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Annual Report
March 2021 / February 2022

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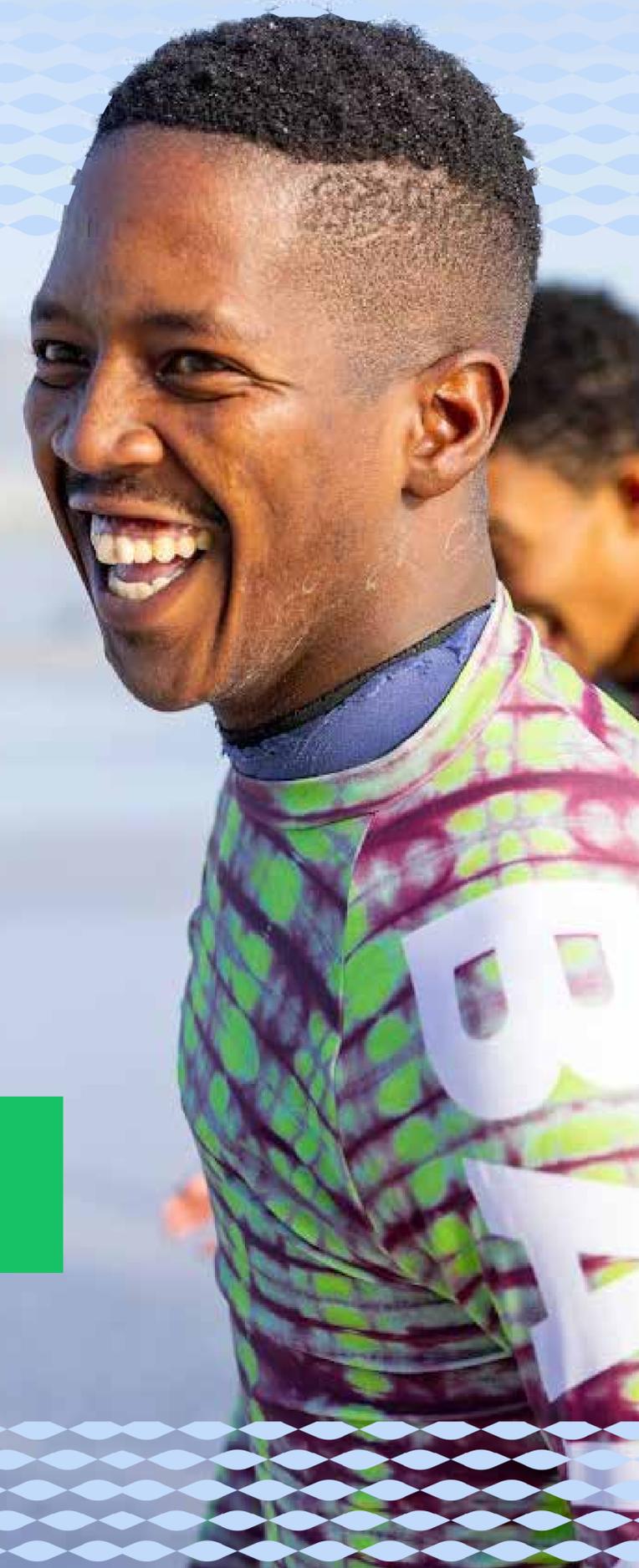
It's a great pleasure to be sharing my first Chairman's Report as acting co-chairperson of the Waves for Change board. At Waves for Change, we've been offering Surf Therapy programmes to some of South Africa's most vulnerable young people since 2011. Year on year, demand for our programmes has kept growing and the importance of young people's mental health is being taken more and more seriously by decision-makers around the world. We know we need more community-based, child-friendly mental health interventions and, as our evidence continues to evolve, we know we have a model for mental health promotion that needs to reach more and more people in South Africa and internationally.

