

QUARTERLY REPORT - March 2021 Khula Development Group

“The ability of children to succeed in school is determined by their behaviour, social engagement with others, and their capacity to obtain literacy and numeracy skills that are interrelated with their physical, motor, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual development. Children struggle with the curriculum in higher phases if they do not acquire basic reading skills during the Foundation Phase”.

van Zyl, Carien.; van Wyk, C. Exploring Factors That Could Potentially Have Affected the First 1000 days of Absent Learners in South Africa: A Qualitative Study. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health **2021**, 18,2768.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052768>

Funding purpose

Khula’s mission is to reintegrate primary school children in poor and disadvantaged communities, at risk of dropping out, back into the school system. Khula was involved in 23 schools in 5 areas in and around Paarl and Stellenbosch in the Western Cape. The programmes of the organisation are managed by two branches, Paarl and Stellenbosch.

To accomplish the mission, the organisation runs four programmes:

- Reintegration of children – to promote regular school attendance by supporting absent, at-risk learners and their families
- In-school support – to provide foundation level academic and psychosocial support to reintegrated learners from grade R to grade 7
- Primary Caregivers – to encourage primary caregivers to accept the responsibility to ensure their children attend school every day
- SAgo2school – to promote a culture of regular school attendance and impart the value of education.

Amalgamation of In-school Support and Primary Caregivers in a community-based approach:

Khula’s response to COVID-19, as extensively elaborated on in the quarterly report submitted in December 2020, was to integrate Khula’s programmes into a community-based approach. The aim was to keep learners connected to and interested in learning through play reducing school drop-out that, as expected, increased exponentially from what was previously already a dire situation.

WCED’s @Home Learning Pilot Project in collaboration with appointed Host NGO Hubs, was a result of Khula’s adjusted approach due to COVID-19. In this way our capacity was enlarged, and the funding purpose was still achieved.



“This pilot aim to explore how to engender a *culture of learning*, and a love of *learning through play*, and the degree to which this can be supported by harnessing the ingenuity, creativity and passion of unemployed youth.” – Angela Biden, M&E Consultant

All hubs recruited Interns, funded by Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT), from local communities and were allocated to work in the neighbourhood and school areas in which they have contextual understanding and influence. Thus, they were provided with the opportunity for meaningful work experience in community development context, which was one of the key aims of the Pilot Project.

In Paarl Branch this pilot was run by our In-School Support and Primary Caregiver Support staff, who did a splendid job at still reaching more than their usual cohort of learners and primary caregivers. In Stellenbosch we also experienced success with the coordination of the pilot with our ISS programme - identifying learners in streets where @homelearning programme was operating for Home Visits. We also coordinated services with our Reintegration team as interns relayed information to the Reintegration team about Khula clients. It was always a challenge to restrict our services to only the cohort that met Khula’s referral criteria as many other learners presented with signs of school disengagement but did not yet present with chronic school absenteeism. We were now able to engage all learners in the geographical areas surrounding schools we provide services to with the aim:

- To promote a culture of community learning, whether at School or at Home
- To promote a desire to attend school for those learners not attending due to COVID-19 related challenges.
- To interact with the child at their educational level
- To promote a positive connection between the caregiver and learner and encourage family involvement.
- To raise awareness to begin a culture where learners are eager to self-engage.

It is our hope that through the interventions by our Reintegration Team and the Integration of our other programmes with the @home learning model we can have influence on individual-, family-, community- and government systems level and in so doing promote a culture of learning and school attendance with a much wider reach than we anticipated.

Beneficiary Reach

Khula Paarl and Stellenbosch currently works with 812 primary school learners who are at risk of dropping out of school. Paarl Branch has 555 Learners in our cohort and Stellenbosch Branch 257.

