



September 2020

QUARTERLY REPORT *Khula Development Group*

Thank you for the opportunity to report on Khula's activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. ***“It would be extremely immoral to play politics about the future and safety of our children. We should instead all wish our children all the best. Against all odds, it's with a degree of confidence, I say, that we are on course to rescue the ruin this pandemic has placed on our education system.” She told the National Assembly on Tuesday 25th of August there already appeared to be an increase in truancy, while their biggest fear was a high dropout rate, which tended to affect impoverished communities.*** (Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga, News 24, 25 Aug, Jan Gerber.)

As this statement clearly mentioned, we are in a difficult stage in education. Khula Development Group does however try to render our best services to the children entrusted to us.

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.*

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 with the aim of reintegrating them back into the school system. This programme's service is delivered by social workers, social-auxiliary workers and field workers.
- **In-school support** – to provide foundation level academic and psychosocial support to reintegrated learners from grade R to grade 7. This programme's services are delivered by an Occupational Therapist, facilitators and volunteers.
- **Primary Caregivers** – this programme helps the main caregiver of the child with parenting skills and encourages them in accepting responsibility for their children's school attendance. The programme is hosted by facilitators who convene groups sessions at different venues in the community or conducts home visits to encourage primary caregivers to accept the responsibility to ensure their children attend school every day.
- **SAGO2school** – aims in promoting a culture of school attendance and imparting a value for education by the means of child participation, teacher's collaboration and community engagement.

Problem Statement

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Covid-19 outbreak around the world a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 11 March 2020. South Africa's president, Mr Ramaphosa, announced a national lockdown on 23 March 2020 which started on 26 March 2020, including the closure of schools. This national lockdown has since eased; however, strict restrictions are still in place. Other regulations, including strict hand hygiene, sanitisation, social distancing and the wearing of masks are still compulsory.

Schools remained closed during level 5 and 4 of the Lockdown. Schools eventually re-opened during the week of 1 and 8 June 2020 with only Grade 7 and 12 pupils returning. The reopening of schools, however, came with strict, pungent, and almost impossible regulations to adhere to from the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Alongside the strong regulations, the educators and



school staff were exposed to ambivalent input between the department, government, unions and NGO's. This understandably provoked fear, anxiety, frustration and uncertainty within schools. Schools again closed on the 27th of July and only reopened in phases on the 24th of August 2020.

Since the impact of COVID-19 on learners reaches beyond just their learning, an important area of support was in the provision of care and support services. In this regard, KDG has aimed to accelerate and strengthen the delivery of our programmes that will reduce the risk and vulnerability of children and youth during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, through tangible on-the-ground interventions that cushion the effect of COVID-19 on learners, teachers and families.

In our previous report we elaborated on the impact of COVID-19 on schooling and our vulnerable client group and the resulting significant adjustments that were made to our service delivery. *The risks for school drop-out increased drastically. Learners that were already high-risk cases now are now critically at risk of permanently dropping out of school.*

Beneficiary Reach

Khula Stellenbosch currently works with **237** Gr R to Gr 7 learners and their families living in 4 areas (Cloetesville, Klappmuts, Idasvallei, Kayamandi) and attending 6 different schools. **Khula Paarl** works with **576** Gr R to Gr 7 learners and their families in 16 schools situated in Paarl East and Simondium.

Community children:

Community Project in Stellenbosch:

As the teams of fieldworkers visited the homes of our most vulnerable clients who are at highest risk of dropping out of the school system, they have noticed that there is also a need for engagement with learning activities amongst the other children in the community, who are not registered Khula children.

They have therefore started a Community Project in the carpark of the Breughel Community Centre where they invite children and their parents/carers from the local area to join in a fun session of learning-through-play. They are currently running two sessions on Friday afternoons with the appropriate social distancing protocols in place. The objectives are to promote a value for learning; encourage the parents to engage with their children and to maintain a connection for school.

No. of instances where community (non-Khula) learners received @home learning materials during week.	338
Friday project: No. of individual sessions with community (non-Khula) learners	212

In addition, many children in the community were exposed to our programmes that due to COVID-19 protocols were presented outside the homes of our clients which can be seen in the statistics below.



