



CAPTURING GROWTH

THE JOURNEY OF THE SKILLS FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMME IN GHANA



Funded by PTI and
implemented by JA Ghana

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This photo essay project captures the growth of students who have participated in the Skills for School Programme in Ghana. The programme equips young people with essential soft skills - communication, confidence, managing feelings, reliability, working with others, and goal setting. The programme is run by teachers in fifteen schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, managed by Junior Achievement Ghana (JA Ghana), and funded by Princes Trust International (PTI) a UK-based charity.

This project, which was undertaken by JA Ghana, focused on examining how the programme has impacted and shaped the lives of students for the better.

In-depth interviews were undertaken in 2023 with seven students from five of the fifteen schools.

The photos presented capture the experiences of these students and the views and stories presented accurately capture the views they shared during the interviews.

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The Story of Blessing

Blessing, an 11-year-old female student at a school in Accra, experienced a transformation in her life due to her participation in the Skills for School Programme.

Her journey with the Skills for School Programme began when she stumbled upon one of the programme's meetings while studying in the school library. Initially, she was too timid to approach the teacher in charge but confided in a friend who was already a member.

Fortunately, Blessing was subsequently chosen to join the next cohort.



“

For the first group that joined Skills for School, one day I came to the library to read and saw all of them learning. While I was reading, I asked them if I could join the group because as I was reading, I was paying attention and observing what they were doing.

”

I realised that it was fun. So, I asked one of the students if I could join and he told me he did not know and that I should ask the teacher but I could not so I left.

Before her involvement with Skills for School, Blessing faced challenges in communicating with others, even her friends and her mother. She felt shy and often carried a sense of sadness.

However, the support and training she received from her teachers and fellow club members had a profound impact on her.

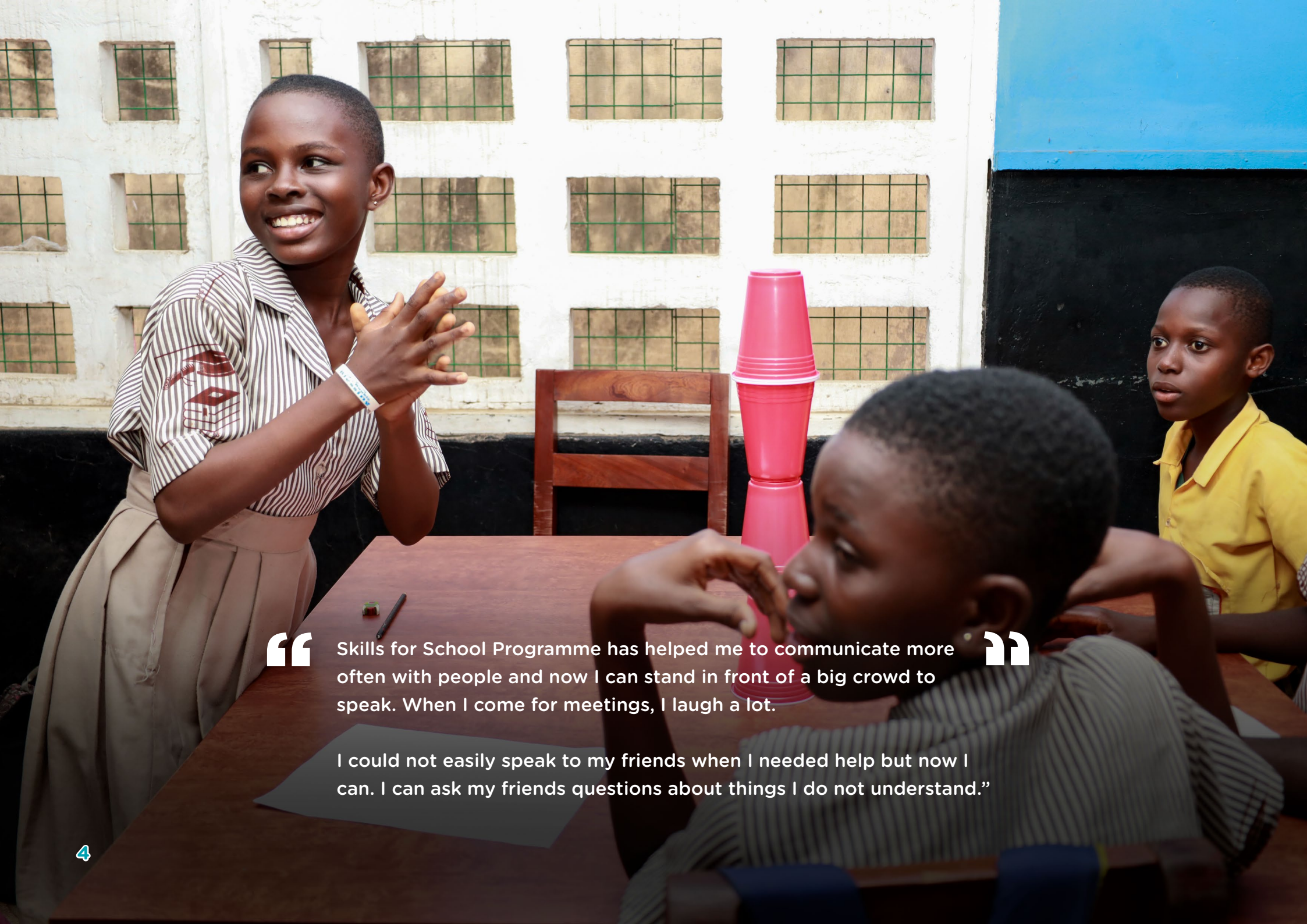
Through her participation in Skills for School, Blessing has grown significantly in self-confidence and acquired valuable knowledge about building relationships and effective communication.



