

PRESS RELEASE

IMPACT STUDY ON KHULISA'S DIVERSION PROGRAMME IN NORTHAM RELEASED

In November 2020, Khulisa contracted Sheri Errington, Theory of Change expert, to design and implement a study to evaluate the impact of Khulisa's crime prevention and diversion interventions on young people in Northam, with an extended focus on understanding the key mechanisms of the programme. The study included a review of programme documentation, quantitative data collection and a series of in-depth interviews with young people, parents and key stakeholders involved in the programme. One crucial element of the study was a workshop designed to engage key Diversion staff and stakeholders in the process of developing a Theory of Change for the programme, as a participatory approach to gaining insight into staff and stakeholder perceptions of impact and change

The quantitative data has highlighted key risk factors for young people in Northam, and their pathways into prevention and intervention programmes. The interviews with young people and parents have illustrated the value of these services in contributing to positive development, improved family relationships and as a source of much needed support. Interviews with stakeholders also pointed to the important role that Khulisa plays in the local community, with evidence pointing to Khulisa being experienced by local police and probation services as an impactful partner in crime prevention, contributing to an overall reduction in reoffending amongst youth in the area.

The Theory of Change workshop proved to be immensely valuable, promoting meaningful engagement in the process that resulted in increased buy-in to the importance of monitoring and evaluation, a shared understanding of the programme and significant insights into the diversion programme theory.

Youth violence is deeply normalised in South Africa and is fundamentally influenced by the high levels of violence throughout South African society at large. As a result, the line between victim and perpetrator is often difficult to determine because so many young perpetrators have also been victims of severe violence, in their homes, schools and communities.

Research shows that violence prevention measures with a strong focus on youth have the greatest potential to reduce violence and crime rates across society. By addressing the root causes of youth violence and strengthening young people's resilience to risk factors, prevention efforts can reduce youth's susceptibility to violence and crime and thus increase safety for all of society.

There is a critical need to understand the efficacy of Khulisa's crime prevention and diversion programmes being delivered throughout the country, especially where resources for young people are limited and the needs are limitless.

There is strong evidence to support that diversion programs, when properly implemented, reduce re-offending. However, there has not been much research focusing on how diversion programs achieve this impact, in the form of program theory, which is critical to the development and resourcing of these services.

About the Theory of Change (ToC)

ToC is gaining increasing recognition as a robust tool for programme development and evaluation. It is a participatory, theory driven approach to describing the causal pathways through which a programme is hypothesized to have an effect. These workshops intend to assist Khulisa in the strengthening of their Monitoring and Evaluation framework, by promoting:

1. The development of robust evaluation questions,
2. Identifying key indicators for monitoring,
3. Pinpointing gaps in available data and prioritizing data collection, and 4. Providing a structured approach to analysis and reporting.

Both the impact study and the Theory of Change workshops will have an unquestionable impact on improving program design, development and delivery.

Both the impact study and the ToC workshops have had an unquestionable impact on improving Khulisa's programme design development and delivery.