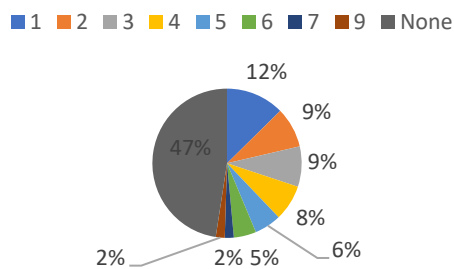
Community Involvement in Khula @homelearning

Did other children also engage with the @homelearning materials?



52% of learners reported that other children also engaged with the @homelearning package that they received

How many other children also engaged with the @homelearning package?



18% said at least two or three children respectively engaged with them with the package material. 14% said that four or five other children engaged with them, while 7% said six to seven children engaged with them.



Teachers:

Other direct and indirect beneficiaries of our programme depending on the schools involved are the teachers with whom we keep close contact and assist with emotional and practical support. A Go2teachers Meeting via Zoom were held on 22 July 2020: 10 members attended.

Representatives from New Orleans, Orleansvale, Paulus Joubert, Simondium and even Rawsonville Primary Schools joined the meeting. We asked the educators how their schools were doing during this time, what challenges they were facing and what positive changes they observed. The schools who could not join our online meeting, were visited in person on the following day



Learners:

Paulus Joubert Primary School invited our SAgo2school team to present a Health & Safety Message on protocols of social distancing and mask-wearing. Go-Go and So-So visited the school twice on different orientation days and reached **120** learners in person and another **260** learners through a recorded video of the show as well as the distribution of awareness flyers. Total learners reached: **380**



Results/Outcomes to date

KDG reopened on 4 May 2020 and was reaching out with an integrated approach to children and primary caregivers at their homes. The staff teams were focused on addressing social issues, building relationships in the home and community and promoting an @homelearning initiative during this COVID-19 season.

Due to many different social factors and the high levels of poverty, it is easy for children to start a cycle of school absenteeism. The programmes of the organisation are managed from two branches, Paarl and Stellenbosch with 48 staff members including Head Office staff.

Statistics

	Paarl	Stb
Fieldworkers – Home Visits only	14	6
Social Workers – Home Visits, Office, Home	2	1
Social Auxiliary Workers – Home Visits, Office, Home	3	3
In-School Support Staff – Home Visits, office and home	2	2
In-School Support staff – work from home only	2	0
Primary Caregivers – Home Visits, office and home	1	1
Sago2school	1	0

As we were not able to work in schools, we have a home visit only approach where our focus was mainly @home learning. Through the adjusted integrated approach, we aimed to achieve the following:

- To prevent school disengagement.
- To promote a culture of @home learning through play.



- To Involve primary caregivers and children in learning at home through the demonstration and participation of activities. Our desired outcome would be for primary caregivers and children to form closer bonds and secure attachments by doing fun educational activities together.
- To systematically address areas of developmental delay which we hope might make some difference in their development. The activities are carefully selected by our In-school support team led by occupational therapist and programme coordinator, Linda Zietsman.
- To assess and report of children in need of care and protection to the relevant DCPO's. (Designated Child Protection Organisations)
- Provide Emotional Support
- Educating the learners and their families about COVID-19 and how to keep themselves and others safe.

This adjusted approach included the following:

- Our staff developed easy to use resources to assist parents and children with COVID-19 awareness training including prevention measures and emotional assistance as well as the basics of schooling and fun and stimulating activities to do at home. This includes a stationery pack, worksheets, books and games that can be played and made with inexpensive and recyclable materials.
- These packs were distributed by our team to the homes of our clients where primary caregivers and children are trained in their use, whilst ensuring that all the necessary COVID-19 health and safety guidelines are followed.
- Children who are academically mostly in need of extra support are being followed up weekly by our In-school support team, who usually provide assistance at schools.
- In preparation of resuming school attendance, our staff have ensured visits to all the relevant learners specifically encouraging them to attend school, addressing any fears and concerns that they or their primary caregivers might have. The team also ensured that they were aware of the days that they were due at school and their specific roster which was marked with them on a calendar sheet that they could put up on their wall to remind them.
- Child protection remained a large concern and visits and follow-up by Khula staff continued, however the fact that the statutory organisations had for the most part not returned to active field work hampered progress in these cases.

Normally the results of our work would be measured by looking at indicators relevant to the specific Khula programme under review. Due to COVID-19 these normal processes were mostly been disrupted and we came up with new and innovative ways to measure the results and outcomes of our work.