Paarl- & Stellenbosch Branch Statistics as from January 2021

Location:	Paarl	Stellenbosch
No. of schools	16	5
No. of new referrals	0	1



No. of closed cases	6	5
No. of successfully reintegrated	37	2
No. of permanent dropouts	13	1
No. of relocations out of area	22	0
No. of progressed to Gr 8	16	2
REINTEGRATION – No. of client visits	1187	658
Total external referrals	8	8
Form 22	7	4
External referrals DCPO	25	0
No. of family meetings	2	0

Results/Outcomes to date

Reintegration Programme Outcomes

- Despite many children dropping out of the school system, there are some positive stories. Paarl Branch was able to reintegrate **37** learners that are now successfully reintegrated in the school system.
- In Stellenbosch, the majority of the Khula learners who have been promoted to Grade 8 in 2021, have been registered at a high school (10 of the 14 grade 8 learners). The remaining 4 learners are Klapmuts learners who are struggling to find placements at secondary schools in Paarl. The team has managed to close approximately **20** cases for 2021 during supervision and the necessary steps are being followed to terminate services with the clients. Immediate changes have been noted in many cases (31 cases since 2020 up until February 2021) reported during 2020 and could be closed before officially opening a Khula file. As a result of the possible changes in the Khula model/strategy the team is attempting to manage these cases without officially opening the cases and closing as soon as possible, while still acting in the best interest of the child.
- Learners who have relocated because of COVID-19 are being followed up for registration at alternative schools by means of the Department of Education. In some instances, feedback however indicates that the learners are still registered at their previous schools or have not been registered at a new school for 2021 and is not showing on the system. Realistically some parents only started preparing for their child's return to school when the schools re-opened on 15 February and therefore these cases will be followed up again in March 2021.
- Whilst the struggle continues to provide children at risk of harm with adequate services, Khula Paarl conducted 26 Case Discussions with Designated Child Protection Organisations that serves as an accountability and networking platform to



jointly address the risks every learner faces. Child Neglect and abuse remain one of the most prominent perpetuating factors leading to school drop-out. Our team work relentlessly at advocating for the unmet needs of the children in our cohort. Recently our Reintegration team started to assist Designated Child Protection Organisations (DCPO) in basic tasks preventing children being placed in alternative care. This additional form of support has strengthened some of our relationships with our statutory partners. Unfortunately, we had to report one DCPO to the Provincial Office of Department of Social Development (DSD) because of misconduct. This is not an easy thing for Khula to do, but we felt obligated towards the community that is served by this organisation and the children involved. An investigation is now being launched into the activities and conduct of this organisation. Our Principal Social Worker, Carien van Zyl also mitigated a process with DSD where specific Social Workers are now assigned to handle Khula's cases in Klapmuts as well as in Paarl.

- Pre-COVID-19 reintegrating children in the school system was a challenge. Now this challenge has increased immensely as children now attend school on rotational basis. Intermittent school attendance has increased the need for Khula's services, and this unfortunate situation created an increased need for home learning support.

Some testimonies by our Reintegration Team:

- A 9-year-old deaf and mute girl, who has never attended school, despite everyone in her street knowing about it, was not assisted until our team invested much of their time and energy in finding a way through a very rigid school system to get her placement at Ligstraal Special Needs school. A huge team effort resulted in this girl starting her school career in 2021 where her special educational needs are now being met.
- 3 Children living in a pig stie was removed from their parents' care after a very difficult process of finding a space at a Child and Youth-care Centre and assisting the DCPO in their tasks to get the children to a place of safety. They are now adjusting well in their new safe environment where each of them has their own clean bed, food to eat and access to safe care and education.
- It has been encouraging to see how empty the streets have been throughout the day since the schools resumed. This along with the responses from learners seems to indicate that a lot of the communities' learners are actually back in school and going on their allocated days. This has been an encouraging and motivating start to the new academic year.
- In one case a learner stopped attending school as the school did not allow him to attend in "civvie" clothes as he does not have school clothes. Interns took initiative and managed to arrange school clothes for him. Reintegration team will follow up and provide the learner with the school clothes.