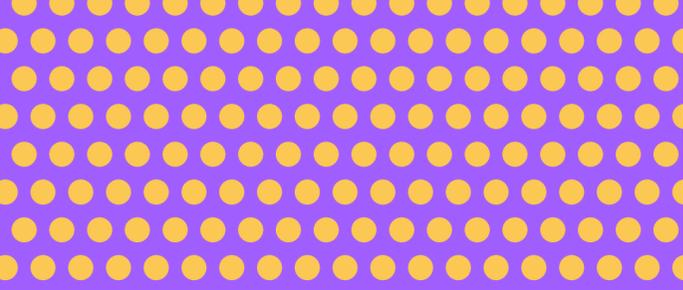
As you will read across the forthcoming pages, we've built a strong team of young South Africans to oversee the roll-out of our Surf Therapy programmes in South Africa. We now connect with over 2,000 young people to the power of the ocean each week. We're proudly South African and proudly youth-led. If you've ever met a Waves for Change coach on a South African beach, you'll know what I mean. As a team, we're incredibly proud to be part of a movement that is changing the face of surfing in our country and changing the conversation around mental health and mental health service delivery. As we enter our second decade, our goal is to work even more closely with the various stakeholders that are aiming to improve access to mental health services in South Africa. We have the evidence and the team to do it, and we're excited for what comes next.

As our Surf Therapy programmes have grown, we've also piloted a successful partnership model that is training and supporting more sport for development and after-school programmes to integrate a mental health angle to their work. By sharing our programme method with more partners in South Africa and internationally, we believe we can sustainably grow the footprint of our programming and research. We now work with almost 40 partners in 11 countries including a headline partnership with Elman Peace and UNICEF in Somalia. Our goal next year is to package our programme and training tools so that more and more partners can use them to bring a mental health focus to their youth programming.

On behalf of the rest of the Waves for Change board and our team on the ground, I hope you enjoy our annual report. If you do, please share it with your friends and colleagues. We continue to appreciate your support. As we say at Waves for Change. Simunye, Sisonke.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AS', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.





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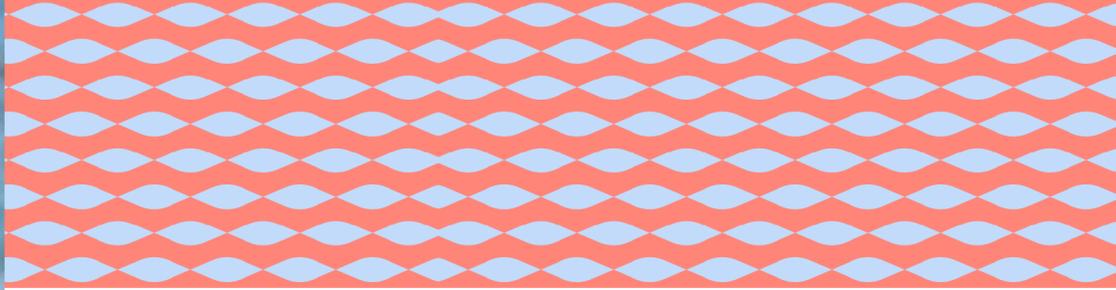
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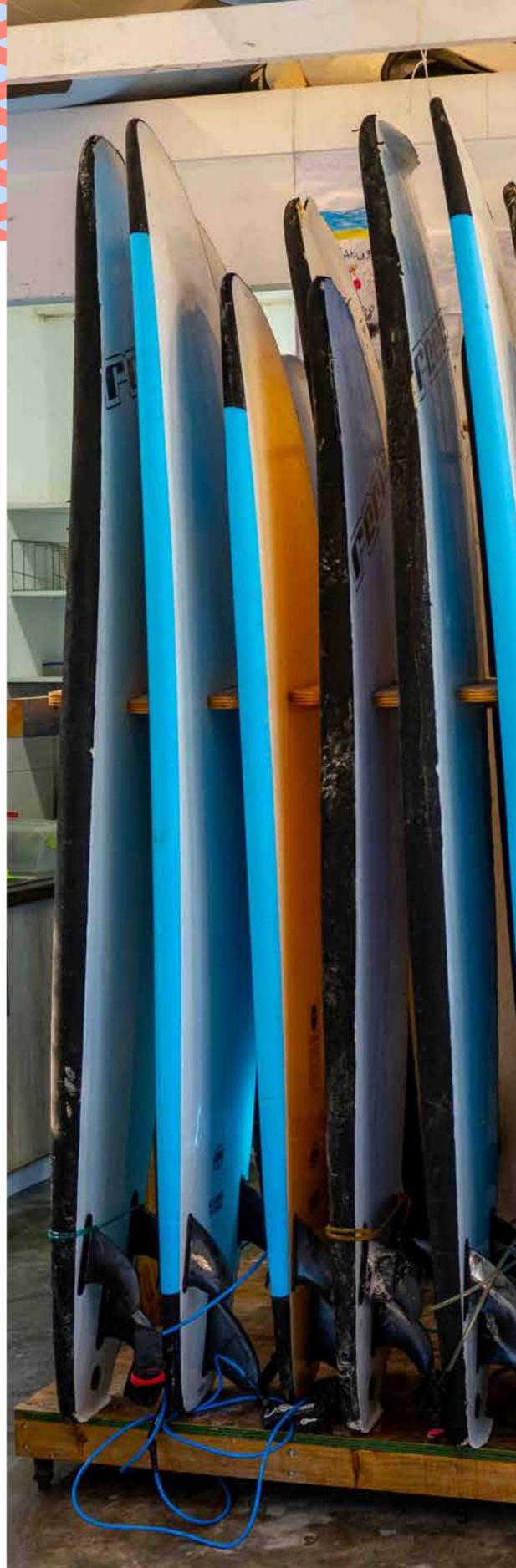