Before our adjusted COVID-19 approach they were measured as follows:

- Reintegration
 - Absenteeism measured through their report cards, teachers' feedback and our own observations.
 - Number of children successfully reintegrated.
- In-school support
 - Academic results from report cards used to identify children for the programme as well as Khula assessment and observations by facilitators during sessions at schools.



- Primary Caregivers
 - Attendance of programme sessions and level of engagement/attitude during sessions as well as other observable changes in personal and home hygiene and self-care, future perspective and taking responsibility for their children.
- SAgo2school
 - Number of children reached through school assemblies and level of engagement in class attendance competitions.

Adjusted approach – effect on results and outcomes

As discussed in a previous report, our adjusted approach saw the programmes combine to develop a unified programme with all services rendered together in the community and at clients' homes combining the efforts of all programme staff. Usually many of our programme activities happened on the school premises and presented separately by the different programmes.

Implementation Data for June - September 2020

	Paarl	Stb
Home visits by Fieldworkers	1612	305
Unsuccessful home visits (no one home)	128	183
Home visits by professional staff (Reintegration programme and In-school support)	918	1067
Primary Caregivers Programme Home Visits	115	276
Formal reporting of Child Protection Cases by Form22	20	2
Referrals to DCPO's	11	2
Child Protection Follow-ups	47	44
Other external referrals	7	8
School@home package interactions	405	971

In addition to our core business COVID-19 caused a lot of poverty and subsequent hunger. Simondium Primary, Valcare and Khula partnered in a feeding project in Simondium and surrounds.

Background information

This project was started by Mrs. Liza Matthee, school principal of Simondium Primary and other community members in March 2020 due to the desperate needs of people which occurred during level 5 lockdown. As a result of these restrictions, many people were left in dire financial circumstances due to unemployment. The closing of the schools intensified the need and contributed to many learners being hungry as many of them depended on the feeding schemes at schools. When schools were allowed to operate feeding schemes at the schools, it was decided by both principals of Simondium Primary and Bergendal Primary that feeding schemes at the schools are not the best option since most of the learners reside a great distance from these schools. Thus, feeding schemes at various locations were established in order to reach more beneficiaries and limit the movement of people. Although the locations varied slightly per month, food were served three times per week at approximately 50 locations each month.



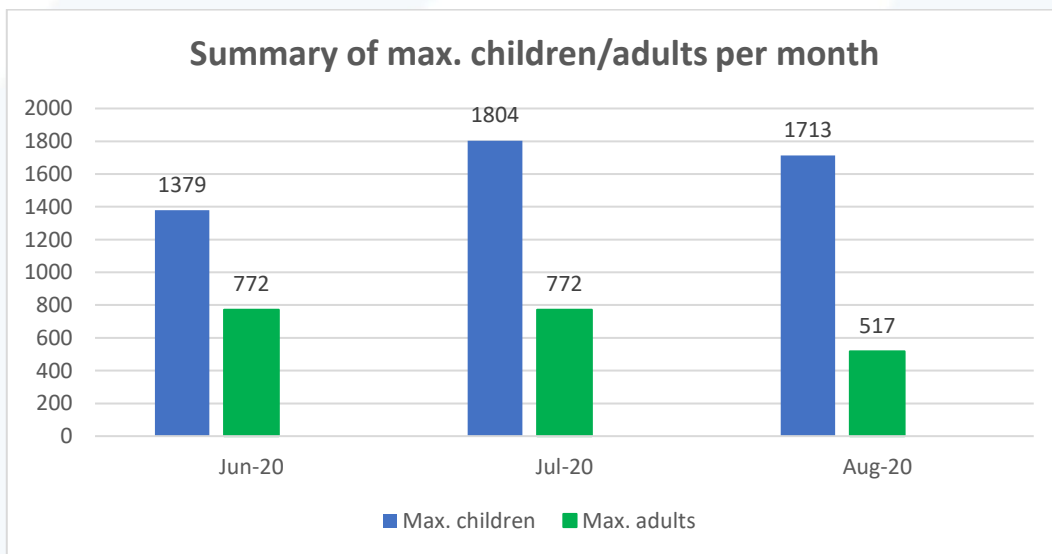
Khula's role and responsibilities in this project

Given that Khula Development Group is the partner organisation for Valcare in this community, we've decided to act as the liaison for this project in order to support the broader community in this crisis time period. Our role and responsibilities included the following:

- Attending of meetings held between Khula Development Group, Valcare and Mrs. Matthee.
- Correspondence with Mrs. Matthee regarding logistics.
- Developing of the report format for the contact persons at each location.
- Assisting with the food delivery at Simondium Primary.
- Collecting of forms and compiling of monthly report for Valcare.
- Organising of a site visit for Valcare employees to selected feeding scheme locations on 22 July 2020.

