.

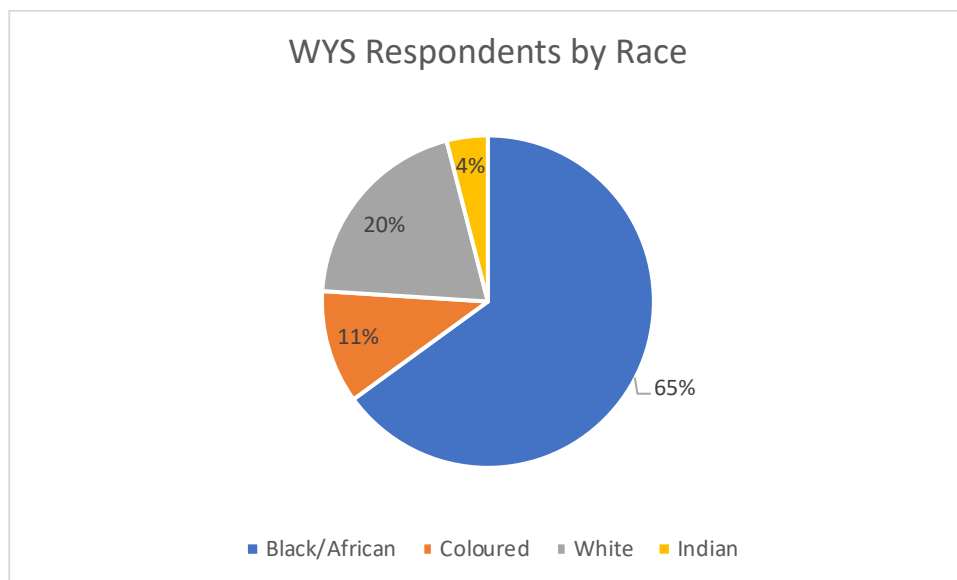


FIGURE 2: RESPONDENTS BY RACE

Figure 3 below shows that the majority of respondents (62%) have post-school education, while a further 29% completed high school. Only a small percentage of respondents did not complete high school or have little or no education.

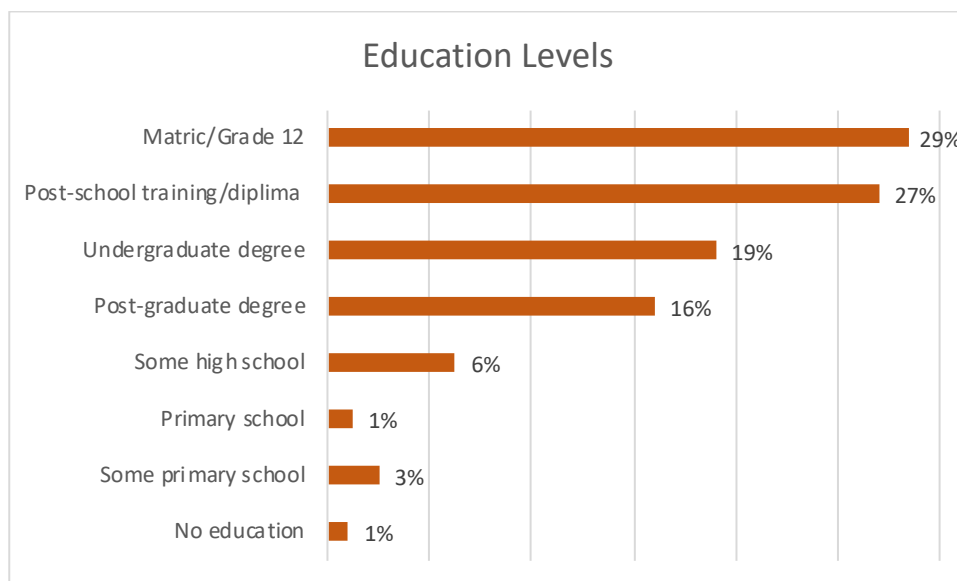


FIGURE 3: RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATION LEVEL

As per Table 1 below, the vast majority of respondents were from Gauteng, followed by the North West and then smaller percentages in five of South Africa's seven remaining provinces. Further, a total of 87% of respondents were from urban areas, while 13% were from rural areas.

	Valid Percent
Valid Gauteng	48%
North West	19%
Western Cape	13%
KwaZulu/Natal	8%
Northern Cape	7%
Limpopo	2%
Mpumalanga	3%
Total	100,0

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS BY PROVINCE

In the analysis of the retrospective baseline data in this report, the formative and summative findings have been kept separate in order to allow for comparisons from the formative period to the more recent period in which the programme matured, and the campaign built momentum.

## 7. Decision to Adopt WYS

### 7.1. Factors Impacting on Take-Up of WYS from the Retrospective Baseline

“What’s Your Story?” was designed as an easy-to-implement intervention that could be used in a number of interactive contexts that could readily be adopted and rolled out by others. A key indicator of success, therefore, is whether or not those exposed to WYS take it up and undertake further WYS-related interventions.

In the formative evaluation, church data from the retrospective baseline showed that after being exposed to the “What’s Your Story?” methodology by Heartlines, 42% of respondents had engaged in further intentional storytelling with others after exposure. In comparison to this, in the summative evaluation, a full 80% of respondents reported that they had engaged in further storytelling processes with others.

This increased likelihood of someone adopting the WYS approach amongst respondents that were introduced to WYS in the period after the formative evaluation can, in part, be explained by the issue of 'dosage', which emerged as an important finding in the formative evaluation. The term 'dosage' as used here refers to the level of exposure that the respondent had to WYS at the point of being introduced to it. The levels of exposure are outlined below as a continuum from zero to high dosage:

- Only viewing Heartlines' *Beyond the River* film and engaging in a discussion on its contents (zero dosage);
- Having WYS explained but no opportunity to practise the sharing of stories (low dosage);
- Having WYS explained with the opportunity to practise the sharing of stories (medium dosage);
- Having WYS explained with the opportunity to practise the sharing of stories, plus additional activities (high dosage).

In the formative evaluation, 56% of respondents had medium to high dosage. In the summative evaluation, however, this increased to 84%. These findings provide evidence that the greater the exposure to WYS when it is introduced to participants, the greater the likelihood that it will be taken up as a methodology that participants then introduce to others. This finding also suggests that Heartlines took on board the recommendation in the formative report to support higher dosage options.

In the summative evaluation, we probed the nature of this 'dosage' in more depth and the extent to which this affected take-up of WYS. The results showed the following:

- Take-up was affected by whether or not the individual was exposed to a "promo" (a short introduction to the method), a WYS training (i.e., training on how to implement the method) or a "Bridge" (i.e., higher level of engagement). We found that **63% of those respondents who had been exposed only to a "promo" took the process forward**. This compared to the **respondents who underwent training where 84% reported that they adopted WYS** and, similarly, we found that **84% of those who engaged in a "Bridge" process stated that they took the process forward**.
- Further, whether or not the person engaged in a practical storytelling process during their first exposure to WYS – and, whether this was coupled with other activities - was important to determining whether the respondents took the process forward. **80% of people who engaged in a storytelling process took the process further. Of import is that 91% of people who engaged in a storytelling process plus other activities intentionally adopted the approach**. This was versus the 51% of respondents who had not been exposed to a practical storytelling process or other activities and adopted the process.

These findings were further evidenced when the data were subjected to a statistical regression in order to identify those factors most significant for ensuring take-up. It was found that the most important factor was what happened at the introductory session, that is, whether there was just a description of WYS versus whether there was a description, interactive storytelling process and possibly other activities.

The other factors that emerged during the summative retrospective baseline which appeared to affect take-up are outlined below:

- Whether or not the person found their introduction to WYS a positive experience appeared to effect take-up: **of those who had a positive experience, 81% adopted**

**WYS**, whereas of those individuals who did not have a positive experience, only 27% adopted the approach;

- Similarly, whether or not the person felt that the exposure to WYS had a positive impact on themselves appeared to affect take-up. **82% of those who reported positive change also adopted the approach**, whereas of those who did not report positive change, only 14% adopted the approach;
- The extent to which the individuals felt clear about the purpose of WYS. None of those respondents who felt unclear about what WYS was about went on to adopt it, versus 51% who were “mostly clear” and **83% who were “very clear” about the purpose of WYS adopted it.**

Again, these findings were strengthened in the statistical analysis, which demonstrated that where respondents received a description plus engaged in an interactive storytelling process (and possibly other activities) and also felt that the description of WYS was clear, take-up was highest.

For those who did not engage in a storytelling process in their introduction to WYS, but did take up WYS, the value of appreciating diversity before exposure to WYS appears to be in play as a factor implicated in take-up (respondents were asked to rate themselves on their ability to appreciate people different from themselves).

Of those who provided a reason for why they did not actively adopt WYS in both the formative or summative evaluations combined, 35% reported that they did not do so as they were not really sure how to facilitate a WYS process and 54% indicated that they had not thought about sharing. It is interesting to note that those who had not thought about sharing WYS stood at 68% in the formative evaluation, but only at 23% in the summative. This is a very positive finding and strongly suggests that greater emphasis was placed on ensuring that people understood the programme’s imperative to consciously cascade WYS to others. This also highlights the capacity of Heartlines to be adaptive and respond to learning from the formative evaluation.

An interesting finding with regards to the regression analysis is that it did not throw up factors such as race, age, gender and education levels (which most frequently emerge in such analyses) as factors affecting whether WYS was taken up. This is important, because it indicates that take-up is not influenced by these factors and suggests that WYS is a tool that is viewed as valuable for all segments of society. The implications of this regression are discussed later in this report (see the regression in Appendix 2).

## 7.2. Rationale for Taking up WYS

This section provides an overview of the reasons that respondents provided as to why they had elected to find out what Heartlines’ WYS programme was about and how it could be used – and for what purpose – in their churches.

When asked to provide reasons for adopting WYS (a multi-mention question), the highest number of respondents (23%) indicated that they wanted to improve relations between people in their church, while 19% reported that they wanted to break down a barrier of some nature. 17% reported that they wanted to contribute to positive relationships within their communities while 11% reported that they wanted to learn more about others.

Data from the case studies bring further insight into reasons for adopting the approach:

**Break down barriers:** a key reason why respondents chose to become involved in WYS was to create a space for respondents to break down walls, move away from cliques and to get to know each other.

In one case, a respondent explained that they wanted to adopt WYS to “break down the walls between us, and so much of what we hear is divisive. So, for me, it’s a nice tool to break the walls that we keep putting up because of our differences.”

Another respondent – who had chosen to do WYS in their school - commented that they hoped that the process would make management more accessible: “we wanted staff to see us being vulnerable and that we are dealing with the same issues”. Another respondent from the same community observed that they elected to undertake WYS as a way of enabling the staff to have the opportunity to get to know each other and “share on a deeper level”.

**Understand community members with social issues:** one church spoke about the fact that they had chosen to introduce WYS because “there is a lot of gangsterism going on in our community and we try not to judge them but engage to try to understand why they do what they do. The church is trying to come alongside some of these guys to see what is it that we can do to help change our community. The aim is to win their trust”.

**Address racial schisms:** a respondent observed that they wanted to find a way to build a greater appreciation for diversity within the church. The respondent observed that WYS was considered because the church recognised that this transformation would require an active process. As the respondent commented: “some of the staff have been resistant to change and the need to address diversity”. A leader from another church had a similar rationale for taking up WYS stating that “what I am trying to do with the pastors is get them to visit each other...People don’t want to go into the life of a person living in a tin shack. People don’t want to move out of their comfort zones”.

In another case, a respondent observed that they wished to build diversity, but they did not have the language: “we were trying to find the tools to get more real integration”. WYS gave them the relevant tools in order to achieve this.

