



# Quarterly Report

May 2024 - July 2024



**khula**  
Development Group

# Table of Contents

- 1 Funding Purpose
- 2 Reflection
- 3 Beneficiary Reach
- 4 Celebrating Successes
- 5 Collaboration
- 6 Challenges
- 7 Future Plans



# Funding Purpose

Khula Development Group (KDG) is based in Paarl and Stellenbosch, South Africa. Khula is dedicated to our mission of promoting a positive culture of learning and strengthening the value of education and attendance for children at risk of school disengagement. We are excited to share our broader impact.

## Reflection

Children from low- or middle-income countries (LMICs) are especially at risk for developmental disorders as issues such as poverty, stunted growth, living in rural areas, and a lack of cognitive stimulation predispose children to poor developmental trajectories. It is also estimated in 2016 that a third of preschool children in LMICs are not meeting their cognitive and socio-emotional developmental milestones. The impact of these developmental deficits is long-term however, the severity of symptoms can be lessened through early identification. (McCoy DC, Peet ED, Ezzati M, Danaei G, Black MM, Sudfeld CR, et al. *Early Childhood Developmental Status in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: National, Regional, and Global Prevalence Estimates Using Predictive Modeling*. PLoS Med. 2016;1–19.)

Over the past two decades, the world has seen a rapid increase in the prevalence of learning differences among children. The rising global statistics reveal that there is an **increased need for feasible and effective services that cater to the unique needs and abilities of children with learning differences, especially for those living in low-resource settings where there is limited access to quality interventions.** (Connolly NB. *The Feasibility of Occupational Therapy Visual Art Groups for Children (8 – 12 years) with Learning Differences in a Low-Resource Setting in the Western Cape, South Africa*. 2023; p.4.)

Khula has found that about 80% of learners receiving direct services are able to reach their developmental potential within a year of individualised, holistic intervention provided weekly during the school term.

The remaining 20% of learners, however, reach their developmental ceiling even with one-on-one support in the Khula classroom and at home. This is due to cognitive and social-emotional limitations that cannot be fully addressed through therapeutic means. This is evident in their limited or slow progress, even with repeated interventions and frequent assistance. As a result, these learners are referred to relevant stakeholders, such as designated child protection organizations (DCPO's) or School-Based Support Teams within their schools, to ensure a sustainable support plan is created for their ongoing educational and social needs.



While Khula recognizes the challenges in justifying the sustainability of this service, we are driven by the existing need and our calling to continue providing this essential support.

From the most recent report compiled by Dr Johannes Erasmus following the "Tracking Children" project, (where a total of 3 821 completed assessments were received from three different year groups), improving home support and reducing absenteeism through effective interventions must be prioritised. Strengthening academic progress and behavioural support is essential to mitigate fallout risks. Targeted support can bridge gaps and improve outcomes for learners at risk of dropping out of school.

# Beneficiary Reach

To fulfill our mission, we employ a **macro**, **meso**, and **micro** approach in our interventions.

## MACRO APPROACH

At the macro level, our outreach extended to **44,262** interactions within our target audience and community. These interactions include all service delivery as well as Go2Captain announcements, child protection initiatives focused on child safety, and school attendance competitions.

## MESO APPROACH

At the meso level, we facilitate group sessions for children who have lost a loved one or someone special in their lives, as well as life skills groups and sessions for fathers using the Legacy Dad's material. We also conduct Go2Teachers sessions, which focus on self-help strategies for managing depression and anxiety, along with activities designed to address the cycle of depression. Additionally, we offer group support for parents and primary caregivers. In this approach, we utilize the "Fun-and-Connect" manual, which emphasizes family dynamics, connection, introspection, positive thinking, and problem-solving. The "STERK" program is also implemented with the Go2Captains, empowering them to identify and address bullying behavior, manage discipline, and navigate emotions. Over the past six months, there have been a total of **2,890** such interactions.

## MICRO APPROACH

Our micro-level approach involves providing holistic support to specific learners referred from nine schools. We currently have **258** learners on our database who meet our referral criteria, including academic challenges, absenteeism, behavioral issues, or developmental delays. These learners received targeted interventions till the end of July. Our Total caseload was **493** which included **235** caregivers. Our learner caseload consists of 152 male learners and 106 female learners.

This model acts as a testing ground for developing best practices to enhance school attendance and educational engagement. "There has been a worldwide increase in the prevalence of learning differences, increasing the demand for feasible and effective services that support these children's development and functioning. However, very few children have access to specialised individual intervention."

*(Connolly NB. The Feasibility of Occupational Therapy Visual Art Groups for Children (8 – 12 years) with Learning Differences in a Low-Resource Setting in the Western Cape, South Africa. 2023; p.4)*

## Home visits

During a home visit we have the opportunity to give feedback to caregivers on how the learners are doing at school and to understand the reason/s why caregivers keep learners at home. The caregivers are also reminded to set a positive example for their children and how their own lifestyles and the choices they make affects not only themselves but their children.

