

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works”

~ Hebrews 10:24

Surviving in a gang-riddled community

By Marise Stumpf

At night his dreams are peppered with vivid images of being kidnapped. 15 years old, but skinny and small for his age, Mohat* abandons his tik-addict mother with whom he shares a bed in their cramped living quarters and instead snuggles up to his grandmother to seek comfort from the dangers that haunt his dreams. He's seen it all ... shootings, kidnappings, rapes and death. This is life in gang-riddled areas ... not in the United States, but right here on our doorstep in Paarl East.

Mohat dropped out of school at 13 because his classmates made fun of his tik-addict mother. Mohat violently defended her honour and was expelled. Now he does odd jobs to supplement the family's income and takes care of his sister's baby while she works. 'We all live off my grandmother's pension and seasonal work-income, money my grandfather earns from odd-jobs and my sister's pay. There's always food on the table, but it's not easy.'

He remembers a time when his mother took good care of him, his younger brother and older sister, but that was before she went to jail for shoplifting and became addicted to tik. 'Now, when I earn some money, I never give her any; I rather buy her something,' says Mohat. Valerie** washes other peoples' clothes to sustain her drug addiction.

Hanlie van der Merwe, Khula branch manager in Paarl says: 'When life is such a constant battle and a child is faced with such continuous hardship, dropping out of school is almost a guarantee. School drop-out is one of the main perpetuating factors of gangsterism. For the vulnerable child, the protection of a gang and the sense of belonging

provides a substitute family. Children also experience success and acceptance as opposed to the failures they feel at school. In addition, they aspire to the power and control, assumed access to money and expensive branded clothes and cars associated with gangsterism.

'It is common for small children, when we ask them what they would want to become, to answer: "A gangster!" But sadly, for all its perceived benefits, once accepted into the folds of a gang and its criminal activities, there is no way out.' Mohat explains: 'My parents are divorced, and my father is a gang member on the Cape Flats. His own mother had him arrested and put in a jail for fear of his life from other gang members.'

Hanlie elaborates: 'If we do not address the perpetuating factors that cause children not to cope in school, gangsterism will forever remain an enticing alternative – one that does not include attending school and building a life to become a successful adult and breaking the cycle of poverty.'

Poverty, sexual and/or physical abuse and emotional neglect of children, drug abuse, conflict in the home and

overcrowded living conditions constitute the norm in the majority of South African communities. In May 2015, BUSINESSTECH reported the top eight reasons why kids aged 7 to 18 drop out or do not attend school:

1. No money for school fees – **23.5%**
2. Cannot perform academically at school – **17.7%**
3. Have too many family commitments – **11.6%**
4. Suffer from illness and/or disability – **10.4%**
5. See education as being useless – **9.4%**
6. Completed education to the level they wanted – **7.8%**
7. Working at home – **6.7%**
8. Struggle getting to school – **0.5%**

The lack of books, large classes, bad facilities, poor teaching, a shortage and the absence of teachers compound these factors and have not changed since 2015.

Hanlie concludes: 'That is why parents play an increasingly important role. They must lead by example. We need male role models to expose children to other alternatives. Parents themselves need to embrace the value of education and impart it to their children. We can no longer rely on the army or government to rid our streets of the devastating effects of gangsterism; we need to clean our own house and provide the safe haven from where our children will have a firm foundation to confidently live positive and productive lives.'

OUR PROGRAMMES

REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN

1

What did we achieve?

- **23** schools in **5** areas in and around Paarl and Stellenbosch
- **822** children in the Khula caseload
- **2 537** home and school visits between June – August 2019
- **74** new referrals between June – August 2019
- **58** referred cases closed fully reintegrated June – August 2019

January 2019 was the last time a nine-year-old female learner attended school. She was officially deregistered on 1 March 2019 as she was absent for approximately twenty-three days. Her parents moved from one area to another and did not make any effort to enroll her at a school in their new neighbourhood. In August 2019 she was left in the care of her grandmother and plans to have her reintegrated in school were made. She is back in class with the last teacher she had. Regrettably she must repeat Grade 3 in 2020 due to missing class for two terms. Nevertheless, she has a routine and has not missed a day since re-admission. Her situation was brought under the attention of a Khula staff member and we are ecstatic to have her back in school.

IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT

2

- This programme is active in **10** schools with a total of **233** children.
- We welcomed **2** new facilitators in our In-school support programme in Stellenbosch. This made the enrollment of thirteen new learners possible.

The building blocks of the In-school support programme.