In another case, the leadership of two different Anglican Churches - which are located in what used to be considered traditionally white suburbs in the Western Cape – noted that they have increasingly seen the growth of more diverse church membership. They observed that members of the churches generally know each other, but that they do not connect at a deeper level. As a result, both leaders grappled with the challenges of trying to build more racially integrated communities. WYS was seen as a means to begin to address this.

**Religious differences:** in one non-denominational church, a respondent observed that they “wanted to use WYS to get to know each other better and support each other better. I was hoping to also address our religious differences”.

**Thinking beyond their internal community:** in the case of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk or NGK, the focus of the leadership was utilising WYS to get members to “think beyond themselves and focus on the broader community”.

**Previous relationship with Heartlines:** finally, many respondents stated that they had chosen to introduce WYS because they had a relationship with Heartlines and, therefore, trusted that the programme would be helpful.

## 8. Perceptions of WYS

This section of the report considers respondents’ perceptions of WYS. It is based on data from the combined formative and summative retrospective baselines in churches (there were no



significant differences across the formative and summative baselines with regards to these data) and the case studies.

### Perceptions of the Process

As evidenced in Figure 4 below, 60% of the respondents reported that it was a positive process that made them feel good about themselves and others. 22% reported that it was “useful” and that they felt “heard”, while 15% found the process difficult but also useful. Only 2% reported that it was difficult and stated that they did not enjoy it though, interestingly, they still chose to implement the approach.

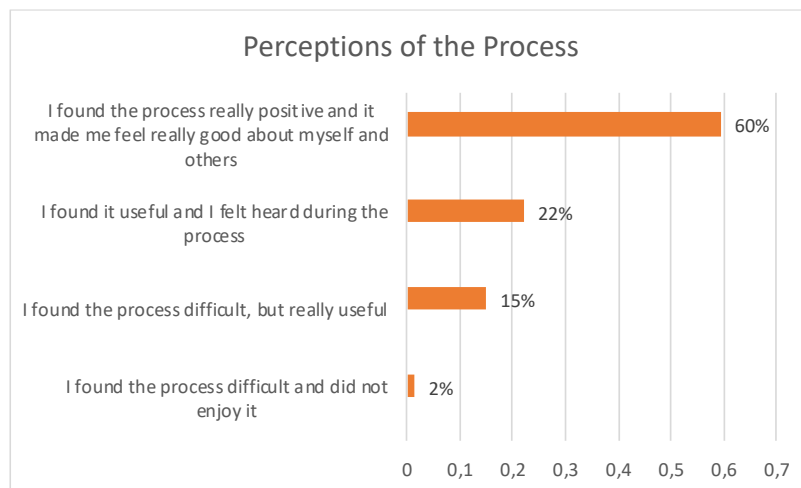


FIGURE 4: PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROCESS

In the case study data, many respondents commented on how positive the experience was and how consistent this approach is with the broad culture of churches.

A church leader observed that the process: “felt **familiar and was comfortable**. The reason I am saying this is that, in the pastoral space, we encourage conversation through the use of the narrative. So, the way Heartlines did it was comfortable for me - as it is our way. I think the whole approach was very powerful, and to see people from the cleaning staff to gardener, who had never shared their stories as they did not have a space to do so...it was very powerful”. Another church leader commented that the “WYS approach was very useful as it is a natural way of working with people. This method fit me like a glove as it is the way the church operates.” Yet another respondent observed that “during this session they [Heartlines] explained the concept of a river of life with the aim of sharing our life stories through the river, ...we were excited, as the value of story-telling is immense. It has an impact in terms of making us to be vulnerable and it is a wonderful tool to break down barriers.”

Other respondents observed that “the process of telling our own story loosens us up to receiving others’ stories and, that said, it is an opening because you cannot box WYS into one single programme. **It is the start of a process** and we have lots to learn about ourselves and others. We need to be sensitive to stories without prying and wanting to take over other people’s lives.”

Those who had **some reservations** about the approach suggested that they were not comfortable with the group methodology. They mentioned that they would like to engage on a “one on one” basis observing that “some people are natural introverts, so they do not find it easy to open up about their lives to other people”. One of these respondents suggested that if there are group sessions then it is important that ground rules about confidentiality are set before the sharing takes place.

Another concern that was highlighted by respondents is that for some the process can result in people reliving their pain. This view was confirmed by one of the respondents who commented: “I found the process unsettling as it brought up all old pain - I had an opposite reaction; it upset me and I did not have a positive response to WYS, I did not share it with anyone – as I did not want to relive the process”.

However, there were also cases where respondents were initially uncomfortable and then, as they participated in this process, they shifted their views. One pastor observed that during the first week of the first session “people were a bit nervous and, by the second time, people were connecting and by the last session people were connecting and we could not get them out of here”.

One respondent commented on this tension between comfort and vulnerability, concluding that it is this very dynamic that makes this process so valuable. One church leader observed: “telling our stories built trust, brought deeper learning, vulnerability and toughness. I say tough because we normally don’t tell our stories and is always difficult to talk about myself. After we watched the movie and listening to our leader tell her story, I was excited because now I knew that this is something we needed in our group and ultimately the church. Great method in general.”

### Perceptions of the Value of the WYS

When WYS adopters were asked about their perceptions of the value of WYS (Figure 5), 38% of adopters reported that they learned things about others that have been mind-opening, while 34% reported that WYS “encourages people to do the right thing in relation to others.” A further 28% reported that they had learned things about themselves that made them feel they could really make a difference. Only 2% reported that they do not think WYS will result in meaningful change.

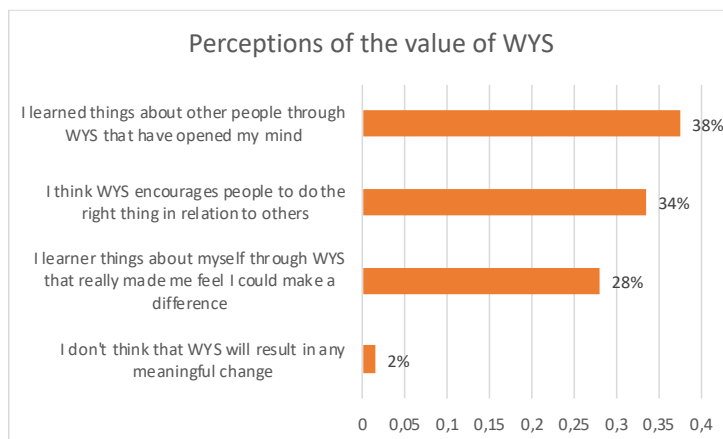


FIGURE 5: PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF WYS

Figure 6 below indicates that 82% of WYS adopters indicated that they believed WYS was a “powerful tool that can be effectively used to change society”. 11% indicated that it would work on some but not on others, while only 6% thought that most people would not take the risk to engage in a storytelling process. These data are only from the summative retrospective baseline because the question was changed in the survey to improve clarity. It is therefore not possible to compare it with the formative data.

One case study respondent commented that, “I could see the value in this process – the format was reassuring, and it brought humanity and valuing of people. We shared joys and challenges and shared genuine relationships.”

Another observed that initially they were “worried about my story and about how my drawing would come out. However, ultimately it was valuable for me and the process allowed me to reflect and evoked a lot of different emotions. I liked the methodology and using The River of Life (i.e., detailing one’s life path in a diagrammatic fashion that resembles a river), as it made it easy to understand, and the approach catered for various members of staff. Often it is difficult to have a programme which deals with all educational levels of staff and the use of the river bridged the gap in terms of who was participating, and everyone’s rivers looked different and that was cool.”

Another respondent observed that they think WYS is necessary because “it helps you to identify issues and how to make progress in life. Heartlines teaches you a lot of things – from how to socialise and interact with people.”

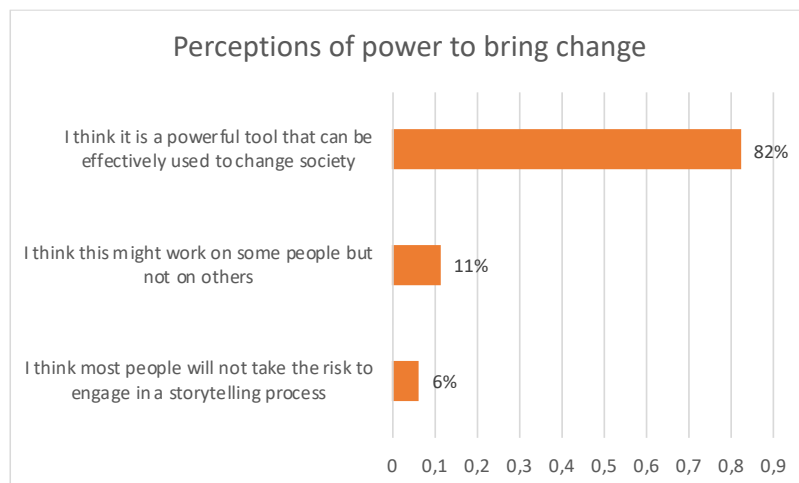


FIGURE 6: PERCEPTIONS OF WYS IN BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE

## 9. Ways in which WYS was Taken Forward

### 9.1. The Frequency at which WYS was Taken Forward

Respondents in the formative and summative retrospective baseline surveys stated that they had repeated WYS on multiple occasions. A full 81% of the WYS church respondents who adopted the approach indicated that they had repeated WYS more than once. As per Figure 7 below, 41% reported that they had repeated WYS 2-5 times, while 38% had repeated it 6-10 times and 18% 11-15 times.

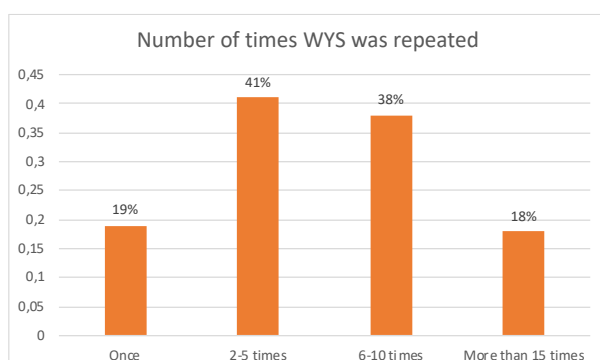


FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF TIMES WYS WAS REPEATED

If we estimate very conservatively that each time someone repeated the process they reached only one other person, and we use the lower end of the number-of-times-repeated categories (e.g., 2 instead of 5 and 6 instead of 10 and so on), it is estimated that WYS reached a minimum of 17 759 individuals. If each repeat of WYS reached two people, it would then have reached an estimated 35 518 people in total. Still conservatively, if each repeat reached five

people, 88 795 would have been reached. What the number would be if a percentage of those reached continued to cascade WYS (and the evaluative evidence shows that this did take place) is significant.

It is interesting to note that in the statistical correlations reviewed for this report, we found that those who engaged in the WYS process more frequently were more likely to show a greater degree of empathy than those who did this less often. The question that emerges out of this is whether they repeat the process more often because they are more empathetic, or if they become more empathetic by repeating the process more often.

## 9.2. Activities Undertaken in Taking WYS Forward

In response to a summative multi-mention question (respondents could select more than one response), as to what kinds of actions respondents had taken when repeating WYS, Singizi found that the kinds of actions taken by respondents included:

- 36% of the participants indicated that since undertaking WYS they had listened to someone else's story;
- 50% reported that they had told others about WYS and how and why to do it. These were broken down as follows:
  - 26% of the respondents reported that they had told people in their church about WYS and how and why to do it;
  - 12% of the respondents reported that they had told people in their church youth group about WYS and how and why to do it;
  - 12% of the respondents reported that they had told people outside of their church youth group about WYS and how and why to do it;
- 24% reported that they had got a group to engage in WYS with each other. These were broken down as follows:
  - 9% got a group in their church to engage with WYS;
  - 8% got a church youth group to engage with WYS;
  - 7% got a group outside of their church to engage with WYS.