Summary of statistics for all the locations of children/adults whom received food per day

Month	Children		Adults		Total beneficiaries
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum tot maximum
June 2020	623	1379	294	772	917 – 2296
July 2020	1455	1804	387	772	1842 – 2576
August 2020	1322	1713	238	517	1560 – 2230



(For as full summary report, please refer to *Attachment 1*.)

Monitoring methods

Our standard programmes (Reintegration-, ISS- and Primary Caregivers programme) are recorded on our tailor-made interactive web-based database. It is a case management system that offer a platform where all work with relation to the learners, their families and schools are recorded. The data we capture then gets exported into reports that we use for case management, monitoring and evaluation, donor reporting, newsletters, presentations and advocacy purposes.

Any new pilot programmes are recorded and reported on separately until it becomes a formal programme which is then merged with our current database. The capturing, reporting and data analyses for monitoring and evaluation purposes are constantly developing to an improved standard.



Further monitoring and evaluation tools are our monthly reports compiled by all programme coordinators and managers as well as reports for Khula's Board of Directors and Donors. The monitoring of @home learning is a new set of data that needs to be captured and that needs testing and monitoring. As we are able to report on on-the-ground reality of remote learning in under resourced communities on different platforms such as a working group of different partners of WCED, we need to ensure we are successful and have the desired impact.

School attendance tracking:

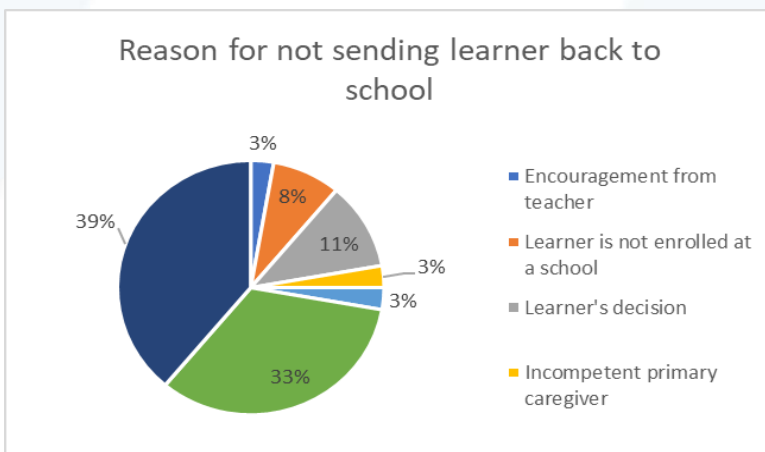
We were tracking school attendance for those of our referred learners who were due back at school closely. **By the end of July 43% of learners who should be back in school had partially or fully returned with 53% not having returned at all.**

Suspected reasons for low return to school rates were identified as follows:

- The reasons why learners had poor attendance before lockdown were exacerbated by lockdown and vulnerability of learners to negative influences have increased:
 - Involvement in negative peer groups, in some cases including substance abuse such as dagga.
 - Behaviour issues as well as poor academic performance.
 - Poor social circumstances.
- Siblings and friends not having returned to school yet.
- Parents displaying resistance to sending children to school as a result of COVID-19
 - In some cases, circumstances at home with people with comorbidities in the home etc and other insecurities are such that PC's prefer to keep children at home.
 - In some case the pandemic is used as a scapegoat for other issues and a lack of parental responsibility is present.
- Continuous changes in school dates results in confusion amongst learners and parents and is demoralising. It also constrains continuous and regular school attendance.
- Tumultuous circumstances in the community including protests and picketing and temporary school closures due to COVID-19 positive cases in the community causing disruption, confusion and fear.

Some of these suspected reasons for absenteeism were formally confirmed by survey results that included both branches:

39% of learners who did not go back to school cited uncertainty of the schools reopening, 33% did not go back due to the fear of the virus. 11% did not go back due to "Chose" to not return





The abovementioned survey was conducted at 103 of the learner's homes that formed a substantial presentation of Khula's total case load. With the information that we gathered through this survey we were able to get an idea of the success of each activity in our @home learning packs as well as valuable information from caregivers and children.