*“Caregivers in Kayamandi warmly welcomed Khula into their community. Many of these caregivers cannot afford school transport, leaving learners to walk approximately 3 kilometers or more to and from school. Caregivers believe it’s in their children’s best interest to keep them home during severe rain. While the facilitator acknowledged that these reasons are valid, they emphasized that the children are falling behind in their schoolwork as a result. The facilitator suggested that caregivers reconsider their budgets, prioritize transportation, and view it as a long-term investment in their children’s future.”*



## Individual Sessions

Our individual sessions included sand play therapy, focus on bullying, making the right choices and how to identify emotions. During academic support sessions with learners at school we focused on teaching basic concepts such as shapes, colours, numbers, and distinguishing left from right. Several learners have suspected borderline to mild intellectual disabilities and/ or foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, which negatively affects their intellectual capacities and learning. Therefore, learners are referred to the SBST/ learner support teacher/ S2H program coordinator for further assessment and accommodative school placements if they make limited to no progress within the S2H program over 12 – 24 months.

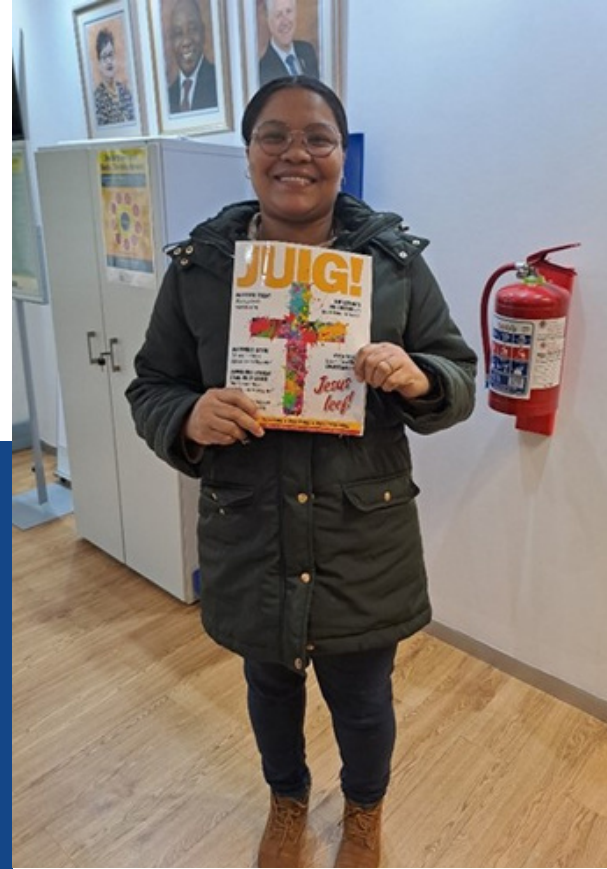
**A wonderful testimony of the benefit of our individual intervention was stated by one of our facilitators.** *“When I began working at Khula, a learner and his brother were already enrolled in the CWB program. Initially, the learner struggled with writing and drawing and was very withdrawn, likely due to hunger and wearing dirty school clothes. In the Khula class, efforts were made to help him feel valued, regardless of his circumstances or what others said about him. The focus began with teaching him to write his name while he was still in Grade 1. It took time for him to develop the proper pencil grip, as he initially just scratched around the paper. Clay was introduced to help him practice his fine motor skills. Today, he can proudly write his name, and his drawings of people have shown significant improvement. He is also much more confident, now dressed neatly, and has become more playful with other learners.”*



## Teachers

Teachers can play an important part in keeping learners in school. Khula recognises this and are intentional about supporting our teachers. The following feedback were received after Khula staff went from class to class to distribute JOY magazines to all educators as a token of appreciation.

“A principal expressed that Khula’s services are highly valued and appreciated; A secretary mentioned she will be undergoing knee surgery during the school holidays and that the magazine is the perfect gift to keep her occupied during recovery; Muslim teachers shared that they plan to pay it forward by regifting the magazine to their Christian family members.”



## Cases closed

Over the past six months, **90 learners** were closed off from our program. Of these, **56 were due to good progress** and regular school attendance. One learner permanently dropped out, **14 advanced to Grade 5**, **8 transferred to another school or area**, and **7 had their services discontinued by the school**. Additionally, **4 learners were closed off for other reasons**.

**Khula received 141 new referrals between February and July, reflecting teachers' increased awareness of early risk factor identification.**

## Training

Khula conducted in-person training for educators as part of the Tracking children project in collaboration with Inceba Trust and the Winelands Educational District. This training, which was held on July 8th at the Nonceba Building, showed significant improvements in educators' knowledge and understanding:

- **Understanding of dropout prevention improved by 62%.**
- **Knowledge of dropout risk factors increased by 53%.**
- **The ability to identify at-risk learners was enhanced by 44%.**

The pre- and post-training evaluations indicated that all educators grew in their knowledge of risk factors for drop-out, how to prevent drop-out and how to identify learners at risk for drop-out. Post-training, most educators' attitude towards learners at risk of drop-out improved and they were motivated to assist these learners going forward.