What was evident from the case studies is that whilst the focus of the interventions in 2019 was within the church, the **reach has extended to families, community-based organisations, schools, and neighbourhoods.**

Case study respondents highlighted the different communities that have been reached as they roll out WYS. One respondent from a church explained that she had introduced her congregants to WYS at Wednesday evening bible study meetings and used the methodology at a Women's Day service, as well as on Youth Day on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019. She has also taken several groups of Community Public Works participants through WYS. These took the form of either full-day or half-day workshops during which the participants were given the opportunity to listen to and tell stories. The pastor plans to return to these groups and to train them on ways in which WYS can be taken forward in their community work.

The pastor mentioned above also reported that she is planning to introduce local prisoners to WYS as she is already running Heartlines' 'Values and Money' programme with prisoners. Another church leader spoke of the success that is already being experienced in taking WYS to the prisons observing that they had done an "amazing session" in the jail that day and "we spoke about our personal lives. And everyone was sharing their stories and it was brilliant."

One respondent stated that "I have shared my story on my Facebook page and invited my Facebook friends to do the same, and the response was great. I ended up hearing from a guy who works in Correctional Services and he told me about prisoners that have not had visitors

for years. I decided to visit them and hear their stories. While in the waiting room, I spoke to the person next to me and shared my story with them and respectfully asked them to do the same. I also had a session with the Sunday School class that I teach. I used the scripture from the Bible and asked the children if they wanted to share with me where they come from. I started this in 2019 after the realisation that people are going through a lot of things and have no one to talk to”.

Another respondent commented that she has continued to share her story with people from outside the church: "I take walks in the mornings and I make sure to greet someone on the way and start a conversation and ask them about themselves and in the process share my story with them. In this process I have made more friends than I have ever made in my life... I have had a WYS session with my boss and found that she has the same medical condition like me - and I had no idea."

One respondent commented that, "I spoke to my best friend about WYS and she is a teacher and I suggested that she should try it with her class. I immediately shared with my fiancé. At home I stay with another guy who is a missionary and I shared my story with him, and he shared his and I listened to his story. I then shared with my very close friend who works at an educational institution."

Leaders within the church explained that they encouraged their members to take WYS forward in the different spaces in which they engage. One church leader commented that they had "challenged my members to go to workplaces and share their life stories and I left it there...some took it to their workplaces...I did not ask for feedback as part of our culture of our church is reaching out to communities and cross-cultural work and that is our focus."

The potential reach that can be realised through WYS is illustrated by this example. One respondent explained that Heartlines and the church discussed the possibility of introducing WYS and, as a result, Heartlines came to train cell group leaders. The respondent indicated that the training included the River of Life, the movie (Heartlines' film titled *Beyond the River*), some video clips and the motivation for story-sharing. After the training, cell leaders then went into their cell groups and engaged with group members around WYS. This resulted in about 100 members of the church being exposed to WYS in a short time, and the plan is to reportedly train all 400 members within the church. These members then reached out to the different communities in which they live, enabling this one intervention to reach scale.

During the qualitative interviews, respondents explained that they **made choices about how to take WYS forward** based on the nature of the group. For example, in one school the deputy principle indicated that she had used one of the advertisements which Heartlines had provided in order to stimulate discussion around racism. She also showed Heartlines' *Beyond the River* film to the learners in one of the grades. She indicated that she would like to show the film to the whole school. One church leader used WYS for the youth group in the church. She explained that she used the format that had been adopted by the pastor and "worked out how best it would work with each group of kids. It was more informally done, but sometimes we used the mind map or answered questions directly for building their stories".

Some respondents observed that, as they repeated WYS, they made **adjustments based on their learning as they continued to implement WYS sessions**. One respondent indicated that the second round was run slightly differently to the first, as the leadership felt that it was too much to use the themes and the questions in the groups. They therefore shortened the sessions as "the real impact was the connections between us, and the ongoing impact was the stories and not the questions. We stripped it down to its bare bones. The workbook was too big, and the session would be too long by doing the questions and sermons. We believed it would be easier to attract people for one and a half hours per week and, that way, more

people were prepared to commit. If people had to commit to two and a half hours, not as many would have come”.

A few respondents commented that they had found that WYS was **less effective in some contexts**. For example, one member indicated that while she had tried to share WYS at her workplace, it was not perceived as a safe space. There was a perception that sharing personal stories was unprofessional and not productive. This was echoed by another church member who observed that she would like to share stories in some spaces but indicated that in other spaces it does not yet feel safe to share stories. A few respondents from other churches made a similar observation about sharing stories with neighbours, who had then reacted with some reticence.

## 10. Considering Change

Having explored perceptions of the programme and the activities that respondents have undertaken to take forward WYS, we then considered the extent to which individuals report that this has contributed to personal change and, specifically, the development of the intended values. These changes are explored below.

### 10.1. Personal Change

In the summative retrospective baseline survey, respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of personal changes in values such as **curiosity, ability to be non-judgmental, appreciation of diversity, ability to perspective-take, understanding, feelings of connection with others, trust, communication and collaboration**. Each of these values was identified as a core component of empathy at the start of the programme. This was done in consultation with empathy experts based in South Africa and Europe.

In both the formative and summative evaluations respondents uniformly rated themselves higher on these values after WYS. The data presented below are from the summative evaluation only, as the data from the formative evaluation were analysed in a different manner. Nonetheless, the findings remained consistent across both.

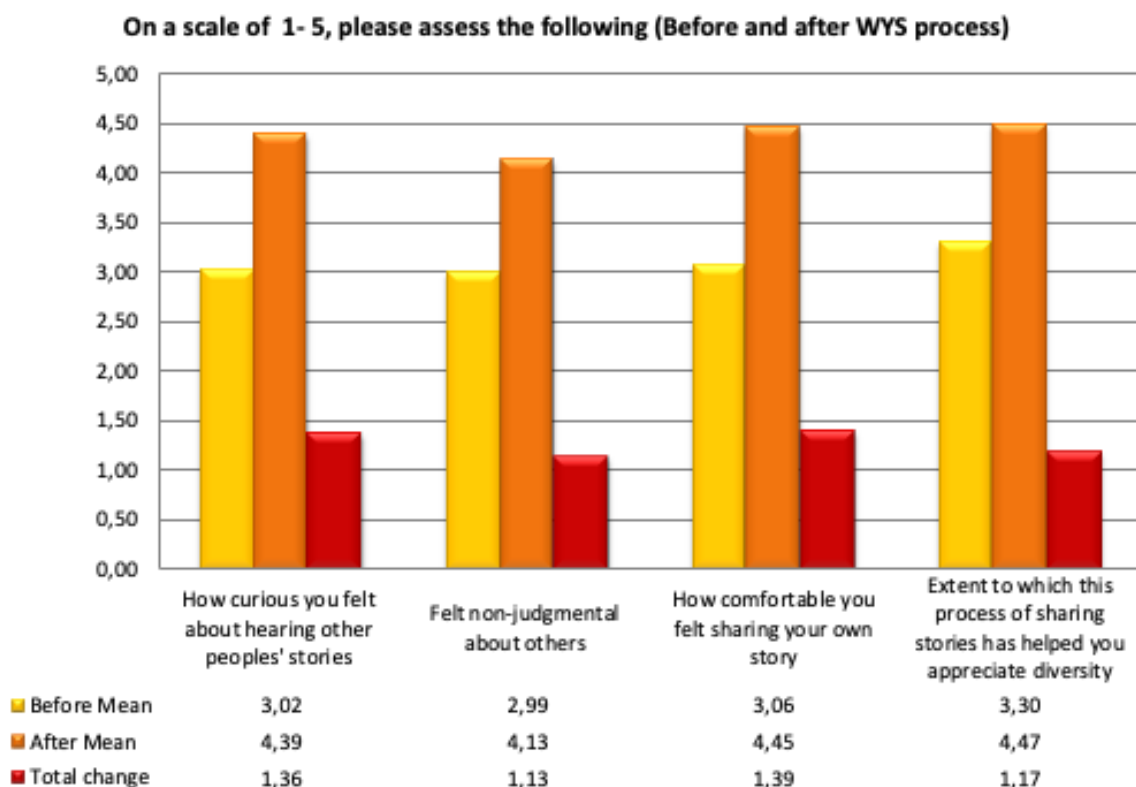


FIGURE 8: PERSONAL CHANGES IN VALUES 1

On a scale of 1- 5, please assess the following (Before and after WYS process)

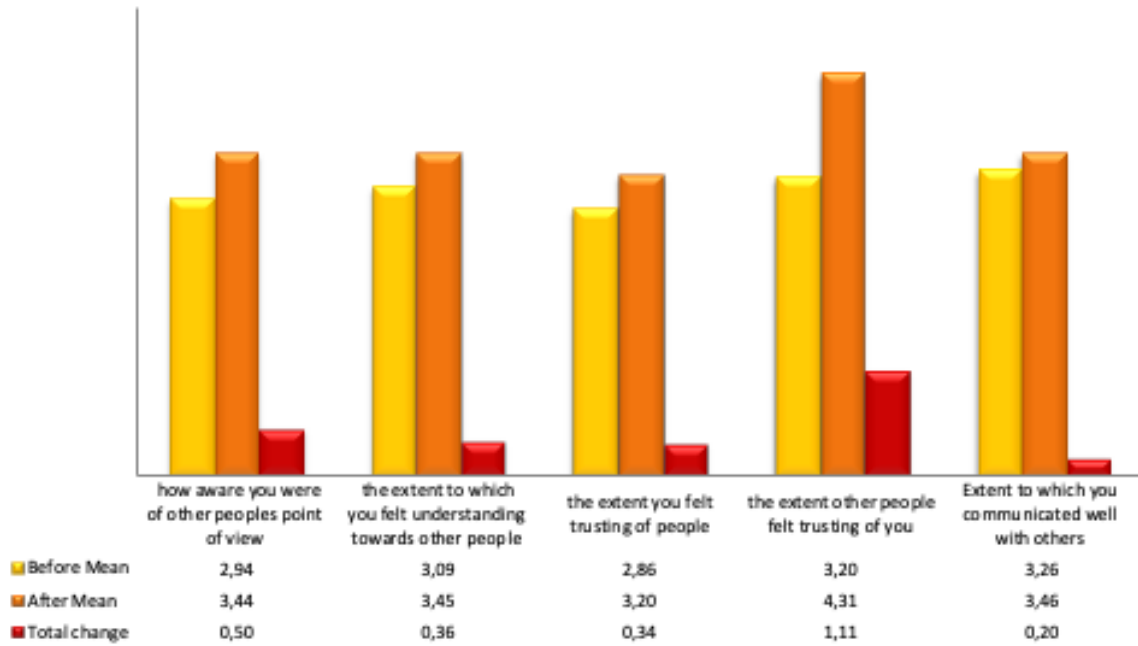


FIGURE 9: PERSONAL CHANGES IN VALUES 2

On a scale of 1- 5, please assess the following (Before and after WYS process)

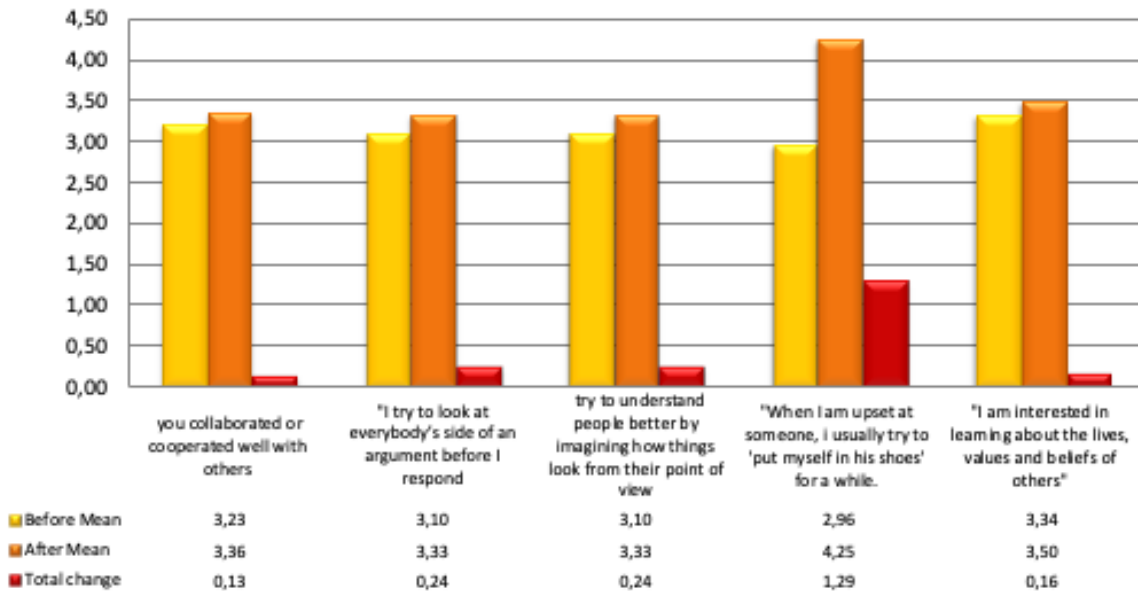


FIGURE 10: PERSONAL CHANGES IN VALUES 3

As is evident from the above, the values (posed as statements or questions) in which respondents reported the biggest change after being exposed to WYS were as follows:

1. Comfort in sharing their own story;
2. Curiosity about others;
3. Perspective-taking (when I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his shoes for a while);

4. Perspective-taking (I try to understand people better by imagining how things look from their point of view); and
5. Appreciation of diversity.