“

I could not communicate much with people.
I could not communicate easily with my friends
about some of my problems and I was shy.
I was also sad most of the time.

”



“

Skills for School Programme has helped me to communicate more often with people and now I can stand in front of a big crowd to speak. When I come for meetings, I laugh a lot.

”

I could not easily speak to my friends when I needed help but now I can. I can ask my friends questions about things I do not understand.”



Blessing's improved communication skills have also extended to her relationship with her mother. She now finds it easier to discuss her school-related problems with her, and her mother has started to offer support.

“

At home, now I can easily communicate with my mother about the problems I have at school. Though she does not like to know much about it, I try to still talk to her and now sometimes she tries to support me.

At first, I could not communicate much with her about that because I thought she would beat me.



Looking ahead, Blessing aspires to become a president in the future. She believes that the skills she has developed through the Skills for School Programme, including communication, confidence, and anger management, will be instrumental in achieving this goal.

Blessing identified that confidence will empower her to speak in front of crowds, and enhanced communication will enable her to craft and deliver impactful speeches. Moreover, she anticipates that her anger management skills will be invaluable in her future endeavors.



I want to be a president in the future. I believe that communication, confidence, and anger management skills will help me in this aspiration.

Having confidence will help me when I have to stand in front of a crowd to speak. Communication will help me with the speeches that I have to write and deliver. I will also be able to manage my anger when I am at work.”

*Blessing
for
President*

Blessing’s journey with Skills for School Programme has not only transformed her into a more confident and effective communicator but also instilled in her the belief that she can pursue her dreams and make a positive impact in her community and beyond.



The Story of Marvellous

Marvellous, a 14-year-old boy residing with his parents in Accra, recognised that his participation in the Skills for School Programme transformed his life.

His decision to join the programme was influenced by the positive feedback he received from friends who had experienced the programme. He expressed,

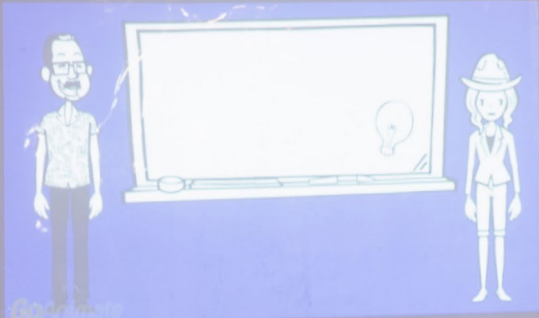


“My friends told me that they watch videos for learning and other activities. They also said that they learned how to manage their feelings and became more confident.

I thought it would be a great programme, and they advised me to express my interest to the teacher when she visits our class.”

23rd August 2023

SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS II



Lol bro
Brib \$

Specific
Measurable
A
R
T

Yolo
Laugh out loud (Lol)
You only live once (Yolo)



Before Marvellous became part of the Skills for School Programme, he faced significant challenges with his studies and struggled with the fear of failure. He recalled the anxiety he experienced during his first examination at the school, leading him to seek assistance from friends instead of attempting the questions.