Reintegration: Constraints experienced

- Many parents did not plan for the expenses related to their children's school needs for 2021. This prohibited children from going back to school as a result of school clothes related issues. Khula assisted where possible in terms of providing school clothes (mostly shoes) and/or helping them financially plan to buy the necessary items.
- Challenges have been experienced with registration and placement of learners at High Schools. A prerequisite for registration at Cloeteville High included a registration fee of R750, which most of our parents cannot accommodate because of financial constraints. This resulted in learners being placed on a waiting list and not being able to register (this issue has been resolved and all Cloeteville Khula learners are registered for Gr 8). Paarl High schools are also experiencing a high volume of applications for Gr 8 learners and currently have a long waiting list, resulting in many Klapmuts learners not obtaining placement. Scottsdene High School in Kraafontein has however, indicated that they still have registrations open for Gr 8 learners and transport is available from Klapmuts.

Community Based @home learning pilot:

- In Stellenbosch a group of 10 unemployed youth interns and in Paarl a group of 18 interns from the local community were recruited, trained, mentored, and guided.
- *"The programme focuses on 2 distinct but linked pathways for change. The first involves the intern as the beneficiary group. In this group, the training and mentoring is expected to bring personal and professional change, shown by a range of observable behaviours, indicating the attainment of core competencies which will enable these candidates to meaningfully engage communities in children's education. The second area where change is analysed considers the learners as a beneficiary group. This is a challenge, but the aim is to assess the degree to which learners are observed and report to be engaged in their own learning."* – **Angela Biden – M&E Consultant**

Holiday Period

SCORE /Hope Through Action managed and accommodated all the pilot's interns over the Festive Period when the other 3 NGO hubs were closed. A total of 52 interns participated in a holiday programme designed to keep children engaged with fun group games and playful learning activities. A total of **1 960** children were reached through this SCORE Holiday Programme between 18 - 29 December 2020.

General feedback:

- A total of **6373** children were reached by all hubs through informal activities and **2939** children engaged in formal activities until the middle of March. They are engaged through educational play-based activities making use of educational materials. The



educational materials used in this project were sourced from within the partners from the @homelearning forum. The materials sourced for this project included basic language and numeracy materials, as well as psycho-social materials. This was done in collaboration with the @homelearning forum. The materials included:

- Intern toolkits put together by Khula DG including toys for gross-motor activities and play.
- SAGo2School boardgame developed by Khula DG for promotion of family connections and learning.
- Wordworks boardgames and resources packs for basic literacy
- Yebo Maths Games for basic numeracy
- Treasure Box After-School Programme books for recreational activities
- My SA Pandemic Story from UCT School of Education for psychosocial support
- All the hubs participated in World Read Aloud Day celebrated on 3 February 2021.
- We participated in the Back-to-School drive organised by the Social Workers of the Winelands District of WCED
- Me Diana Niemand visited Khula on Friday 5th of February to discuss materials that were developed by the Winelands district and will be available to the hubs to use. Future close collaboration between the Foundation Phase Management of the Winelands District was discussed.

Khula Term 1 reach:

@HOME LEARNING PILOT	Paarl	Stellenbosch
Children reached	734	724
Informal Activities – Play based	45	317
Formal Activities - @home learning materials with academic focus used	1514	405

Community Based Learning Outcomes

Due to the 2nd wave of COVID-19 and South Africa moving back to lockdown level 3, we had to adapt our Intern program as per government regulations as from 18 January 2021. We did however not lose sight of our goals. We did not change what we do, just how we do it.

With the postponement of schools reopening, it gave us a great opportunity to reach more learners in the community, as well as the Parents/ Primary Caregivers during this time. We decided to move away from informal street learning / activities with the children (to prevent the risk of super spreaders), and to reach the learners/clients/families through home visits.

Some preliminary outcomes against the goals of the @home learning pilot:

- The interns, under guidance of their mentors, promote a culture of community learning, whether at School or at Home



- By being out in the streets everyday doing educational activities through play, a culture is slowly being modelled and imparted in the communities the @home learning pilot is rolled out.
- They are promoting a desire to attend school for those learners not attending due to COVID-19 related challenges.