Respondents interviewed for the case studies discussed how the storytelling process supported greater levels of understanding that helped to resolve negative emotions and even improve relationships at work. Importantly, across the cases, respondents spoke of the extent to which they had developed increased levels of empathy. Church members felt that WYS was an “eye-opener” in changing their perceptions about other people.

One respondent stated that, “I have now learned how to open up and talk about myself” and another respondent observed that what she had learned is that “when I look in the mirror, I only see myself, but WYS makes you think about others. I feel more curious and have more empathy as it makes you realise...to put yourself in others’ shoes. WYS helps one to get some perspective and forces one to focus on the needs of others and to look beyond your own problems.”

Other congregants interviewed specifically mentioned how WYS has assisted them to no longer judge others. Comments included: “WYS has really changed me a lot. I am no longer judgmental of others. I respect people as they are. I try my best to understand why people behave the way they do and why they are the way they are. I know that there is a story behind every person’s life.”

Another respondent commented that they “found the movie [*Beyond the River*] very inspiring and encouraging. It taught us not to judge and to get to know people. By the time you get to know the other person better, you do things differently, you treat each other differently. We learned that we need to gain each other’s trust, to be a better team, through storytelling. Before WYS, I did not have anyone to talk to”.

## 10.2. Connecting with Others in the Church/in the Organisation

Respondents to the summative retrospective baseline survey were asked whether or not WYS had impacted on people within their church communities getting to know each other (this question, and others that follow in this section, was not posed in the formative survey). As per Figure 11 below, 68% indicated that this was the case to a good or great extent, while 24% provided a neutral response.

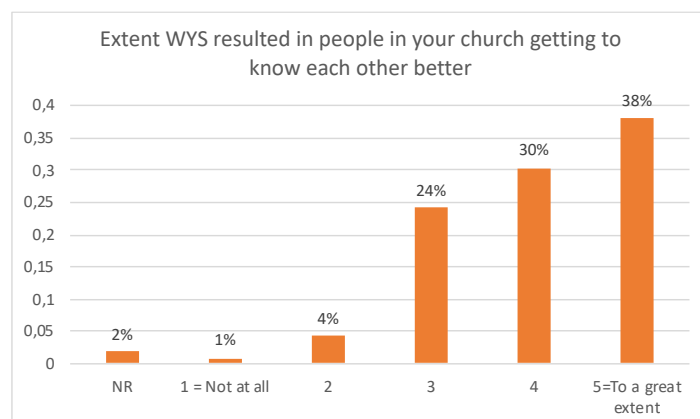


FIGURE 11: WYS AND PEOPLE IN CHURCH GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Across interviews and case studies, respondents highlighted the extent to which WYS has changed the way that they interact with each other as well as their **perceptions of each other**.



Respondents spoke of how valuable WYS is as a means of **welcoming individuals** who join various church structures. One respondent observed that, “people talk more before and after church, just mingling. We make time for interaction. People are no longer coming and going without talking to others. Many people are open to talk about their backgrounds and make time to listen to others”. In another church a respondent commented that “when new people join the team, we get to know them using WYS, we share how we grew up and how to get to where we are, and this helps us interact and understand one another. We have made this a culture”.

Many respondents suggested that WYS has also allowed members of the church who have known each other for some time to **deepen relationships**. As one respondent commented, “I think in our group there were things shared that were not known by others and people were more open and vulnerable to sharing their story, whether deep or not. This has made a difference amongst the staff – there is a little more openness which we need to nurture, and it has allowed for easier flow of communication.”

In other cases, respondents observed that this process had assisted to **mend relationships**. One respondent commented that “I shared with my church sister, who opened up to me. We never had a good relationship and I never understood why. So, after church that same day I visited her and talked to her about how I feel, and I tried to share my story with her. Then we both shared stories and cried on each other’s shoulders. We spoke about everything including our hopes and dreams”.

Of import is that one respondent also highlighted the value of WYS in **addressing challenges with diversity** indicating that, “it helped deal with racial barriers, because even us, as pastors, are now more open with each other and we are different races.” Another respondent commented: “we shared our stories, we know each other much better than before, especially our backgrounds, history and upbringing. We discovered personal things about each other, our differences and similarities, etc. Learning about where my colleagues grew up, especially the fact that they grew up in the rural areas. I had no idea what it is like to grow in the rural areas, but now I do. This has really improved our working relationship as well”.

### 10.3. Changes within the Church Itself

WYS included what were called “Bridge” processes that took place over one or more days and sought to build cohesion through WYS and related activities. Bridge participants reported that the process assisted in **bringing the church leaders closer together**.

Comments from participants included: “I thought it was great as it gave people the opportunity to think about their lives and what was important and what they wanted to share or not. At the end of our process, there was real togetherness and people seeing each other and how we all connect and how similar we are”.

These changes have led to a greater level of cohesion within the **structures of the church**. Respondents across churches shared that there is now new energy amongst members of the teams within the church. They observed that members now understand that everyone is unique and everyone is able to offer their own experiences and knowledge that others may not have. They reported that they accept the variety of personalities, age groups, cultures, and races they have in the team. For example, one respondent observed that, “the WYS experience has produced obvious changes in the [church] group. They are no longer just a group; they have become a team. People communicate openly with each other, share their thoughts, opinions and ideas with members of their team; as well as taking into consideration what others have to say”.

Respondents who completed the survey also reported that WYS had increased cooperation amongst members of the church. As per Figure 12, a full 81% of respondents reported that WYS had improved cooperation between people in the church.

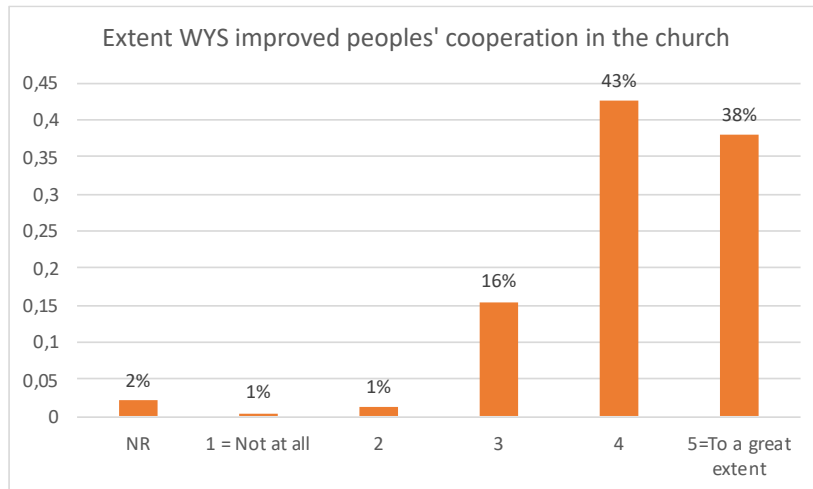


FIGURE 12: WYS AND COOPERATION IN CHURCHES

One church leader observed that the process has resulted in changes in the values of the church and, in doing so, has contributed to changes between **church leadership and members**, stating that “there is a growing process of engagement” and the church is increasingly seen as a “safe space for youth”. Leaders of the church indicated that the congregation were not used to leaders taking time out to listen to them and to get to know them: “our participation was important in terms of rectifying the level of respect and hierarchy which exists in the church...WYS has created and grown a safe space for our youth.”

In addition to congregants feeling more connected to leadership, leadership within the church also spoke of becoming more connected to the congregants. One respondent commented that this process “helped [her] know the people [she] is leading better”. She indicated that there were “very touching stories. You realise people have been through so much”.

Another church leader commented: “I have always been comfortable with diversity but the WYS process has heightened my awareness of the power of story and giving people space to listen to someone else’s story. This has **changed my relationship with my staff.**” One staff member observed: “I was lonely and did not reach out to people but now I do. I am more curious about people and am reaching out to people more than I did before. In terms of my interaction at the church, with the staff, now we talk to each other and engage. Before it was just ‘hi’ and now we go for coffee and talk, and we share - we did not care before but now we are curious of each other and interact more.” She confirmed that as a result of these engagements she now trusts her staff more.

Other churches spoke of how **WYS is being integrated into the church**. In one case the church leader reported that the church has introduced the concept of ‘know your story’ into the sermon which takes place every Sunday and, in doing so, touches on issues related to diversity and otherness. The church leader also highlighted the other changes that the church has made in response to the WYS process such as, for example, a rite that “is now done in all languages”. Some members indicated that the WYS process, and subsequent changes, have led to an increased sense of unity and respect: “they are now holding hands and they are now more open to black members and are being respectful”. There was a recognition that this is a complex process, and this is reflected upon in more detail in Section 11.

Others spoke of **increased participation in church activities**. One respondent observed a change of behaviour from many people in the church: “our cell groups have grown big because we have now developed a habit of talking to each other”.

A few respondents indicate that these changes have also contributed to **improved attendance** of church services. One church leader commented that this change is a result of increased understanding of the circumstances of the members of the church: “after WYS I got to learn that there are so many people who walk long distances to get to church. I started to respect their commitment to God and to the church, because now I was aware of what they go through every Sunday and for the during-the-week services to get to church. Some of us who used to make these wrong remarks stay close to the church and we are driving, while others stay very far and are walking to church”.

In one case respondents spoke of how increased empathy has **translated into acts of service**. A pastor explained how they had invited some young graduates to their service, and each graduate told young people their stories of how they completed their education and the trials and tribulations that they faced doing so. After the service, the young graduates (who had brought cellular phones and laptops with them) sat with youth from the church and assisted them to get information on different courses and programmes and, where possible, assisted them to submit applications.

#### 10.4. Building Relationships and Networks beyond the Church

Both church leaders and church members believe that WYS has contributed towards churches having a more outward focus and caring about and contributing to others. In other cases, church leaders and members indicated that WYS made them think beyond themselves and reach out to others. As one member stated: “give before someone is forced to ask for your help”. Another commented: “I am more curious and more aware of diversity and of the need to ensure open communication with staff. I think I am now more aware of taking others’ views into account as I am more aware of other people’s journeys. And in terms of myself, I think the process gives you perspective of your own journey and your own growth.”