Following his participation in the programme and the lessons on confidence, Marvellous' perspective shifted. In his subsequent tests and exams, he remembered the importance of confidence and took the initiative to answer questions, even when unsure. He expressed optimism that his performance would improve in the upcoming term.



“

I used to be among the top students in my previous school, but my performance declined after joining this school due to fear and lack of confidence.

”



Marvellous not only gained confidence in his academic pursuits but also transformed his approach to classroom interactions. He actively participated in class discussions, asking for explanations when his answers were deemed incorrect, which enhanced his understanding of various subjects.

“

I want to become a pilot when I grow up because my father aspired to be a pilot and underwent training but faced challenges. I believe that the lessons on confidence and overcoming fear will assist me during pilot training.

This programme will help me become the best pilot, allowing me to identify trustworthy individuals and those I can rely on.



Furthermore, Marvellous acquired essential life skills through Achieve, such as forgiveness and anger management. He learned how to handle conflicts with friends and release anger constructively, improving his overall well-being.

Marvellous envisions a bright future where he can fulfil his father's dream of becoming a pilot.



Marvellous' journey with Skills for School has empowered him with essential life skills and the confidence needed to pursue his dream of becoming a pilot, honouring his father's legacy, and contributing positively to his community by serving as a role model for other children.



The story of Obronii

The Skills for School Programme has had a profound impact on Obronii, a 13-year-old female student in Accra. She initially joined the programme on the recommendation of her class teacher, who recognised her lack of confidence. Obronii's father was initially hesitant, but with the support of her teacher, she was able to join the programme.

Before enrolling in the programme, Obronii struggled with low self-esteem and a sense of neglect due to her constantly changing schools and family circumstances. However, Skills for School transformed her by helping her discover her identity and strengths, and boosting her self-confidence. She gained the courage to share her life experiences.





“

Sometimes I felt like, I was the only person in such a situation but what encouraged me was the Skills for School Programme. It made me know who I am, what I could do, and my strengths. Also, it built my confidence and self-esteem. If it were not for my participation in the Skills for School Programme, I couldn't have spoken to you now, because as soon as Madam informed me of this interview, I would have surely told her I couldn't.

”

“

I thought Madam Esi was a very tough woman - she was strict, but then how she took us through Skills for School I saw how she was very open and free so she made programme....

I never absented myself from meetings because I was always happy when in the meeting. Anything she taught us I tried to let it be part of that life, whatever she said, I tried to do it”



Obronii found the programme to be a supportive and non-judgmental environment where students openly discussed life experiences and challenges. She appreciated the guidance of her teacher, Madam Esi, who not only provided direction but also practical resources and advice to help the students



Obronii believes that Skills for School offers a valuable opportunity for students like her, with its focus on support over punishment and the ability to set their own rules. She found the programme to be full of fun, contrasting it with mainstream schools where mistakes might lead to teasing or judgment.

In her future aspirations to become a surgeon and make a difference in her community, Obronii believes that the skills and values she acquired through Skills for School, such as teamwork, anger management, and effective communication, will be instrumental in her journey. She understands the importance of collaboration and controlling emotions to build meaningful connections and achieve her goals. Ultimately, Skills for School has had a lasting impact on Obronii, shaping her into a confident and aspiring individual.