Kinders is ons toekoms

Die Kaapse Wynland-onderwysdistrikskantoor se sub-komponent vir maatskaplike werk en die interns van Khula Development het verlede week 'n bewusmakingsveldtog in Drakenstein gehou om kinders aan te moedig om skool by te woon. Hierdie groep was in die Paarl werksaam.

- The interns use the SaGo2school mascots every now and again to promote school attendance. The children recognised the mascots and was very excited to see Go-go and So-So.
- The interns are trained to interact with the child at their own educational level by Khula's staff doing practical workshops to familiarise them with materials and do skills development in working with children in a community-based approach.



Find some images of learners engaging with learning at their own level, leaving them with a feeling of achievement and success instead of failure.





- The interns attempt to promote a positive connection between the caregiver and learner and encourage family involvement with some success.



- To raise awareness to begin a culture where learners are eager to self-engage with learning material.





Intern Outcomes:

By way of personal and professional training sessions, one-on-one conversations and work experience, the @home learning interns are guided and mentored by Khula's In-school support and Primary Caregiver staff.

An interim survey of their experience of the pilot project thus far had the following responses showing an understanding of the importance of relationships in engagement at the community level, a deeper level of self-awareness, and an authentic enjoyment of the newly discovered purpose.

- *“Great! This internship changed my whole life and view and perspective of my community and my purpose. It helped me grow spiritually, physically, and mentally. If this were a permanent job I would with no doubt exchanged my dream job for what I am doing now”*
- *“In a helpful way it's very good for me because I've learned a lot and what I've picture about this whole internship was a different story for me, but it was a challenge for me, and I love doing what am busy doing right now.”*
- *“I adore my job. This internship has allowed me to learn a lot about myself and I have also grown as a person and young adult. I have learned so many life skills for example communication and leadership skills. My communication has become increasingly better and i am more comfortable in my own skin. I have always had leadership qualities being in the public eye at school all the time academically, but this internship has just boosted my confidence.”*
- *“I am experiencing the internship good so far and it is a very inspiring experience to me, because I love what I do encouraging children to go back to school. The internship is helping me to gain more experience on how to work with children as that is my dream to build relationship with them.”*
- *“Am getting there step by step and am willing to expand and share my experience to my community and country as well”*
- *“The way you talk to the kids, care, love, respect each other and also don't judge just help”.*
- *“The internship is great; I have great mentors and teammates that I work with every day.*
- *Sometimes it feels like I'm in school again with all the assignments but, I know it's for my personal and professional growth. I have never worked in a workplace where you have so much fun and to see the kids excited.”*
- *“I am enjoying it very much. I am learning so many things about myself as well as how to protect the children and their needs.”*
- *“So far I'm having fun and I now understand what is needed in my community.”*
- *“I find it very interesting and the importance of school for children. It is important for a child to learn from school and at home, so we can help them.”*



Monitoring methods

Khula Programmes M&E

Khula's main M&E tool is an interactive web-based database designed for the management of our programmes, the capturing of data on learner- and school level as well as the documentation of work carried out by Khula's staff.