Respondents spoke of the extent to which WYS has contributed to **churches building relationships with other churches in the community**. This has sometimes involved bringing churches with parishioners that are primarily from different race groups closer together. There are also examples of churches cooperating with each other better in their immediate surrounds. A respondent explained that in their community there was an ‘adopt a pastor’ programme, where pastors visit each other to get know each other better and share ideas to improve their church services. The programme was implemented to help leaders from different churches to better engage with each other. The respondent indicated, however, that people were often reticent to engage with pastors that they did not know. However, when WYS was integrated into the programme, it reportedly resolved these issues, as church leaders from different churches were able to build rapport through the sharing of stories.

Survey respondents also reported that WYS had improved the relationships across churches. As per Figure 13 below, 67% reported that WYS had improved these relationships to a good or great extent.

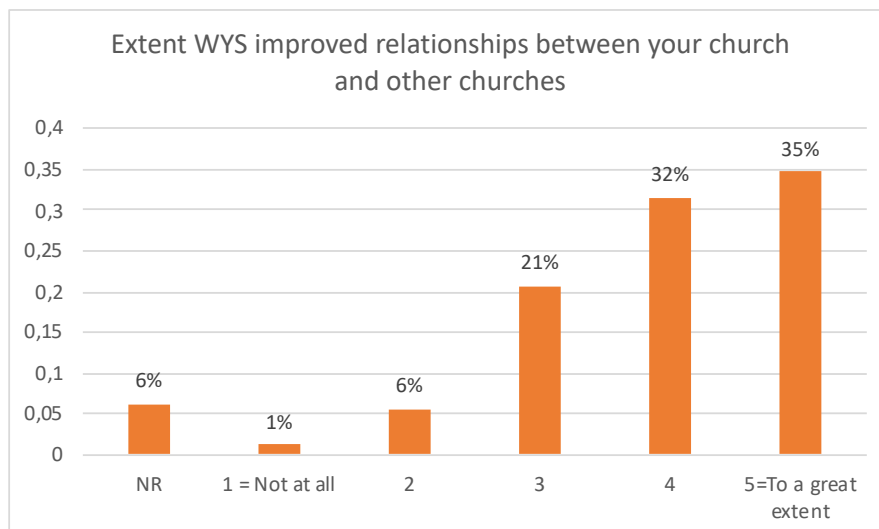


FIGURE 13: WYS AND RELATIONSHIP ACROSS CHURCHES

These relationships have also extended beyond the church to families, community-based organisations (CBOs) and the wider community.

One respondent observed that church members had shared WYS with their **families** and that this had led to real changes in some families. For example, one leader commented: “once my family were aware of my story, it changed the whole family dynamics. They see the different approach I am adopting. I am being more open to them and speak to them easier and they are speaking to me easier – it has changed my personal relations.”

Another respondent spoke to her increased ability to take her children’s perspective on issues: “I have gained emotional intelligence from this experience through communicating and connecting with my family and children. I don’t shout prematurely anymore. I am trying to see things from my children’s perspective, though this can still be a challenge.”

One congregant commented as follows: “my son left home and we were not on speaking terms. After ‘What’s Your Story?’ we reconnected. I called him. He came back home. We had a conversation about why he left. We have a better relationship now. I reserved all my opinions while we had the conversation and I remembered that we are being taught to judge less and listen.”

One respondent from a **community-based organisation**, observed: “I don’t get offended easily anymore. When I see the other caregivers at work being silent, I give them space and go back to what they shared in their story and try and understand that they are going through something and it has nothing to do with me. We got to understand each other better. We work together better. We speak openly and not keep quiet. We communicate better.”

In another case a respondent observed that WYS had allowed members within the community-based organisation to recognise the similarities amongst themselves, commenting that the impact at the end of the workshop on people “from different races was profound.” Others confirmed this and indicated that prior to this intervention, there were real tensions between people from different racial groups. WYS had led to shifts as people “got to understand each other and gained more respect towards one another”. Similarly, another respondent indicated that WYS changed how he thinks about other cultures and races, and that he is learning many new things from others since WYS stating that, “we fight as colleagues and we don’t blame race. We come to understand each other differently..... when I became comfortable, I invited the team to come to my home. I was nervous, my family was nervous, because I was bringing a white person as well.”

One respondent indicated that WYS had helped her to integrate well with the organisation and get to know others and start new friendships: “I started working here one year ago. When I first got here, I found it difficult to connect with people. My home is not in the village, so I drive in and out every day. We all work so hard and think we don't have much time to talk more. So, I decided to take advantage of this opportunity to talk to people and try to get to know them better. I was also hoping that it would even improve my working relationship with my colleagues in my department.”

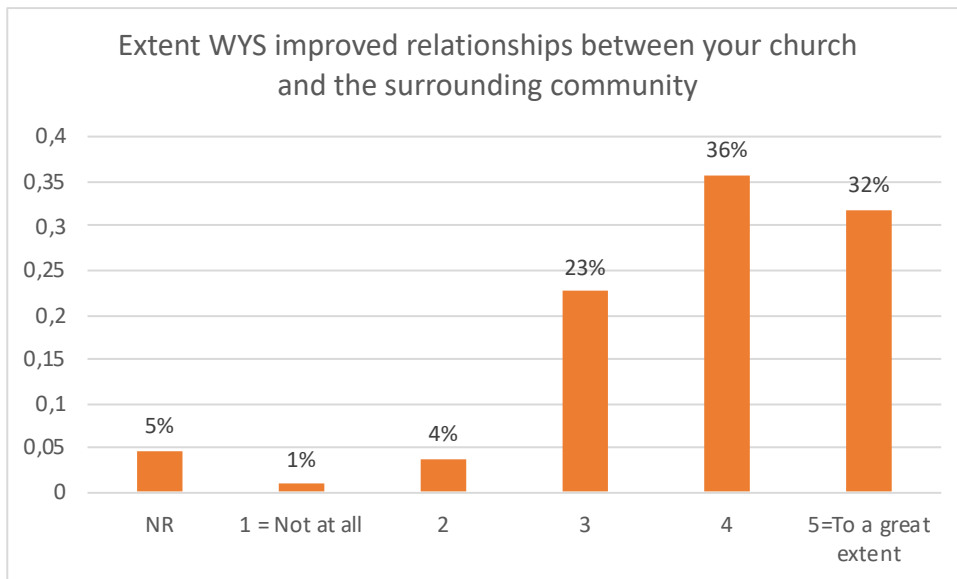
Other respondents from the same community-based organisation observed that “during lunch breaks they are talking to people of different races that they have not been talking to before. Before, there was a sense that people of similar races sat together, and this changed almost immediately after WYS. I heard teachers coming back to me saying for the first time they got to hear about each other's background and understand who they are” and another observed that, “we work in an organisation that works with people's wellbeing. At the beginning I thought we were an open community. I thought we were having these conversations already, but with the introduction of WYS we realised that we need to go beyond ‘Sawubona’ so that ‘Sawubona’ means more. It now genuinely means ‘I see you, tell me your story, how are you?’.”

There were also changes reported in **educational institutions**. For example, one member of a church who was exposed to WYS and who is a teacher, indicated that he shared a story with a troublesome learner in his class. The teacher reported that he once took him to the staffroom. What could have resulted in harsh discipline turned out to be well-received therapy. The teacher shared his childhood story with the learner and the learner was also motivated to share his story. After that session, the teacher understood the background of the ill-disciplined learner, which changed his view about the learner, and the learner also understood the teacher better. This reportedly resulted in positive changes in the learner's behaviour.

Respondents shared how WYS has helped them make changes in the **workplace**. One respondent started using WYS in his stores: “I took WYS to my stores especially the new stores that I got after I did WYS. After I watched the movie – it gave me different ideas...I shared my story in the stores.” He indicated that he shared WYS in his stores as he wanted to improve teamwork and “it has helped and now the staff understand each other better especially between different race groups”. He added that he is continuing to tell his story and share with his staff: “if I get new staff that is what I do...I try and understand where you come from, what's your culture and people are feeling comfortable.”

A respondent, from another workplace, commented that she “took that risk [to tell her story at work] and got more than I expected. I got support and consideration from my co-workers. It is super. And the funny thing is that they now worry about me, and I now have to be the one assuring them of how okay I am on a daily basis. That on its own is what makes me get better. It has improved our work production and makes it easy to work because you feel safer than before.”

There were also examples of how WYS has helped to break down barriers in the **wider community**. In the survey, 68% of respondents reported that WYS had a positive effect on relationships in the community.



**FIGURE 14: WYS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY**

One respondent indicated that she had asked an Ethiopian foreign national owning a spaza shop in the area his story. She reported that, “I was interested to hear where he comes from, how he came to SA, what was his name, because everyone calls him ‘My Friend’. He was very appreciative. He said no one has asked what his name is. He was curious to understand why I wanted to know about him, and I explained that I have done this exercise and want to get to know more about people that I interact with. This is my new mission.”

Respondents observed that with respect to other changes in the wider community it is too soon to understand the level of change that has taken place. At the point of this evaluation, respondents could only speak to an increased understanding, which will enable the institution to develop a greater understanding of how to effect change. For example, respondents in one community (that had selected to undertake WYS to address social challenges) indicated that WYS had helped them to take perspective on why so many young people join gangs and are involved in substance abuse, robbery and other crimes. They observed that understanding the reasons for this could assist them to find ways to resolve some of the problems.

## 11. Factors Impeding and Promoting Change

Chapter 7 of this report highlighted some of the factors that affected take-up. These included whether the introduction allowed participants the opportunity to engage in a practical storytelling process (sometimes coupled with other activities), and whether respondents had access to training and/or a 'Bridge' intervention. In addition, we found that where respondents had a positive experience in the storytelling process, they were more likely to take up WYS. This was also the case when the respondent personally experienced a change or shift within themselves. Finally, we found that where respondents were clear about what the purpose of WYS was, they were more likely to adopt it. This section drills down more deeply into what factors emerged as important in promoting and impeding change.

### 11.1. Factors Promoting Change

#### **The simplicity and accessibility of the approach**

As mentioned, one of the factors emerging from this evaluation has been that gender, race, age and education levels are not factors that determine whether or not an individual takes up WYS. Instead, the simplicity and accessibility of the approach appear to make it suitable for all to use as a tool, even without additional guides and resources (although see mention of this again in the next section). Heartlines refers to the approach as Ask.Listen.Tell., and it appears from the findings of this evaluation that this is exactly how participants are using it and, in general, with positive effect.

#### **Having a champion**

A key finding from the case studies is that WYS needs someone who is going to intentionally take it forward: someone who believes in the method and is passionate about making a difference. WYS needs a champion who can plan and follow up with others where required.

Respondents highlighted that this requires leadership and trust as observed by one church leader who observed: "I wanted to plant trust in my group".

This was illustrated by another religious leader who observed that she had integrated WYS into all areas of her work, and very consciously encourages others to adopt the story-sharing approach. She has used WYS in her church, in school visits, in engagement with community workers, and even on her radio programme. This, in turn, has resulted in many others taking up WYS. This specific pastor received a stipend from Heartlines to assist her with promoting WYS, but it was very apparent from interviews with this pastor, as well as her parishioners, that her passion for the method was noteworthy.

#### **The more people share, the easier it gets**

One respondent commented that "once I had got my head around what I had shared with everyone, I needed to process what I had shared as I had shared unwanted memories and once I had processed that, I shared with my family. Once I shared with my family, it helped them understand some of my behaviour. It made my kids feel closer to me."

One pastor reported: "Some [parishioners exposed to WYS] are more open, and are becoming more open with others, and some people have expanded their comfort zone, but it's all a process."

#### **Range of relevant resources**

Respondents suggested that a key contributor to change related to the extent to which Heartlines provided relevant resources and tools.

One respondent commented that “WYS gave us a better platform, they gave us the tools to have meaningful and impactful relationships, I have observed people talking that I have not seen talking with each other before”.