“Starting in June 2019, I immediately stepped into what is probably one of the biggest challenges in South Africa; the gross development delays in children from the lower socio-economic communities.” These are the words of our new In-school support Programme Coordinator, Linda Zietsman. This programme supports Gr R – Gr 7 children academically and psycho-socially during school hours. The foundation of Occupational Therapy has been laid by a previous Occupational Therapist, whose material is successfully implemented in KDG classrooms. The need for further building blocks of Occupational Therapy within this programme has been identified, and that’s what she will do.

Gradually, through small steps of education, training and development of material, bigger changes started to happen within the KDG classrooms. Not only has the facilitators visibly stepped up by introducing the building blocks of development into their classrooms, but definite changes are happening in some of the children. Those who once were too shy to play, now participate fully in play; children who were easily distracted, can now constructively participate in activities. KDG classrooms have changed to exciting, playful classrooms where children are able to bloom. The foundational building blocks of development has been laid, and now we are ready to build the rest of the house.



- Our **Koek en Loer** events was once again used to facilitate engagement between primary caregivers and their children. During this session they made puzzles to take home, encouraging bonding time there as well.

PRIMARY CAREGIVERS

3

- **This past term we focused on what it means to be a primary caregiver and the responsibility that comes with it.** Taking care of physical needs, personal hygiene and emotional wellbeing are some of the topics discussed. In addition, every primary caregiver received a booklet from the *Western Cape Department of Health* on how to raise a healthy happy child. Chapters vary from good nutrition, to loving relationships, protection, health care and special care for special needs. This theme was also incorporated in our In-school support programme, where awareness about their clinic cards, health and hygiene was discussed with learners.
- **Statistics indicate we are raising a generation of fatherless children.** The impact it has on society is evident in our communities. KDG Paarl took a step to address this by including male primary caregivers in the programme. To equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge, some of our male staff members attended a course presented by *A world needs a Father. Theys Stuurman*, our Pastoral Carer, began reaching out to fathers of learners enrolled in our In-school support programme. We are excited to see what this new journey holds.

- **At our Stellenbosch branch, primary caregivers are approached with a different angle by providing individual home-based sessions.** Phase one focuses on future perspectives and goal setting. If the primary caregivers agree we proceed to phase two, focusing on conducting basic emotional intelligence and relationship building activities with their children. Every aspect of the second phase is based on learning through play. These sessions are conducted by a facilitator with the primary caregivers of KDG children. They are motivated to implement these activities with their children and are supported until they are confident enough to process on their own.



From left: Denzil Bredenkamp, Ronwyn Andries, Christopher Williams (KDG), Collin Williams, Theys Stuurman (KDG) and Denver Fabriek.



Tools used during individual sessions with the primary caregivers.

SAgo2school

TEACHERS – The heart of the educational system

4

During our monthly go2gether committee meetings, we engage with teachers from our five mentor schools: *Amstelhof, Magnolia, Nederburg, New Orleans and Orleansvale Primary Schools*. These meetings have been helpful in building relationships, filled with valuable insights, creative ideas and strategies to combat absenteeism. It becomes apparent that the key to developing best practices regarding school attendance lies in the willingness of the teachers.

While some teachers are motivated and excited about the importance of education and the value of school attendance, others may not yet share their enthusiasm. Curriculum administration, assessment deadlines, overcrowded classes, the lack of facilities and equipment, behavioural issues and non-cooperative parents are some of the biggest challenges that teachers working in no fee schools, face daily. They often feel overwhelmed and lack the support they need.

As the SAgo2school programme develops, we have identified the necessity to value, honour and appreciate teachers. We fully agree with Sidney Hook's statement: **"Everyone who remembers his own education remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The TEACHER is at the heart of the educational system."**

We therefore endeavour to work alongside teachers at the schools we work in and make every effort to place value on them and emphasise the important role they fulfil in the future of our country.

Charlene Arendse, a Teacher at Amstelhof Primary School, developed and implemented an attendance record-keeping system. Through this, she trained and empowered go2captains who report attendance and identify absenteeism patterns for at-risk learners.



STORIES OF HOPE



A father of a child enrolled in our In-school support programme decided it is time to get his life in order.

After waking up one Friday morning he asked his wife to get dressed and accompany him to his medical check up required for admission at *Toevlug Alcohol and Drug Dependence Centre*. His wife confirmed during their wait he was relaxed and did not show any signs of irritation or agitation and she is very encouraged by this. His application is currently being processed.

Physical abuse, being hungry and exposed to substance abuse by their parents, was the only life three learners and a toddler knew.