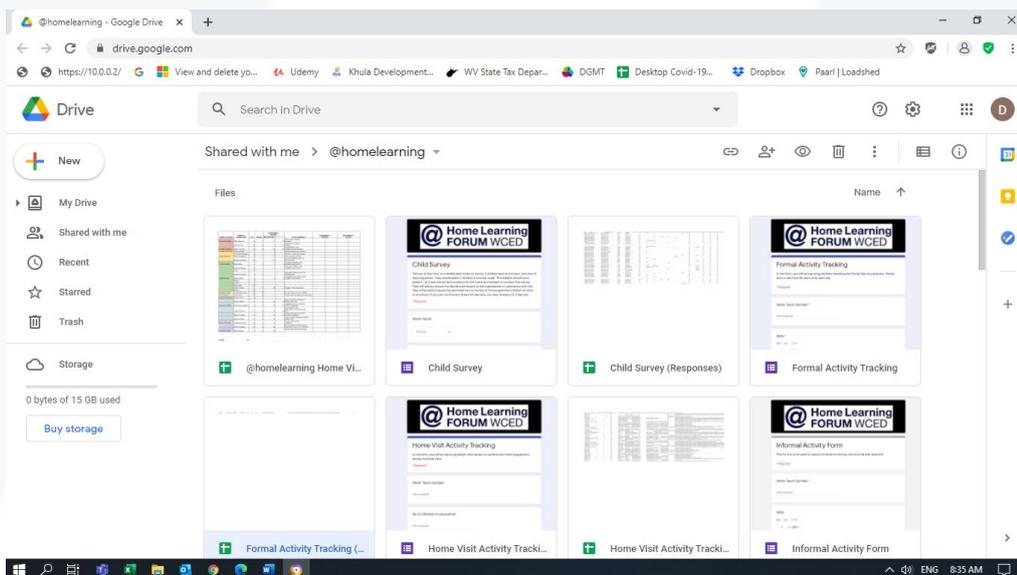
Data extracted from the database include learner information, school marks, promotion or retention status, school attendance records, absenteeism levels, Khula assessments as well as Khula wellness assessments. The statistics, as presented above, is a summarised extraction of "event logs" indicating the number of key interventions that has taken place to achieve the intended outcome of reintegrating learners back into the school system.

Statistics on staff performance, learner level attendance data and intervention data are all captured and reviewed monthly. Further M&E tools are: Monthly Reports, Termly Reports, School Reports and Intervention Reports for each interaction with our Beneficiaries.

@home Learning Pilot M&E

How?

The @homelearning pilot M&E and Implementation team designed a set of M&E tools and instruments to measure attendance of interns and learning, as well as the level of engagement by interns and learners. A series of @homelearning surveys and forms using Google Forms included a variety of open-ended (qualitative) and close-ended (quantitative) questions. An interim report is attached as Addendum 1.





Why?

To evaluate the effectiveness and the potential benefits of the @homelearning approach and material.

What?

Indicators:

- Quality and quantity of engagement between beneficiaries (toward building community engagement in @home learning)
- Quality and quantity of engagement with materials (interns, learner and PCGs)
- Development of key skills and competencies of interns (required for effective engagement building)
- Employment and Employability of interns (post-internship) Learner Engagement (Enjoyment element of @homelearning materials)
- Intern Engagement (involvement – engagement spectrum identifying key competencies and behaviours)
- PCG Engagement (involvement – engagement spectrum identifying key competencies and behaviours)
- Preference and relevance of packet content (Assessment of materials by relevance, appeal, and efficacy)
- Household Characteristics

Future plans (Next months)

- Considering the decrease in Khula's financial support we had to rethink our strategy. During the time that we were the lead in the Winelands WCED @home learning pilot, we discovered the energy and benefit of using young, enthusiastic youth that are unemployed and want to learn a skill as well as earn an income.
- By collaborating with other NGO's as well as Government institutions such as DEDAT and the WCED we experienced a relief in the payment of salaries. The youth that were part of the @homelearning initiative were trained and reached far more children in our community than our previous programme did.
- Previously our programme design was developed and implemented in such a way that all the referrals from schools, were managed by our Reintegration team. They consisted of 3 Social Workers, 6 Social Auxiliary workers and 20 fieldworkers. All services rendered to our referred families were planned and supervised by the Social Workers. The fieldworkers were seen in by- weekly supervision sessions by the Social workers and the load that they carried became too heavy. All internal as well as external referrals that included the Child Protection Cases were done by our Social workers.



- In our anticipated new strategy, SaGo2school will form an umbrella for all our services. Our services will consist of 2 main programmes called **Educational support** and **Community development support**. These programmes will be supported by the **Child Protection team**. Only cases of child neglect and abuse will be managed by the Social Workers. Other referrals will be done by the other programmes to designated child protection organisations.
- Please see below a comparison of our programmes as we plan for implementation from 1 May 2021.