**Khula also trained 85 Teachers from ECD centres in our “Speel en Leer” material.**

(This material has also been translated into English)

- Prior to the training, 56.47% of educators felt that they had poor/average skills, and 43% of educators felt that they had good/excellent skills, in effectively obtaining learners' attention in the classroom. After the training, all the educators felt that they had good/excellent knowledge of how to skillfully engage learners' attention in the classroom.
- Prior to the training, 5.48% of educators felt that they had average skills to promote learners' task completion. The remaining 88,82% of educators rated that they had good/excellent skills to help learners complete their tasks.
- 22,35% of educators described their experience of the training as good whilst the remaining 91,76% described the training as excellent.
- 8,24% of educators reported that they had good motivation to implement the material learned during the training in their classrooms. 91,76% of educators said that they had excellent motivation to implement their learning in practice.



**Overall, the teachers self-rated that they were better equipped to handle learners' fluctuating attention in the classroom and foster task completion after the training. The training was rated mostly as excellent and resulted in a high level of motivation to apply the material taught.**



# Celebrating Successes

A learner has demonstrated remarkable resilience. According to his schoolteacher, he regularly attends school, keeps his schoolwork up to date, and has not shown any behavioural challenges. Despite less-than-ideal home circumstances—his father struggles with drug use, and the home is overcrowded—the learner remains safe, well cared for, and supported. Neighbours and friends trust him with tasks like running errands, such as going to the shop. The facilitator invited the father to a meeting with Community Keepers, which helped him feel included in his son's upbringing. The father is now involved in his son's schoolwork, takes care of him physically, and supports his emotional well-being. The learner has successfully self-regulated, with no reported incidents of anger outbursts at school or home. During community play, it's clear that he has many friends who care for him. The learner has been identified as a candidate for possible case closure.

A learner referred to our L2L program last year has shown excellent progress in school. Regular monitoring by our community worker has motivated him to attend school daily, and he now consistently presents himself neatly. Although his mother isn't always fully supportive, he has a strong relationship with his father. The learner also participates in the Amado program each quarter to boost his confidence, and he has made significant strides, even interacting with the horses. With his successful reintegration into school, the program plans to conclude his participation at the end of the term.

A learner who was previously at high risk of dropping out has transformed his attitude toward education and improved his behaviour. He now attends school regularly and consistently appears neat and tidy, which was once a challenge. Additionally, he has taken the initiative to encourage his neighbours, who have a history of absenteeism, to attend school. He accompanies them each morning, and together, they have formed a supportive friendship, with **all of them now attending school regularly.**

Recently, two Khula learners made it to the top ten of their class and attends school regularly, showing significant improvement given their history of absenteeism and poor academic performance.

We have started with online support groups with 20 schools as part of a network for teachers in the Drakenstein.





# Collaboration

Khula believes in collaboration with other organisations and not to duplicate interventions and actions in the community. These collaborations have led to wonderful relationships.

**Current collaborations include, but are not limited to:**

- SCAN network
- Stb Municipality
- Stellcare
- Community Keepers
- DSD
- Right to Care
- Klappmuts Library/ Municipality
- SpecSavers
- Hear-X Foundation,
- Hugonote College and NWU
- DCPO's
- Amado
- Fountain of Hope
- SAPS



# Challenges

**Gang violence** - Violence within the community led to the cancellation of scheduled interventions both at home and in the community. Schools were forced to close earlier, which had a significant impact on planning and implementing activities

**Stormy weather** - During this year's extreme weather conditions, learners had no other option but to walk to school in the rain. We held creative sessions with them on how to keep themselves dry while walking to school by using refuse bags. They proudly came to school showing us the bags they had cut for coverage. It was a bittersweet moment for our facilitators—we were proud they used our tips, but also saddened that this was their only way to stay dry.

**Shared spaces** in schools – Although Khula has been greatly blessed to have classrooms in most schools, we still find it challenging to work individually with learners in the schools where we share space.

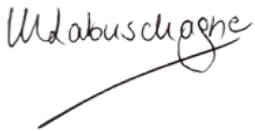
# Future Plans

- Continue with Legacy Dad sessions at schools in Stellenbosch
- Developing the substance abuse manual.
- Continue with in-school bereavement group sessions.
- “Koek en Loer” events at schools to promote connectivity between parents and their children.
- Enrolling the Grade 4 learners in the Create2Grow program
- Prayer week
- Collaboration with NWU in placing Social Work students from UK at schools where Khula renders our service.

# Conclusion

Khula envisions a transformed generation by investing in the education and development of these young minds. Thank you for supporting us in our journey to change lives, one child at a time. Together, we can ensure that the next generation is empowered, educated, and ready to face the challenges of tomorrow.

Kind Regards,



Daleen Labuschagne  
*Managing Director*  
daleen@khuladg.co.za



Suite 139, Private Bag X3041,  
Paarl, 7620

6 Loop Street, Paarl, 7646  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 871 1511  
www.khuladg.co.za  
daleen@khuladg.co.za