We wanted information of the following nature from the perspective of the Learner, Primary Caregiver and Khula Staff Member conducting the survey:

- Engagement with the @homelearning material
- Physical space (context) of @homelearning engagement
- Relevance of content of @homelearning materials
- Enjoyment element: Learner's view
- Level of difficulty of @homelearning material: Learners View
- Household involvement: Learners
- Household involvement: Primary caregivers
- Identification of Household members involved
- Our reach beyond the referred learner; Community Involvement
- Identification of community members involved
- Quantity of community involvement
- Regularity of engagement with @home learning materials: Learners
- Regularity of engagement with @home learning materials: Primary caregivers
- Enjoy element: Primary caregivers
- Primary Caregivers perspective on the impact of playing together on the bonding/attachment with learner
- Household level of education
- Primary caregiver presence – Is the PCG at home
- Primary caregiver whereabouts – Where is the PCG when not at home
- Primary caregiver involvement with school attendance
- Primary Caregiver Motivation behind school attendance
- Primary Caregiver engagement
- Khula Staff Assessment of Living Conditions

(Please find the survey as well as the graphs and narrative to the data as *Attachment 2*.)

We learnt what we can build on, alter or let go of. We gathered some useful information to understand the community we serve, the motivation of parents and learners to go to school and primary caregiver involvement in learning. The information collected also substantiates the real-life stories we relay to systemic influencers who are in the position to make decisions for systemic change that is so direly needed. It assists us to be an even clearer voice for the voiceless and to advocate for change on different levels.

Our observation that the level of fine-, gross motor skills, perception, literacy and numeracy were even lower than expected. Most children between Gr R – 7 were unable to read. They enjoyed the books and requested easier reading materials.

It was surprising that most children loved colouring and drawing the most out of all the activities.

Khula's Employee Development Monitoring and Evaluation:

Khula's culture is value driven. Staff is expected to comply with certain characteristics which we call the 4 C's (Character, Calling, Chemistry and Competence). We conduct an annual assessment with



each staff member celebrating strengths and drawing up a personal development plan for areas of growth and development.

Future plans (Next months)

- KDG was promoting @homelearning since middle May 2020. It was a journey that were not without challenges and limitations. It took considerable effort, initiative, drive and motivation, but it was quite evident that the @homelearning packages had a positive impact on the children and their households. The @homelearning sparked a connection with school again. This was evident during the field worker's follow-up visits as the children were excited to report on the @homelearning activities. This, in effect, promoted accountability and responsibility as the learners only got updated activities once there was evidence that they completed the previous activities.
- Khula is passionate about education and committed to being responsive to our clients' needs, developing innovative, sustainable and quality solutions.
- In order to do this, we invested a significant amount of time into monitoring and evaluating our services and planning and adapting our way of work and strategy for the future.

Unintended positive outcomes we plan to build upon include:

- Our teams learned from one another and our fieldworkers had direct exposure to both our Primary Caregivers Programme Content and In-School Support staff, that brought their different approaches, experience and skills to the table during home visits. The service became more holistic and our staff multi-skilled. We also trained our staff in practical activities that could be done with both primary caregivers and children, promoting parental involvement in learning.
- Our approach became more indirect and enjoyable as we promoted intentional and structured play instead of only addressing the apparent obstacles to school attendance directly.
- We are now more generally perceived by the community as an organisation that are willing to go to even greater lengths to support them in a different way than before and to bring learning home. Our clients are less defensive and open to participate as we have a playful approach whilst still addressing the necessary child protection issues that cause school disengagement.
- Our circle of influence became larger as interaction with our beneficiaries took place outside. In many instances we were able to engage neighbours, friends and siblings that were previously not engaged. We identified how big the need for stimulation and non-threatening learning is at home even among the primary caregivers.

Short to medium term:

- Our plan for the next few months until the end of the year is to continue with our adjusted approach which means that all our programmes are conducted within the community outside learners' homes.
- Through this approach we can identify the benefits and see the needs identified as the most pressing for our communities at present.
- A definite mental connection is made with school in a time where the value and importance of education is taking a complete backseat in relation to all other needs and crises.
- It is still unsure what the long-term outcomes will be, but it is a step in the right direction addressing the importance of education and healthy family connections. If the immediate effect is to continue, one could expect a very positive outcome that can be developed further to ensure a child's successful school career.