COMPARISON OF PROGRAMMES

	Reintegration programme (Previous)	Child protection support service (New)
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Schools. • Other organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Khula’s Educational support programme (internal referral).
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only absenteeism. • Grade R-7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New criteria • Grade R-4.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers, Social Auxiliary workers, Fieldworkers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Social worker, Social workers, Social Auxiliary workers.
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers had supervision with fieldworkers and Social auxiliary workers to discuss cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker will only have supervision with the Social auxiliary workers to discuss cases. • No more fieldworkers in this service.
Main tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus was mainly that the Social workers provided guidance to the fieldworkers and Social auxiliary workers. • The Social workers played more of an overseeing role regarding to certain tasks. • Included tasks like: Form 22s, external referrals, SBST meetings, multi-professional meetings and many more Home visits and school visits were only done by Social workers where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus will be that the Social workers and Social auxiliary workers will do all the interventions themselves. • Include individual interventions, as well as group work interventions. • Added tasks: Assessments and group interventions, as well as all the other tasks from the list. • Social workers will do more home visits and school visits on a continuous basis, not just where necessary.

	In School support (ISS) and Primary caregivers (PCG) programme (Previous)	Educational support programme (New)
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Reintegration programme (internal referral). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From selected schools.



Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for ISS and PCG on the internal referral form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New criteria
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators (and volunteers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinators, facilitators, community workers, interns.
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not provide supervision to staff, only guidance to volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator will supervise facilitators. Facilitators will supervise community workers and interns.
Main tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISS facilitators provided academic and psychosocial support to referred learners at schools. PCG facilitators provided group and/or individual sessions to primary caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combination of both programmes to provide services to learners and primary caregivers. Home visits and school visits @Home learning.

Support

Khula's priority is the successful implementation of the new strategy. The remaining staff members, after the retrenchments process, must be managed with care. With the reduced capacity there are new challenges, processes, responsibilities, and expectations that must be addressed. New key measuring criteria must be identified and confirmed with funders and stakeholders. The next two months will be experimental, and we will have to adapt to changes on short notice.

We will contact funders and stakeholders to inform them of the changes and that we need some tolerance with our reporting in the next couple of months.

Success stories & Feedback

- Children referred to the ISS programme for poor academic performance and living on the streets where the @homelearning programme operates were identified so that special care could be taken to ensure that they received home visits by the interns and were encouraged to attend the street sessions. It was encouraging to see that some clients were already attending the street sessions.
- Resources are well received by a range of different aged children. By upgrading and downgrading the activities, resources can be used for children of all ages. Even though our focus is on children in grade R to 6, we have had high school children attending sessions and enjoying the resources.
- Interns did a great job of presenting the SAgo2school GoGo and SoSo skit in the community. We are looking forward to present skits at schools with interns when we are allowed.
- Feroze Thompson, Social Worker from the WCED visited the programme to witness the work and to ensure understanding with an eye to future collaboration. The visit was a success and we received good feedback from her.



- One of our interns, Cattelin Jacobs, has shown tremendous growth. She has been mentioned twice as most notable intern of the month in the monthly report. She shows initiative and creativity when presenting activities to children. Cattelin has turned down a job opportunity as well as an opportunity to go and study as she says her heart is with the children and this programme. Initially she wanted to have a career in the culinary industry but due to this programme she has changed her mind and wants to go into teaching and someday possibly have her own ECD centre.
- Interns did a home visit after a girl that always attended failed to pitch up for a few sessions. She proudly told them that she is part of a dance group that dances for the Lord. After that she returns home to do her homework as she now has a favourite teacher at school that she does not want to disappoint. She therefore does not have time to attend sessions in the afternoon anymore but will come if she finishes earlier.

We appreciate the support and encouragement of our donors and partners, as this was a really difficult time for all of us. We salute our staff that are dedicated and called to serve in God's Kingdom and make a difference **through love and education** in the lives of our most vulnerable children!

Erns Labuschagne
CEO