The story of Oliver

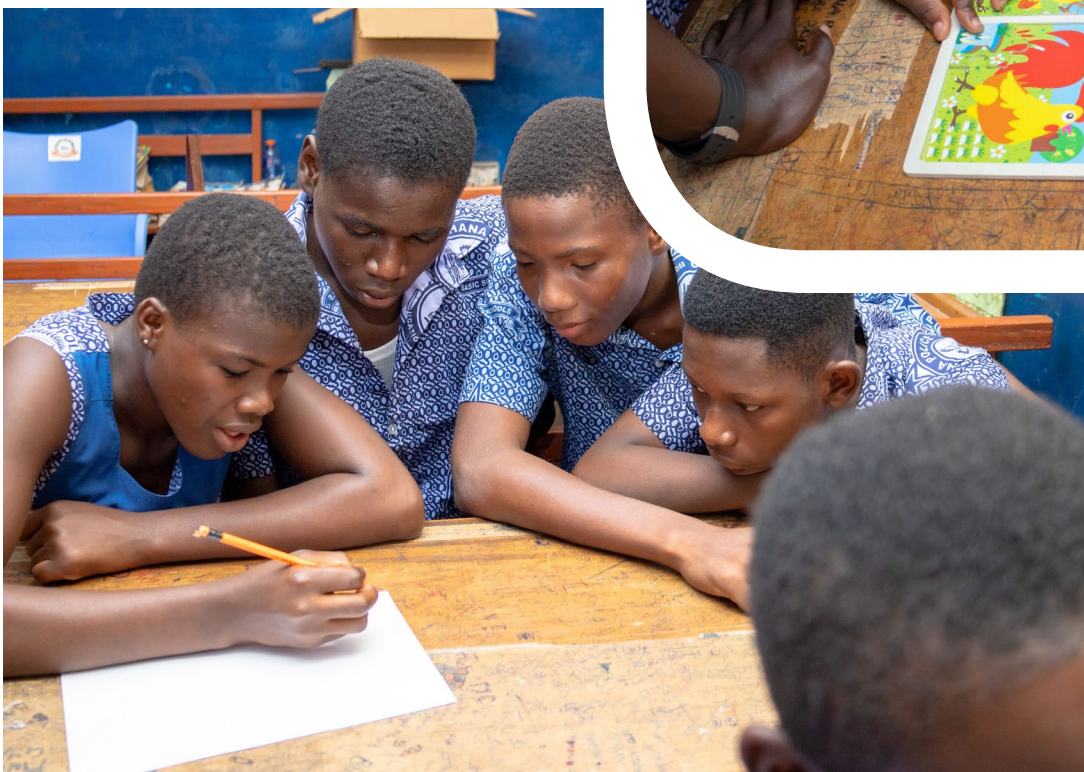
The impact of the Skills for Schools programme on Oliver, a 17-year-old student is immense. Oliver initially found it challenging to speak in front of people, a hurdle that was holding him back.

He learned about Skills for School when his teacher recommended him to join. At first, Oliver was hesitant, but the teacher encouraged him because of his quiet nature. He later embraced the opportunity.

The programme's emphasis on topics like communication, reliability, and confidence played a vital role in boosting his self-assurance. He learned that being confident and reliable is crucial in achieving one's goals.



Oliver highlighted how Skills for School helped him gain the courage to participate in class and answer questions. The programme changed his perception of public speaking and improved his ability to interact with others. It allowed him to overcome past negative experiences, like being laughed at for giving an incorrect answer in class.



Oliver appreciates Skills for school's interactive and engaging approach, which allows students to freely express themselves, while in regular classes, students are expected to listen quietly while the teacher instructs.





Oliver attributes his personal and academic growth to the Skills for School Programme. The programme has not only boosted his academic confidence but has also inspired him to pursue a career in catering. He believes the skills and confidence he has gained through the programme will aid him in achieving his culinary aspirations.



He encourages the continuation of the programme, highlighting its positive impact on student's lives and expressing gratitude for the opportunity it has provided.



The story of Dorcas

Dorcas, a 12-year-old female student in a School in Accra recounts her wonderful experiences on the Skills for School Programme and how it has also helped her overcome personal challenges.

Dorcas joined the programme after her teacher introduced it to her class and encouraged students to enroll. The main reason Dorcas decided to join Skills for School was her difficulty in controlling her emotions especially when she got angry.

She believed that the programme could help her manage her emotions and increase her confidence.

Examples of her past challenges included feeling nervous when speaking in public and the inability to control her anger. She recounted an incident at the community library where her nervousness affected her reading abilities to an audience.

Another example involved a family situation where she became angry and left the dining area, resulting in a series of conflicts with her mother.

Since joining Skills for School, Dorcas attested to the significant growth in her life. She has learned how to control her anger, become more self-assured and aware, and address issues of emotional management.





She also mentioned that the programme helped her communicate better and encouraged her to interact with others. She no longer gets angry as easily and has better control over her emotions

Dorcas credits Skills for School for enhancing her academic performance by allowing her to confidently answer questions in class. She expressed her desire to become a nurse in future. Looking at how Skills for School has prepared her to be more reliable, confident, and determined to achieve goals, she feels well prepared to pursue a career in nursing.





“

”

I want to thank those who brought Skills for School Programme, and Sir Abass for giving me the form to join the programme.