In another example, one respondent observed that the exposure to the *Beyond the River* movie had “really led to them to see things in new ways”. They observed that this was further strengthened by the fact that they were then given the chance to share stories. It was reported that for the first time, they did not focus on the work, but about who they are as individuals and how they come together to do the work they have been called to do. This reportedly resulted in a significant shift.

Another respondent indicated that they had used storytelling before and had found it very valuable. However, she commented that WYS provided her with practical tools to continue to share stories: “I go out into communities every day and sometimes I counsel people. I think the approach of WYS is a very practical kind of principle and it teaches you how to listen and engage”.

### 11.2. Factors Hindering Change

While responses to WYS and its ability to activate change are generally positive, respondents emphasised that **the journey of building diversity is complex**. Whilst WYS is contributing to an increased awareness of the “other”, there is a reality that developing empathy remains an iterative process. Respondents highlight a number of challenges that need to be taken cognisance of in the on-going implementation of this programme:

The key hindering factor that was highlighted relates to the **amount of time that was available for the introduction of WYS**. Respondents stated: “The one concern I had about the process is that there was not enough time to share. It was too short. We started but all of us had commitments in the day and it was too short to share properly – once you start the process it needs to be ongoing.” In another case a pastor reported that he, and other pastors, would have preferred seven to eight meetings with Heartlines to go through different topics in the manual (they indicated that they received fewer sessions than this). This would enable them to learn to introduce WYS to the congregation in a way that “will inspire them to share more with their communities”.

As evidenced in this report, the above is supported by regression analyses on the survey data, which highlight that those who are most likely to take up WYS are those who have had the opportunity to engage in storytelling processes (and possibly other activities).

In relation to implementing WYS in churches, some respondents indicated that if there is not enough of a critical mass of parishioners involved in WYS, it will reduce the sense of a shared purpose, as well as limit the number of people who might volunteer for certain activities. There is therefore a need to ensure that WYS is implemented across the organisation to build a shared purpose. Similarly, in one case a church had attempted to encourage a CBO to adopt WYS. However, it was reported that these efforts “have not gained momentum”. The respondent indicated that the CBOs likely needed more training on WYS, as well as access to WYS materials in order to take this up.

In another case a church leader indicated that she had spent considerable time and resources on successfully introducing WYS to others into the church and community. However, she indicated that getting pastors to work together – both within the community and in surrounding areas – is a challenge. She indicated that part of the issue pertains to pastors “having so much on their plate”, and part pertained to some being “very fixed. They do what they have been trained to do”. Another respondent commented that, “it remains a challenge to get church



leaders from different churches to work together, not least because of their work loads and concomitant restrictions on their time”.

As anticipated, **not everyone was comfortable opening themselves up** and sharing stories about themselves. In other cases, the issue is more around with **whom the story is to be shared and/or in what circumstance**. In a few cases, respondents stated that they had tried to share WYS in their workplaces or with their neighbours but indicated that this had felt “awkward.”

There were also cases where respondents stated that they felt that WYS was requiring them to make **changes in their beliefs** and that they did not feel that institutions, such as the church, should challenge them in this way.

Many respondents also spoke to the **lack of resources**, and this was especially the case with regards to those to whom the WYS training was cascaded. Some church leaders specifically indicated that they would like to access copies of the *Beyond the River* film and reported that it would be good if all church leaders and care pastors could have the handbooks and training as well.

The other issue that emerged during the evaluation is a **concern about what people should do once they hear others’ stories** – especially those who are poor and come from lower socio-economic groups. One respondent commented that hearing these stories would make her feel responsible for helping members out financially. She believed that by people sharing their stories, she would feel obliged to help. This led to an interesting discussion about the objective of WYS. In response, most of the members in the focus group felt that that was not the aim of WYS and, as one member pointed out: “sometimes people just want a smile, a hug, and a pat on the shoulder...to know their name and for you to want to listen to them. It makes such a difference calling someone by their name.” Another member added: “WYS is sharing your story to get to know someone better. It’s not about opening your pocket. At the end of it, it is about what I have done to make people happier.” It is also noted, however, that in some cases becoming more aware did result in members then also becoming more involved in acts of service at the level of the community.

# Section C: Summary of WYS in the Workplace from the Formative Evaluation Report

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This section of the report provides a summary of Singizi's findings related to Heartlines' workplace engagements in 2018. Singizi found that of the 87 respondents who had exposure to WYS, 48.5% reported that they had gone on to adopt the WYS approach. **Of importance is that Singizi found a statistically significant relationship between greater exposure to different WYS activities (dosage) and the adoption of WYS.** In other words, 61% of those who received the highest level of exposure (someone explained WYS and group engaged in a storytelling process plus other activities) adopted WYS.

In adopting WYS, respondents stated that they have undertaken a number of different kinds of actions on a number of occasions. All of the WYS workplace respondents who adopted the approach indicated that they had repeated WYS more than once, and a full 41% reported they had repeated the process more than 15 times. In response to a multi-mention question (respondents could select more than one response) Singizi found that the kinds of actions taken by respondents included:

- 44% of the participants indicated that since undertaking WYS they had listened to someone else's story;
- 24% of participants indicated that since undertaking WYS they had told their story to someone else;
- 13% of the participants indicated that they had told others about WYS and how to do it; and
- 17% of participants indicated that the person had brought a group of people together to engage in WYS with each other.

When asked to provide reasons for adopting WYS, 29% of respondents indicated that they wanted to improve relations between people in their organisation. A further 18% indicated that they wanted to share their experiences with someone else, while 18% indicated that they wanted to break down a barrier through the sharing of stories.

These findings begin to point to the positive changes that are possible through this approach, and these are explored further, in the following section, against the WYS Theory of Change (which indicates that through the above-mentioned interventions it will be possible to improve communication and relationships amongst employees and, through this, build a strong sense of inclusion. This will, in turn, strengthen teamwork and, ultimately, enhance productivity).

In order to understand whether communication and relationships amongst employees are improving, Singizi considered a number of questions, including: Do people feel heard? Are they listening better? Do they feel safe having "tough" conversations? Are there increased levels of trust and empathy?

Respondents indicated that they have considerably improved their listening skills. Further, in addition to trying hard to understand what the other person is saying and expressing interest, respondents also stated that they increasingly provide individuals with their full and undivided attention. Respondents indicated that this, in turn, was perceived to translate into better communication. These findings are illustrated below:

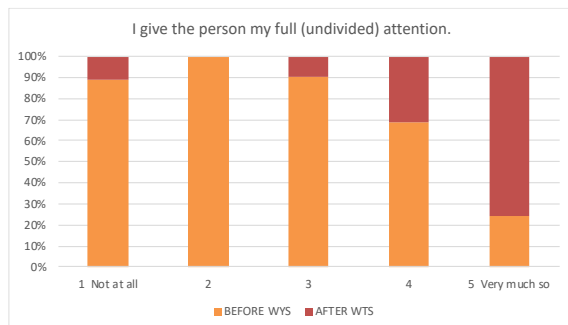


FIGURE 1: LISTENING SKILLS

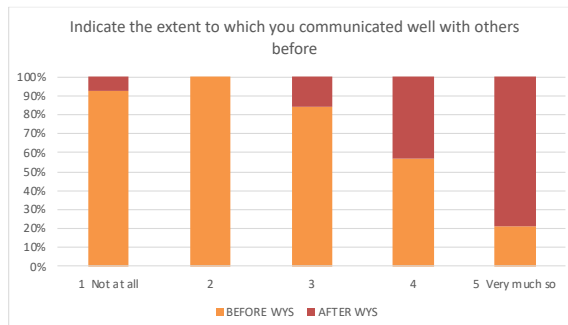


FIGURE 2: IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

Singizi also found that respondents reported that they felt much more comfortable sharing their own story after experiencing WYS. They also reported an increased level of trust.



FIGURE 3: TRUST

The attributes associated with empathy were explored as part of this study. One of these is curiosity. Importantly, Singizi found that respondents scored themselves as much more curious after being exposed to WYS, this is with respect to hearing the stories of others and, through this to learn more about the lives, values and beliefs in others.

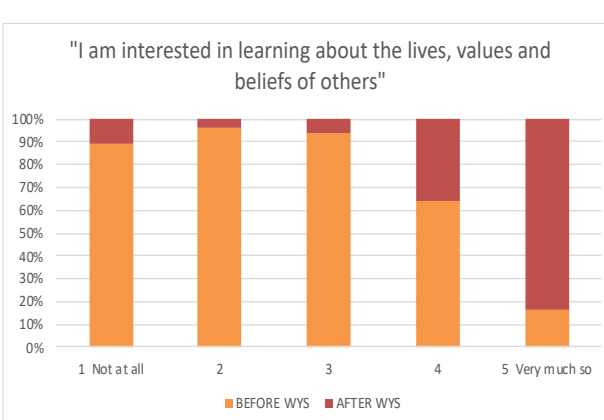
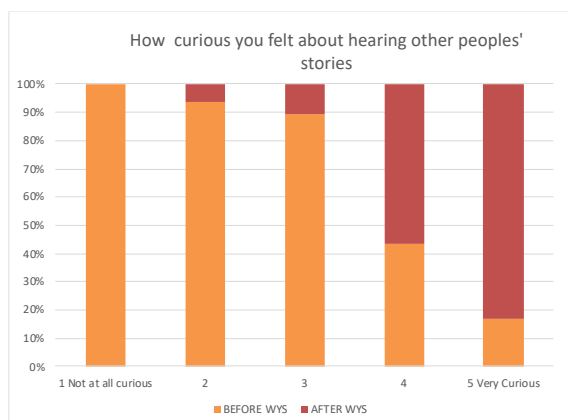
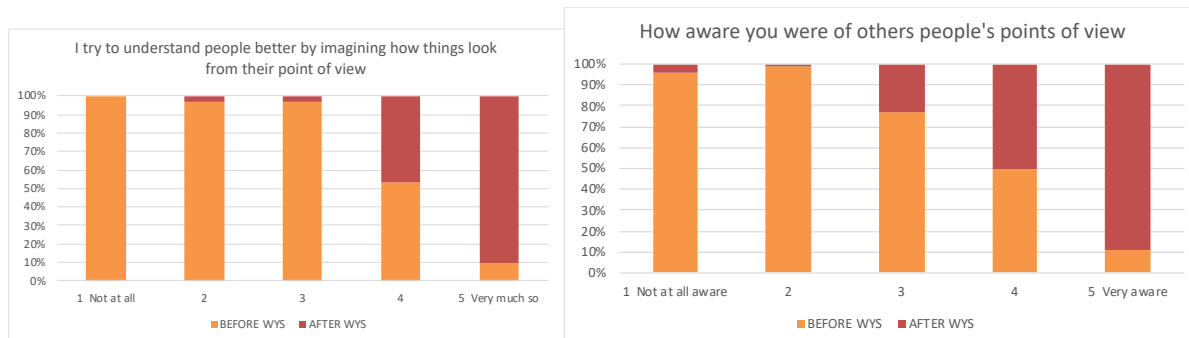


FIGURE 4 AND 5: CURIOSITY

There is also evidence that other key values associated with increased empathy (perspective-taking, open-mindedness and being non-judgmental) are being developed through this intervention, and respondents consistently rated themselves much higher on these after being exposed to WYS.