Founders Remarks

Emerging from the pandemic, it was fantastic to get back to the beaches. In February, baseline findings from research we've been running with The New School in New York flagged a significant spike in the stress levels of children being referred to our Surf Therapy programmes. At the same time, the National Press published that up to 9/10 of young South Africans needing mental health support are not able to access it. We're incredibly proud that 2,200 children each week can access our Surf Therapy programmes and thankful to our expanding community of supporters who allow us to offer these services free of charge. We hope you enjoy reading our annual report. You'll find more information about our growing coverage, expanding research and growing team. As we say at Waves for Change, Simunye. Sisonke. Thank you for supporting us.



Tim Conibear



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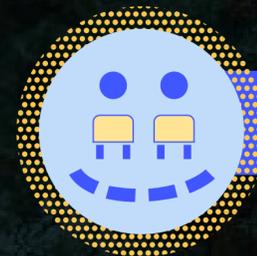
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Direct Service Delivery

Waves for Change's Surf Therapy is a community-based mental health service to children and young people from under-served communities. We use the positive health benefits and rush of surfing with mind-body therapy to help young people build protective relationships, identify and regulate emotions, self-soothe and build a positive image of their future.

Department of Education (including quintile 1 and 2 mainstream schools, schools for Learners with Special Educational Needs, and schools for differently-abled learners) Department of Health (local hospitals), Department of Social Development (local social workers and Child and Youth Care Centres) and other community-based partner organisations.



20 Male

Facilitated by young people from the same communities: 43 caring coaches

23 Female



TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: **2034**

EAST LONDON
368

GQEBERHA
316

HOUT BAY
251

MONWABISI
558

MUIZENBERG
541



218 Male

158 Male

137 Male

346 Male

378 Male



150 Female

158 Female

114 Female

212 Female

163 Female

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A Typical Day At Waves For Change



The school bell rings and children who have been referred to the Waves for Change (W4C) Surf Therapy programme are gathering outside, waiting for their transport to bring them to the beach. While they wait, they decide to form a circle and practice a "take five" – a simple breathing exercise they learnt at the beach that helps to calm the body and mind.

On the beach, W4C Mentors have laid out wetsuits and equipment, ready for their surfers to arrive. Today, there will be over 70 W4C surfers taking to the waves. As children pour out of their transport, they're greeted by their W4C Mentors and issued a wetsuit for the day's session. Above all the laughter, playing, and chatting, a single voice is heard:

“**Simunye! 70 voices immediately respond: Sisonke!**”

All eyes and ears are on the W4C Mentors, ready for instruction. The call of "Simunye" (meaning "we are one") invites them to be in the moment together, moving forward as one. Their returning cry of "Sisonke" means "we are together" and shows their eagerness to participate. Today's session is pair floating: together, the children will practice a fun and challenging new skill (floating), while also practising transferable behaviours such as empathy, communication, and teamwork. These are the positive behaviours they can use anywhere, anytime, to build strong and healthy social connections – a core ingredient of their mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

Together Beyond Waves for Change

W4C bridges the mental health treatment gap through a scalable, community-based approach. For W4C, well-being is not only the absence of illness; it's the ability to contribute to our communities, cope with normal changes of life, make healthy connections, and live productively. We deliver a well-being service with the following core ingredients to boost wellbeing:

- Physically, emotionally, and mentally safe spaces
- Strong connections with caring coaches and peers
- Mastering fun, challenging new tasks
- Psycho-social education to cope with stress and live well
- Access to other services, further opportunities, and supportive social groups

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Task Shifting To 43 W4C Mentors