- Through a few rounds of strategic planning at various levels of the organisation the following strategic objectives are seen as focus areas for development in the medium to long term: advocacy, external collaboration, prevention/ early Identification, community involvement/ community development, training.
- Our main priority is to mobilise the main support structures for the children referred to Khula. Primary Caregivers and Teachers are two of the most significant figures in the lives of children and can either enable them to thrive or be instrumental in causing significant harm and therefore impaired social-, emotional- and physical development.
- The support structures that we will strengthen to ensure the safeguarding of children and prevention of school drop-out are:
 - To encourage a connection with education we pursue @home learning through play.
 - To follow up when children do not attend school, determine the reasons and address it.
 - To work more closely with teachers to support, motivate and raise awareness about the significance of their role in a child's life.
 - Primary Caregivers are being engaged and supported through inclusion in @home learning. Some need more individual support and assistance before they will have the necessary parenting skills and internal resources to provide in their children's needs.
 - A further priority is to find a way to support and empower primary caregivers to provide for their children.

Medium to long term:

Collaboration:

We are also very grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with WCED leaders, policymakers, influencers, curriculum developers and other community organisations on provincial level to advocate for those children who are most vulnerable and at highest risk of dropping out of the school system. During our collaboration meetings, we are busy forming relationships with key people and organisations who work in the education sector. This collaborative (Whole of South Africa) forum are working together on a plan to develop @home learning strategies in the most vulnerable areas of our province. If the plans are implemented successfully, they hope to be able to propose it for scaling throughout South Africa.

Khula, forms part of the working group that focuses on innovation and community mobilisation. Some of the other members in our group have experience in establishing successful afterschool programmes, community mobilisation of faith-based organisations, training and development of the youth, development of educational materials and the provision of psychosocial support and skills development of teachers. We are looking forward to learning from each other and working together to develop plans to train, empower and mobilise communities.

Khula facilitates weekly group meetings where members can work together, actioning requests from the steering committee, sharing their thoughts, experiences, data and knowledge in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Start the process of collaboration by exploring the different stakeholders' programmes already in existence and evaluating what can be synchronised for this specific project
- Mobilise community partners such as FBOs, sport clubs and community structures to support the @Home initiative
- Plan with each NGO opportunities for scale and increased scope of work
- Work with schools & districts to keep records of all Learners to ensure no Learner is left behind
- Fasttrack innovations to support the @homelearning initiative



We are currently still in the process of exploring all the programmes already in existence and waiting for the information gathered through a survey that went out to all organisations involved in developing materials and working with learners in schools in the Western Cape.

What we learnt so far:

- Collaborating and building trust-relationships take time
- Own agendas had to be laid down and a collaborative vision adapted
- Explaining ‘the why’ and ‘the how’ will be an ongoing process
- *Blessed are the flexible*
- Every member has something to offer
- Administration skills from members are highly appreciated
- To be responsible for leading and administrating this group as well as participating in the bigger forum takes up a lot of time resource: average of 20 hours per week

Bigger picture:

As an organisation, we are committed to participate in this @home learning initiative because we can see the value this collaboration can have on:

- Bringing about positive change in the education sector of South Africa
- Forming partnerships with other organisations
- Sharing resources and methodologies between organisations
- Learning through ours and other’ s experiences Sharing our methods and documentation
- Being the voice for the voiceless
- Addressing the imbalance in education between the under-resourced and affluent schools
- Act as a ‘safe bridge that people can cross to see/hear/experience what really goes on at ground level’

Further collaboration possibilities post-COVID-19 that goes beyond the @home learning forum with for example the WCED’s Transform to Perform intervention strategy addressing attitudes and values which influences actions and behaviours of all the role players in the education system.

Support

- The biggest concerning factor for Khula is the increasing probability that more children will be at-risk of dropping out of school because of COVID-19 and that our services will be overwhelmed by new referrals. It is too early to say whether this will be the case.
- Related to this concern is that the impact on children’s long-term development and academic performance. We foresee an increase in the need for extra academic and emotional assistance for children who would were significantly impacted by the loss of months of formal schooling, even though we have tried to mitigate this through our current interventions. We are particularly concerned about the younger children with developmental windows that are difficult to make up once they have passed. We foresee that additional resources and programme development will be required to address these issues in future.
- The fast changing and unpredictable environment that is the nature of our current circumstances affects all aspects of our work and is something that must be managed constantly and judiciously.
- As the approach become more successful more administrative staff is needed to prepare the “toolkits”, attend meetings with WCED or other collaboration opportunities. We need more skilled staff to fine-tune, measure and develop our @home learning approach.
- We also need them doing home visits to transfer their skills to up-skills our other staff. We conduct supervision and “in-service” training in the community. It used to take place in the office, but now it is impossible to bring too much staff into the office.