Then after an invitation, their mother decided to join our Primary Caregiver Programme. She admitted she had a drinking problem and needed help with other aspects in her life too. Her main source of income was a SASSA grant until she found a job. She received advice on how to manage her finances and learned different skills. One of her children acted out at school by bullying others as a result of the circumstances at home. That is now a thing of the past. All three children are in our In-school support programme and their attendance are being monitored. The eldest daughter is now a *Prefect* and willingly participates in activities at school. These children enjoy seeing their mother at school supporting them. The toddler also has someone looking after him while his mother is at work. We hope this mother stays committed in maintaining the new living conditions created for her family.

An eight-year-old hyperactive boy with a learning disability has been in our In-school support programme for the past two years.

He eagerly participates in all class activities and although he cannot complete them, he tries outmost best. Writing down his name and identifying shapes and numbers are among the progress we made together. After hard work, emotional, psychological and academic support he is being referred to a special needs school for learners with special educational needs, *Ligstraal* in *Paarl*.

Prayer Week

Prayer Week was celebrated between 2-6 September 2019.

Both branches took part in the 24/7 Prayer on the Wall, offering prayer sessions to those in need. Volunteers and staff members were overwhelmed by the amount of children who came for prayer. Some children came more than twice a day. With the current state of rising violence and crime against women and children, *Alta Bester*, decided to do a bit more. She arranged a high tea for the female learners at one of the schools where she serves as an *In-school support Facilitator*. The girls were reminded of God's love for them and that he has a special plan for their lives. This was demonstrated as she placed a crown on their heads and wrapped a cloak around their shoulders. A true reflection of "*Daughter of a King*". They also received a handmade cross and card with the meaning of their names, to remind them of how special they are.



STAFF TESTIMONIES

Alta Bester In-school support Facilitator

"Nobody ever discussed our performance with us!" These were the words of some of the learners when we spoke about their academic performance. Some learners stated their primary caregivers do not care about their results. Others mentioned that their primary caregivers are reluctant to open any envelopes that came from school. They often consider the content as trouble. To take interest in the children's academic performance, can be seen as the beginning of a caring relationship.



Monecia Isaacs Fieldworker

A Grade 6 learner in a school in the Paarl East area came running to a Fieldworker during Prayer Week. She testified to Monecia Isaacs that God had answered her prayers after she prayed for her during last year's Prayer Week. At that stage her mother and grandmother were not getting along and she was constantly forced to pick sides. She happily told Monecia her mother and grandmother are getting along very well. Her Uncle also stopped fighting and using drugs. Monecia was ecstatic to hear this and encouraged her to share her testimony of God's grace. She did, and later that day her classmates also came for prayer.



New Staff Members who started in 2019



Front Left:

Linda Zietsman: Programme Coordinator
Esti Slabbert: Financial Manager
Clechaë Flanders: Social Auxiliary Worker
Andriëtte Diedericks: Social Auxiliary Worker
Marisa Le Roux: Programme Facilitator
Niesha February: Fieldworker

Back Left:

Nandi Myburgh: Social Worker
Jakoba Baartman: Fieldworker
Maryke Holtzhausen: Social Worker
Sian Oostenbrink: In-school support Facilitator
Jeneke Petersen: Social Auxiliary Worker
Bianca Oppelt: Communications Manager
Annieka Mostert: Programme Facilitator
Ronwynn Andries: Driver



Greetings

We were sad to say goodbye to our Financial Director, Michelle Lotz, at the end of August 2019. We are grateful for all her hard work and dedication towards KDG as she served the organisation with for almost ten years.

We will surely miss you Michelle!

THROUGH LOVE AND EDUCATION, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Miles 4 Minors

Jaco Lategan and Hugo Potgieter known as Team Bodytech are working hard preparing for the ABSA Cape Epic taking place between 15-22 March 2020.

Their goal is to secure donations for 846 km's @ R350 per km. Each km represents a child across the schools we work in.

Miles 4 Minors had a stall at the Dischem Boobaloo Baby Expo held at Grandwest between 2 and 4 August 2019. Team Bodytech also featured in the September 2019 issue of Into Cycling, where the initiative is discussed in detail.

We are R264 340 away from reaching our target. To help us achieve it, please donate on:

givinggain

OR

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Branch Code: 198765 | Ref: Your Name



Winners receiving their bikes after donating towards Miles 4 Minors at the Dischem Boobaloo Baby Expo on Sunday 4 August 2019.

Rolene Strauss and Minki van der Westhuizen popped by our Miles 4 Minors Stall during the Dischem Boobaloo Expo.