**FIGURE 6 AND 7: AWARENESS OF OTHER’S POINTS OF VIEW AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR POINT OF VIEW**

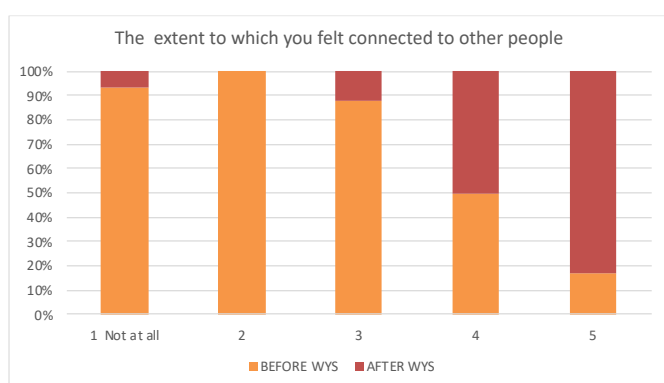
Crucially, respondents stated that this process has assisted them to appreciate diversity and indicated that they were less judgmental about others.

Singizi then considered the extent to which participants actively promote inclusive practices since exposure to WYS. Participants indicated that since the programme they are more willing to stand up against discriminatory words and actions.



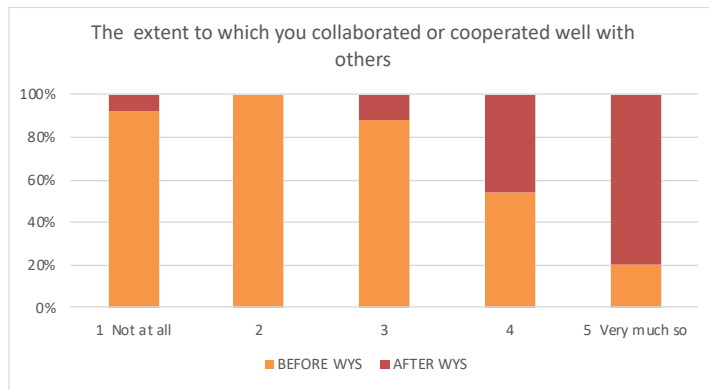
**FIGURE 8: WILLINGNESS TO TAKE A STAND**

These practices appear to result in participants feeling more connected and engaging in more co-operative relations:



**FIGURE 9: SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS**

The findings also suggest that respondents believe that they are better able to collaborate and cooperate with others.



**FIGURE 10: COLLABORATION AND CO-OPERATION**

These findings highlight the potential value of the Heartlines WYS approach in terms of building greater levels of co-operation and connectedness. This is underpinned by improved communication and trust, which are considered central to strengthening teamwork, building new forms of relationships in the workplace, and supporting a culture of trust and respectful communication.

The findings are promising and point to the potential for this methodology to increase social capital in the workplace, and to create the space for networks and relationships to be strengthened through improving shared values, trust, co-operation and reciprocity. This is seen as vital to improving the performance of diverse groups.

It is anticipated that, as learning from these processes grows, Heartlines will be able to work with companies to consider how to further support these changes. This may include developing policies, and institutionalising these, in order to continue to strengthen relations in the workplace and grow the culture of inclusivity.

## Section D: Discussion and Recommendations

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The two key evaluative questions that the evaluation has sought to address are as follows:

1. Can a campaign that encourages people to tell each other their personal stories, in supportive contexts, increase empathy amongst those involved? <sup>2</sup>
2. Does the fostering of greater empathy of individuals for each other in group settings improve cohesion and, therefore, the functioning of the group?

These two broad research questions underpin the WYS programme theory, which was expressed as follows:

If Heartlines develops relevant resources and then provides training (and other activities in the case of “Bridge” engagements) on these, this will result in:

1. Participants seeing the value of the approach and developing an interest in sharing stories;
2. Participants feeling affirmed by the process;
3. Participants develop empathy as a result of engaging with WYS;
4. Participants are committed to adopting new values; and
5. There is greater social cohesion.

The above, in turn, would contribute to the promotion of the virtue of empathy.

As indicated, the programme theory was tailored for churches and workplaces, but the foundational programme theory is used as a broad lens for discussion here.

In making an evaluative judgement of the programme against the programme theory there is a need to understand both whether the programme was implemented as planned and, if not why this was the case and, whether the assumptions (theoretical basis) and causal chain (that is, the internal logic) for the programme proved to be valid.

With respect to implementation, the findings of the formative and summative evaluations of WYS show that the WYS programme theory was implemented as planned. The data from the summative evaluation suggest that the issues that were highlighted in the formative evaluation with respect to ways to enhance the implementation of the programme were addressed, and that the programme’s implementation was strengthened accordingly. This is illustrated by the shift in dosage (the level of exposure to different elements of WYS) from the period covered by the formative evaluation (where 56% of respondents had medium to high dosage) to the period covered by the summative evaluation (where this increased to 84%). The changes made with respect to the implementation of the programme are also evidenced by the finding that in the period after the formative evaluation, greater emphasis was placed on ensuring that people understood the programme’s imperative to consciously cascade WYS to others. The value of these changes is further evidenced by the positive responses offered by respondents

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<sup>2</sup> The definition that Heartlines has adopted for this project focuses on empathy in the sense of empathic concern, which is defined as an other-oriented emotional response elicited by, and congruent with, the perceived welfare of others. Increased empathy is marked by a decrease in negative attitudes and actions around prejudice and racism and increased acts of caring, especially for the “other.”

during the interviews about the way in which the programme was introduced, the ways that the programme was explained and, the resources that were made available.

These findings confirm that short engagements (such as promos) without follow-up training are not likely to yield the desired levels of WYS take up.

We are therefore recommending that Heartlines should continue to place an emphasis on ensuring that when introducing WYS, everyone present who is willing should have the opportunity to test storytelling out, as this seems to be a very significant factor in determining whether an individual is likely to repeat WYS. Where possible all efforts should be made to provide some additional training.

This still remains a fairly light touch resource intervention, which whilst a formal value-for-money analysis has not been undertaken, appears to be very cost-effective way of realising large scale change (outlined further below).

In terms of the internal logic of the programme theory, this evaluation found that the assumptions made about the willingness of participants to replicate the programme is evidenced. As indicated above, this evaluation found that even with a relatively short initial engagement from Heartlines, the majority of people, particularly those who had a positive experience, are adopting the WYS approach, and are replicating this approach within their communities (including church, family, community-based organisations, schools and workplaces).

Moreover, it is evident that the approach is simple and accessible to people of different races, genders and ages, making it particularly easy for individuals to replicate WYS in a number of different contexts, including churches and workplaces.

The findings also confirm the programme theory logic in terms of how WYS would be cascaded, as we found that once an individual had adopted the approach, they were likely to implement it more than once, suggesting a level of buy-in once individuals establish that WYS had a positive effect. This was also evidenced by the comments made by respondents during the interviews and in the case studies.

The programme theory's assertion that once individuals are exposed to WYS and feel affirmed by it they will develop increased levels of empathy was also found to be valid, and we found a strong link between the number of times that respondents shared WYS and increased levels of empathy.

The extent to which these shifts result in individuals who are committed to adopting empathetic values was also borne out by the findings from both the church and the workplace.

In churches, the findings provide evidence that WYS can and does result in positive change at the level of the individual, amongst parishioners within a church, within the church itself, between churches and between churches and the surrounding community.

At a personal and inter-personal level, these changes include increased confidence, a greater level of curiosity of others, improved trust and better relationships. Of import is that there is also evidence that these changes contribute to the strengthening of the institution and even, in some cases, increased participation in the activities of the church.

In workplaces, reported changes include improved communication and trust, which are considered central to strengthening teamwork, building new forms of relationships in the workplace, and supporting a culture of trust and respectful communication.

These findings are very positive and point strongly to the robustness of the theory of change. However, a review of the findings suggests that there are two further key issues for consideration:

The first is that the greater the number of individuals within the organisation who are exposed to the WYS method, the more it is embedded into the institution, and the greater the effect WYS has on levels of cooperation and collaboration. Short ad-hoc interventions are not without benefits, but the findings suggest that the impact is considerably greater where a critical mass within an organisation is reached and where there are groups of individuals who are energised about the approach and can take it forward. This evidence thus also supports the answering of the initial research questions posed.

The second is the need for acknowledgement that any meaningful change takes time and requires reinforcement. Many respondents in this evaluation suggested that they would have valued additional engagements about the programme in order to deepen their understanding and their skills to take WYS forward. In some cases, this refers to slightly longer training and possibly a follow-up session once they had the chance to share WYS. In other cases, respondents would have liked considerably more training in each aspect of the programme.

These findings suggest that Heartlines should ensure that those trained understand how to implement a consolidated approach that considers ways in which a critical mass of members of any one organisation can be inducted into WYS.

Further, it would be valuable for Heartlines to reflect further on ways to ensure that participants who undertake WYS can continue to access support, as they take the process forward in these varied contexts. This could greatly strengthen the overall impact of the programme .

There is also a need to consider how WYS can be augmented with other activities that, over time, will deepen the change that Heartlines seeks to support by reinforcing key values and the key messages associated with them.

Finally, there was evidence that people find the Heartlines resources very valuable and that the different resources were used to share WYS more widely within the community. However, some respondents indicated that they did not have access to the resources that they needed to cascade WYS.

While Heartlines has made valuable materials available online for those who seek to use WYS as a tool to affect change, not everyone seemed aware of these resources and others may not be able to access these online. Ways to involve the champion in creating awareness of these resources could perhaps be explored. Further, and particularly now in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic where much has shifted online, there is a need to create greater awareness of the availability of these resources. In doing so, it would be useful to encourage individuals who may access the site through one avenue (whether the church, their place of work or in their community) to explore the resources that can be used in other contexts.

Finally, going forward Heartlines has a number of issues to consider, as follows:

- Heartlines has had great success with the introduction of WYS in churches and in church communities. This, in turn, has also led to WYS being introduced in other spaces (families, schools, workplaces and the wider community). The issue that Heartlines needs to consider is whether or not it will deliberately expand WYS in other sectors or institutions (as in through direct engagement rather than being taken forward



by members in the churches). As WYS in the workplace has shown, each sector requires differentiated engagement strategies. These, in turn, have implications for Heartlines' overall strategy as an organisation and the sectors in which Heartlines wishes to sustain or build a presence.

- There is also a need for Heartlines to consider whether it can integrate WYS as a methodology within and across its other programmes. While storytelling is core to much of Heartlines' work, WYS is a specific embodiment of that and its potential utility in other programmes is worth considering. This includes a consideration of whether there are ways that WYS can support the development of empathy in more deliberate ways in its programming to address specific challenges with "othering" in communities (such as xenophobia) or to address specific societal issues (such as the role of fathers).
- What kinds of resources are required to enable respondents to take WYS forward in different contexts, given the finding that resources are particularly important when seeking to cement WYS into a particular institution? Tailored resources may also be useful to deal with specific sectors or areas of focus, such as using WYS to address values in schools or working with WYS to build improved relationships in families;
- Finally, what should the balance be between reach and depth? Heartlines has already shifted from providing "promos" to providing opportunities for participants to engage in storytelling and, in some cases, other activities. However, there is a need to determine whether there is cause to deepen engagement even further (at least in some cases). The case study data indicate that there are some calls for a more sustained level of engagement over time.

This report has provided some suggestions about ways to address these questions and it will be important that Heartlines considers these questions within the context of the evolving focus of the organisation (for example its increased focus on the role of fathers). However, what is evident is that whilst WYS is a relatively low-cost intervention, it supports significant changes in values and, as a consequence, greater levels of cohesion. This emphasises that in an increasingly polarised world, there is a need to sustain this effort and to consider ways to both expand this programme and to deepen the on-going support that is provided.