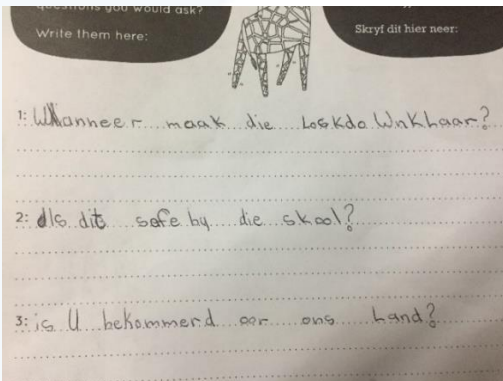


- We can only work in the community on days the weather permits. Previously we were able to work within schools or to go into the homes of learners, but now we utilise our staff differently on those days.
- Logistics became increasingly challenging as all staff needed to be in teams in different locations.
- Each branch used to gather in a Monday for collective worship, emotional support and planning for the week. This was a highlight for staff which is now impossible. We needed to re-think how we can still do quality emotional care of especially our fieldworkers who found coming into the office a treat and a nice break from their tough working conditions in the community.
- We are very concerned about children mostly only go to school every second day. There are several concerns with regards to this arrangement however necessary it might be.
- Parents who can generally not take responsibility to ensure their children attend school, are now less likely to succeed in this obligation. It is most likely due to the instability of school rosters, impaired communication between the school and home, lack of motivation to engage in schoolwork at home and no means to access remote learning.
- In many instances' children are not motivated to attend school due to their friends in other classes, schools or grades not going to school on the same days that they are. The street is full of children playing in school hours making it very difficult to attend school if you are already not enjoying it or struggling with schoolwork.
- Winter and rainy days play a significant role in poor school attendance.
- Teachers who are not motivated to be back to fulltime teaching or willing to “walk the extra mile” to prevent children from dropping out or falling behind even more than what is expected.

Success Stories & Beneficiary Feedback

Challenges on our children’s hearts - A letter to our President

Khula were asked to send some of the letters that learners wrote to the President as part of the “Treasure Box – Florence and Watson booklet of the After-School Programme Office of the Western Cape Government”. These letters were presented to Mr Ramaphoza when he visited Cape Town.



“Hoekom het die wyn winkel oop gekom?
 Wanneer maak die Loskdw WnKLaar?
 Dis dit safe by die skool?
 Is U bekommerd oor ons Land?”

We are so excited to share more of the testimonies and photos of our intervention during this period.
Please refer to our “Attachment 3”



C-19: Responding to the Covid-19 crisis

We are constantly back at the drawing board to reflect and when necessary re-strategise to ensure we are delivering effective services in line with the community's needs. There is a growing urgency to establish the value of learning and education in the community we work in.

Collaboration with other local NGO's, civil society, the local community and government to promote learning at home and doing it through play is what we are lobbying for. This collective effort will speed up the process and as a result lead to an interest in learning and improved attachment between caregivers and children. It is being done online by many organisations, but very little people currently assist schools in their very difficult task to teach children, keep them safe and engaged in school.

It is needed that we alter our perspective and start believing in children. John Gilmore inspired us during the Zero Drop-Out Webinar of DGMT on 4 Sept 2020.

What if we turned his statements into questions by asking the following?

- What will happen if we undergo the first critical change to move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset?
- What if we could truly believe that every child is a genius and that every child is born with capacity despite their possible perceived drawbacks?
- What if education could move from content management to complex problem solving?
- What if we could leap from a survival mindset to a value driven mindset?
- What if children can understand how they learn best and take charge of their own life-long learning?
- What if children can start thinking of how they are going to create change?

Right now, sought after competencies are creativity, innovation, collaboration, reflection and curiosity. Despite all the above, foundational literacy need to be in place. Education is not only the education of memory. Learning is not stuck in school hours. School is not the only place you learn but should not be replaced. The WOSA (Whole of Society Approach) is what is needed to improve and create sustainable change.

Why not rather focus on the most important skills any human being needs in life? We should not only look to government (Social Services, SAPS, Health and more), we should look to the community for solutions.

We need home in the school and school in the home.

Erns Labuschagne
CEO