The story of Vanessa

Vanessa, a 14-year-old girl originally struggled with self-expression and shyness. She found it challenging to communicate with others, particularly in situations where she felt self-conscious. However, this all changed when she became part of the Skills for Schools Programme.

Initially unsure about the programme's benefits, Vanessa's perspective shifted as she engaged in it. She noticed substantial improvements, particularly in her academic performance.

Math, which had been a challenging subject for her, became more manageable. She couldn't pinpoint the exact reason for this change, but the results spoke for themselves. This, she described as almost magical.





The Skills for School Programme did not just stop at improving Vanessa's academic skills; it also helped her become a more confident communicator. Before joining, she would shy away from speaking or sharing her thoughts.

For example, she hesitated to apply for a school compound prefect position because she was nervous about speaking to teachers during the interview and addressing her fellow students. However, thanks to the programme, Vanessa's fear and shyness gradually transformed into confidence.







One of the pivotal lessons Vanessa learned was about effectively managing her feelings.

The programme taught her to remain composed when confronted with teasing or situations that might have previously made her angry. Now, she doesn't let her emotions control her reactions. Instead, she stays calm and composed, which has further boosted her self-assurance.

Moreover, Vanessa discovered the importance of reliability and being accountable to others. This skill has enabled her to build stronger relationships and trust with her peers and teachers.

In Skills for School, Vanessa stated she felt supported and encouraged to express herself without the fear of being ridiculed. This is in contrast to the traditional classroom setting where students might be ridiculed if they answer questions incorrectly, which often discourages active participation.

Looking ahead, Vanessa remains undecided about her future career. She is torn between her dream of becoming a doctor and utilising the skills she has developed in the kitchen, where she enjoys preparing vegetables and making salads. Regardless, she feels that the Skills for School Programme has equipped her with essential life skills that will serve her well, no matter what path she chooses.





Vanessa is confident that the programme can similarly transform the lives of others. Its emphasis on effective communication, managing emotions, and providing a supportive learning environment has set her on a path of self-improvement and greater opportunities.



The Story of Elisha

Elisha, a 13-year-old boy aspired to make new friends all the time yet struggled with anger issues, especially when friends teased him about his slim physique. Managing his emotions and responding to such jokes posed a significant challenge for him.

Elisha initially learned about the Skills for School Programme through noticeable changes in his friend. Inspired by his friend's remarkable behavioural transformation, particularly in managing emotions and tolerating jokes after going through the programme, Elisha decided to join Skills for School to overcome his personal challenge of easily getting angry when teased about his slim physique. Elisha approached his teacher and expressed his interest in joining the programme.

“

I realised some changes in my friend and asked him why he was not angry when I teased him and he told me he learned to manage feelings in Skills for School. My friend is someone who easily gets angry but I realised that after he joined the programme, he had changed.

He is now able to take certain jokes without getting angry. I also easily get angry when my friends tease me about how slim I am so I decided to also join so that I will learn not to get angry easily when playing or joking around with my friends. I went to speak to Madam Jemimah and told her I was interested.



Since joining the programme, Elisha has witnessed a positive shift in his responses to teasing. He now laughs off jokes about his size, teasing friends in return and fostering a healthier social dynamic. The programme's sessions on communication and managing feelings have played a pivotal role in this transformation.

Elisha particularly enjoyed the Communication session, where he learned the importance of active listening and responding appropriately. Additionally, the Managing Feelings session equipped him with practical techniques like breathing exercises, counting, and listening to music.





Skills for School has instilled in Elisha the value of reliability. He learned that keeping one's word is crucial for building trust with friends. Notably, he has become more dependable and adheres to his commitments.

Before Skills for School, Elisha hesitated to answer questions in class due to a lack of confidence. However, post-Skills for School, he finds himself more willing to participate actively in class discussions.

Elisha aspires to become a soldier, motivated by the prevalence of theft and armed robbery in his neighborhood. He believes that the communication skills acquired through Skills for School will be crucial in his future role.

Elisha credits his personal growth to his participation in Skills for Schools. He enthusiastically recommends it to his peers, emphasising its ability to help individuals overcome bad habits.







“

What I have learned in Skills for School Programme will help me greatly in the future. When I join the army, I will remember that when my superior or commander is speaking, I must always listen and wait for him to speak before I speak.

Also, when there is a robbery attack and someone dies, I have to know how to communicate to be able to speak to the family of the deceased by breaking the news to them, and advise them on how to manage their feelings

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