# Appendix 1: Workplace and Church Programme Theories

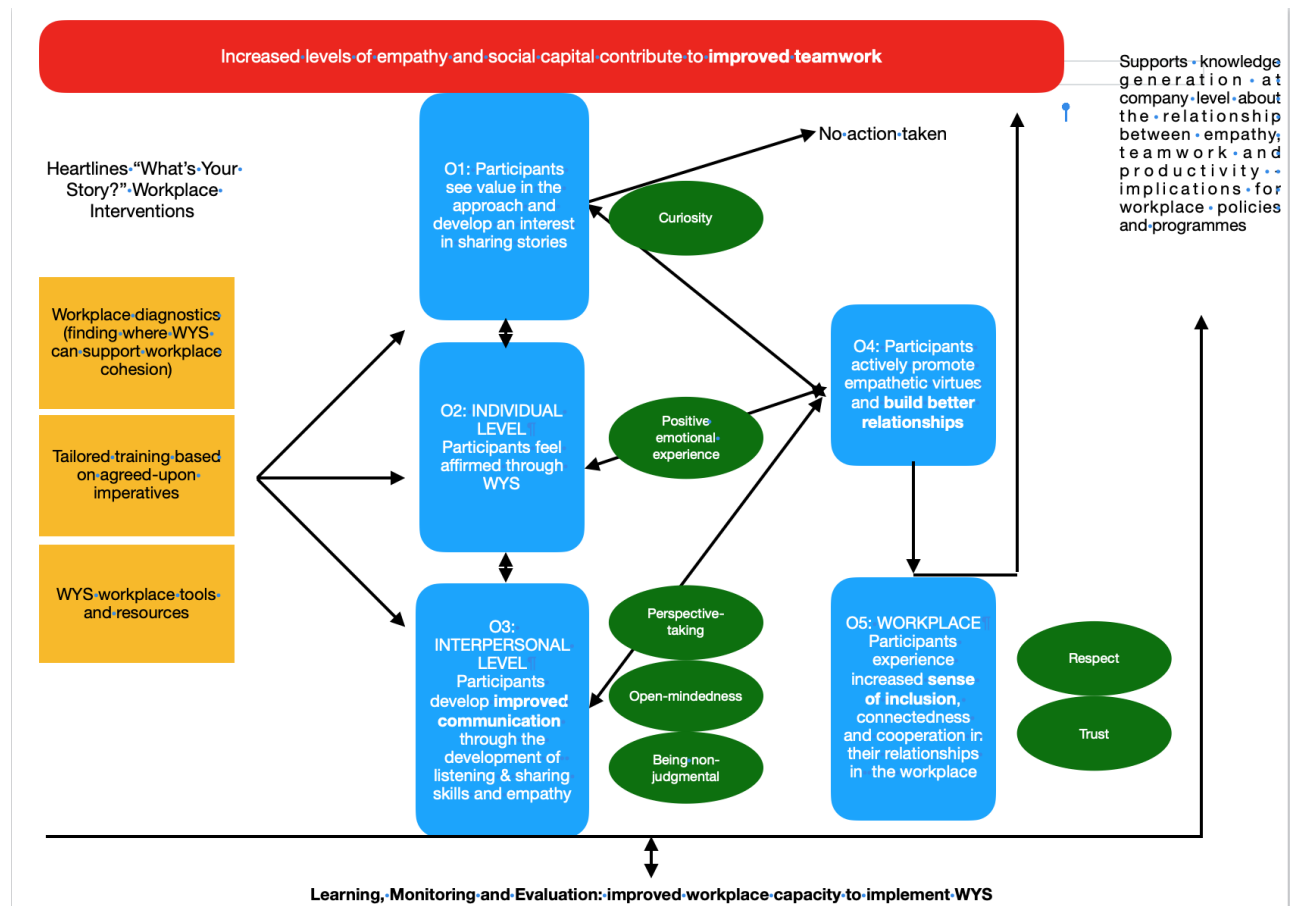


FIGURE 15: WORKPLACE PROGRAMME THEORY DIAGRAM

Promoting the virtue of love (empathy) to create a vibrant, welcoming and connected church community that interacts with the wider community with relational intentionality

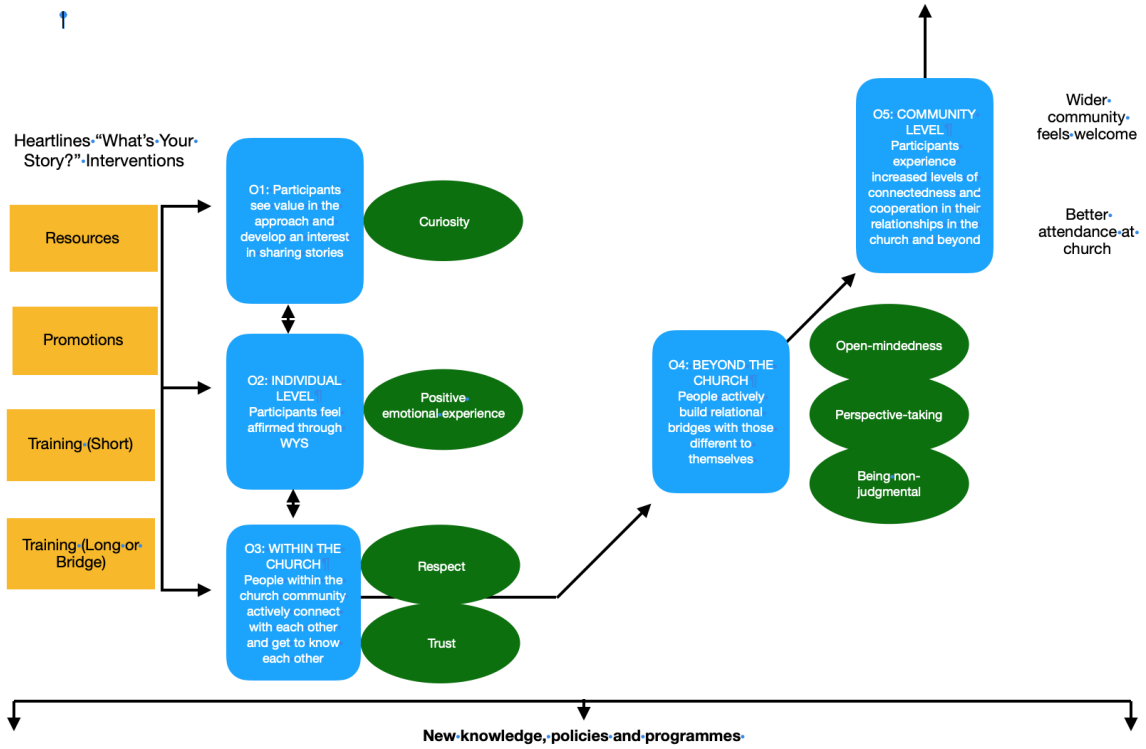
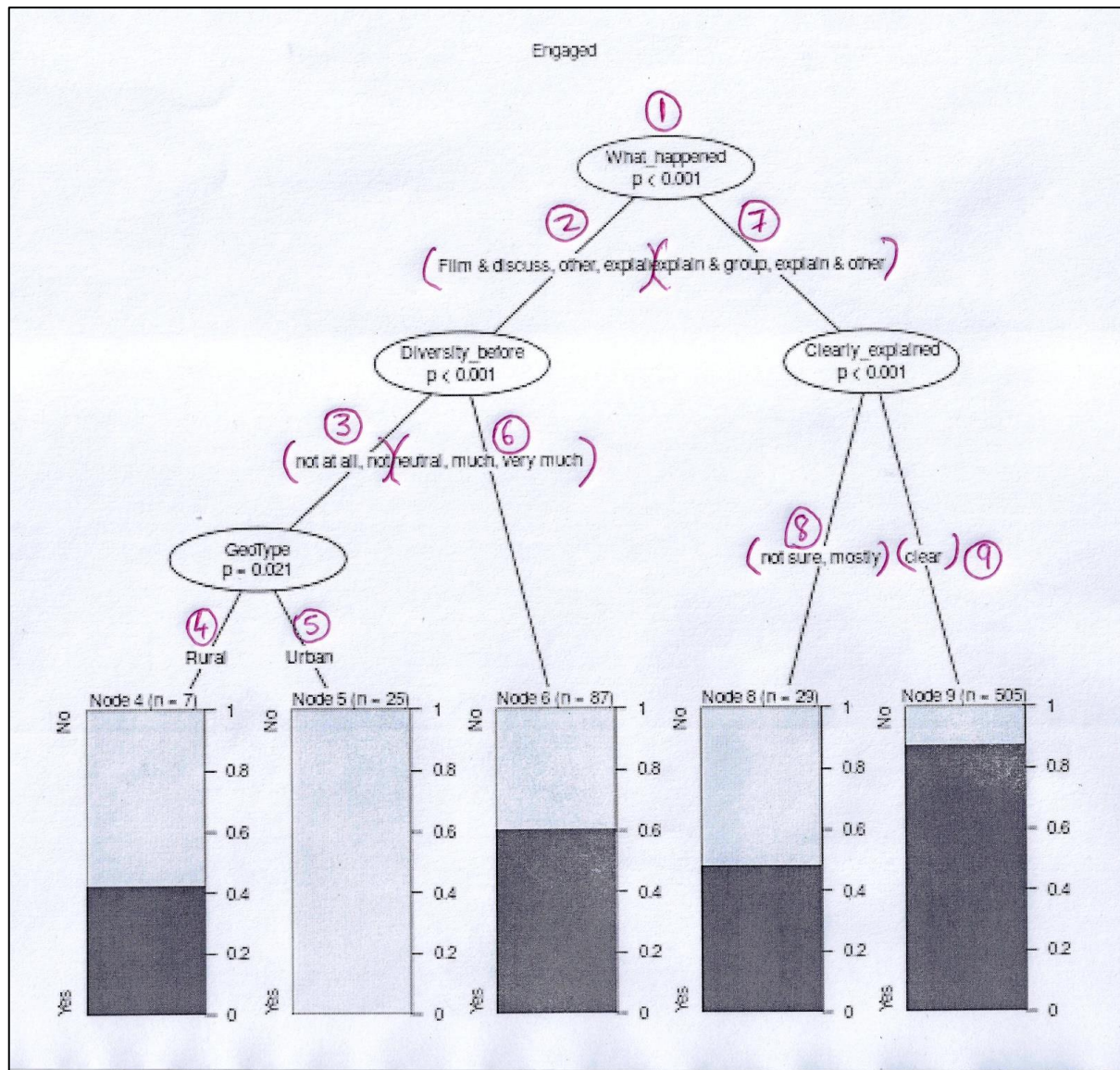


FIGURE 16: CHURCH PROGRAMME THEORY DIAGRAM

## Appendix 2: Regression



- The 'Nodes' indicate the respective 'engaged in WYS process' or did not engage in WYS process, as they pertain to each branch of the decision tree.
- Decision trees are a hierarchy of terms, and as such need to be 'read' according to how decisions are made and influenced by the various variables and disseminated downward.
- "What happened during this first session?" was the important discriminator in terms of subsequent decisions people made to adopt or not to adopt the WYS approach.
- The branches diverge between the group who said they saw BTR and discussed it; 'other'; and had WYS explained without a following story-telling process (Branch 2)
- Branch 7 represents the group who said 'Someone explained 'What's Your Story?' and then the group engaged in a storytelling process; and Someone explained 'What's Your Story?' and we engaged in a storytelling process, as well as other activities'

- So then these two groups are clearly distinguished between group and non-group activities.
- 'Diversity before (WYS)' was only a factor for those who did not engage in the group processes as described above, while in turn GeoType is only important for those who thought 'Diversity before' was "not important," or "not at all important".
- For this group, where Geo-type was a factor, nobody (n=24) from the urban group engaged in the WYS process (Node 5), while 40% of those from the rural group (Node 4) engaged in the process.
- Of the 87 respondents who saw the movie and discussed it (or "other") but who thought 'Diversity before' was important (or they were neutral), subsequent engagement in the WYS process increased to 60%. Clearly the prior attitude to Diversity was instrumental in respondents engaging with the process afterwards
- Almost all (88%) of the 505 respondents who said an explanation was part of what happened AND who said the explanation was clear subsequently engaged the process (Branch 9). Engagement by the sub-group of 29 who that felt the explanation was not clear fell to 48%. (Branch 8)