Volunteers

We cannot do what we do without the help of volunteers. This past month three new volunteers started at our Stellenbosch Branch.

Nina Hefer started at Pieter Langeveldt Primary School, with a background in church counselling, she will help support the older girls on a more emotional level.



Liam O'Connell started at Rietenbosch Primary School, as a young man, he will be positively influencing older boys, supporting a more outdoor and active Champions programme.



Lourens Groenewald started at Klipmuts Primary assisting the existing Champions group programme We are super excited to see the amazing impact these volunteers will have on learners.



To become a volunteer please contact the branch situated closest to you. The Paarl Branch hosts monthly Khula Tours at no cost on the first Tuesday of every month, dates are under the events section of our Facebook Page, alternatively call the Paarl Branch on +27 21 871 1511.

Thank you for your servant-heart.

THROUGH LOVE AND EDUCATION, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Olivia Pieterse founder of the Dumela Foundation and Melville Lawrence Principal of Nederburg Primary, School unveiling the new classroom she dedicated to the In-school support programme of KDG.



"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it." – H.E. Luccock

This was the theme of our Stellenbosch Branch Team Building at The Hydro on 23 August 2019. We used this outing to get to know and understand each other better through fun activities based on the results of personality testing.



KDG mascots Go-Go and Friends had their first show at Rietenbosch promoting school attendance.



In collaboration with the Paarl Junior Town Council, we hosted a Teachers Appreciation Function in Paarl Town Hall on 5 August 2019 with Frank Opperman performing in his one man show, *Donkie*. The function was widely attended by approximately 600 teachers from different schools in the Paarl valley. The aim of this event was to thank Teachers for the role they play in the lives of many learners. Without donations from McDonalds Paarl, The KWV Foundation and Riëtte Kloppers who contributed, this event would not be possible.

Front Left: Zaida Samuels (KWV Foundation), Thana Hancock (Paarl JTC), Frank Opperman (Actor), Daleen Labuschagne (KDG), Riëtte Klopper (Donor), Bianca Oppelt (KDG),

Back Left: Daniël Smit (KWV Foundation), Luther Bakkes (McDonalds), Lize Meyer (KWV Foundation), Lozanne Venter (KDG), Ivan Swartz (Valcare).

THROUGH LOVE AND EDUCATION, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



↑ Six Bricks is one of the LEGO Foundation's tools to introduce learning through play into different settings. KDG was privileged to receive thirty tree Six Bricks to be used in our Primary Caregiver Programme. **Left:** Bev Da Costa (Joint), Theresa Soci (ORT SA Cape Education) and Annieka Mostert (KDG)



↑ The South African Dermatology Physician Assistants Society (SADPAS) donated bars of Dove soap to New Orleans Primary, Paarl. They also introduced KDG at their National Conference in September and pledged to render the services of Dermatologists should learners suffer from severe skin conditions. **Left:** Anette Souris (SADPAS), Mrs Lesinda Williams (New Orleans Primary), Elizabeth Williams (KDG), Linda Zietsman (KDG), Megan Matthee (New Orleans Primary), Nicolette Fabriek (KDG), Mrs Ilse De Koker (New Orleans Primary), Daleen Labuschagne (KDG), Mr Ryno Williams (New Orleans Primary) and Marcelle Salida (SADPAS)

Talking Tigers for Toddlers are filled with information about the gospel and important contact details where abuse can be reported. Most importantly they council, comfort and encourage children in need. KDG has been blessed with fifteen of these automated soft toys to be used in our In-school support programme and by Social Auxiliary Workers. **Left:** Maria von Backström (KDG) Melody Brits (Global Recordings Network Southern Africa), Esti Slabbert (KDG) and Jeneke Petersen (KDG). →

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↑ A life changing KDG story features in the October Issue of JOY Magazine. An Afrikaans version is also available in *JIIG Tydskrif*. Get your copy today.



↑ Partners for Possibility hosted a Leadership Circle Celebration. KDG was honoured to attend alongside Principals from the schools where we render our services. **Left:** Mr John Leibrandt (Magnolia Primary, Paarl), Mr Clive Matthee (Bergendal Primary, Paarl), Mrs Lisa Matthee (Simondium Primary, Simondium), Daleen Labuschagne (KDG) and Mr Franklin September (Brückner De Villiers Primary, Stellenbosch)

Mari-Louise Van Heerden (Community Keepers) with Abigail Adams our Social Auxiliary Worker at Simondium Primary, attending a high tea hosted for the primary caregivers. ↓



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