W4C mentors help shift traditional mental health interventions to new child-friendly friendly spaces. W4C Mentors from local communities act as caring and consistent adults that young people connect with and relate to, providing our service in an accessible and stigma freeway'



Coach Story: Amber Fredericks

My name is Amber Fredericks, and I am 20 years old. I was born in Cape Town and currently live in Lavender Hill. I got involved with W4C at the age of 12 years old as a participant. After I matriculated, I got the opportunity to become a Junior Coach for two years, becoming a Senior Coach in 2022. W4C has had an impact on my life since the age of 12 by creating a safe space for me. I had a caring adult mentor who was always there to check-in on me and my feelings. W4C provided me with both the life skills and life lessons needed to help me think more positively, to have a positive attitude and positive thoughts and a better understanding of what mental health is. I am now a caring adult who is trying to make a positive change in other children's lives. I am a role model and mentor to the kids in our programme. I love working with every single child and being able to witness the change within them.



Coach Story: Vuyisa Sowambi

My name is Vuyisa Sowambi and I am 24 years old. I grew up in the Eastern Cape and went to school there. I wanted to become a professional hockey player but, when that was not possible, I decided to relocate to Cape Town and live in Masi (Masiphumelele). In 2018 I applied for a job at W4C and was lucky to secure the position. My journey at W4C has not been easy. Having lost a friend in a river accident, and then having to work in water, filled me with fear – something I did not mention at the time as I did not want to lose the opportunity. For me, the first real impact of working with W4C was when I became able to face my fear of water. As the years have passed, I have become more and more comfortable in the water and can now, safely say, I am one of the strongest coaches. I have been with W4C for a total of five years and have no doubt that this is where I am meant to be.

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Integrating with Government Departments and Community Based Partners

We piloted our first morning programme in July 2017, delivering Surf Therapy to a group of 16 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At the time, this represented only 3% of our total participant population, who were previously all referred from Quintile 1 and 2 mainstream schools. Our vision was to make our programmes more inclusive, and meet the mental health needs of neurodiverse groups, including children with higher needs that could come to our beach sites during learning hours.

Due to the success of programmes with neurodiverse groups, we have now established and maintained relationships with other government and community-based referral partners, including Schools for Learners with Special Educational Needs, local hospitals (Department of Health), local social workers and Child and Youth Care Centres (Department of Social Development), schools for differently abled youth and those at risk of exclusion (Department of Education).

As of February 2022, we now reach 250 neurodiverse and high-need participants in our service annually. These participants are referred by key government departments and community mental health role-players. This now represents 13% of our total participant population every year. We believe this work contributes to our aim to relieve the burden on the mental health system and making sure our service reaches the children that need our support the most.



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Our 5 Pillar Approach

To train more Waves for Change coaches, and share our method with more partners, we identified the ingredients that make our work tick. We call these ingredients our Five Pillars. Each Pillar is supported by training and evaluation tools that help us train more caring coaches in SA and beyond!

At Waves for Change, we create this positive environment at our programme using our Five Pillars:

1

Connection to consistent mentor support and a positive peer group.

When mentors and peers care for us, it can boost our psychological safety, self-worth, and sense of belonging. During our sessions, our participants feel socially connected to a shared positive identity and celebrated for their individuality. Caring coaches are a key drivers of impact at our programmes, and influence all of the other pillars.

2

Access to a safe space.

Physically, emotionally and mentally safe spaces allow our participants to feel that they are accepted and understood, supported when they try new things, and able to relax and have fun! This provides them with respite from adversity and stress.

3

Access to fun and challenging new tasks.

When we attempt a challenging new task and our mentors and peers celebrate us, it can improve our esteem, confidence, and self-concept. This can increase our participant's feelings of agency and self-reliance, which supports them in their daily lives.

4

Practicing social and emotional skills.

Strong communities, strong minds, and a strong sense of future support strong internal worlds which help us feel and be well. Through our games and activities, participants practice positive behaviours and skills which build resilient well-being foundations.

5

Connection to new opportunities and support systems.

It's important we connect our participants to other services, further opportunities, and supportive social groups which can meet their health and well-being needs. Caring coaches are connected to and communicate with.

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Training and Partnerships

At W4C, we use our Five Pillar approach to train and support partners that want to integrate a mental health focus to their work.

To date, we have supported 35+ organisations (in 12 countries) to adapt and integrate the Five Pillars into their existing programmes. We do this through grounding training and supporting their pilot implementation and evaluation.



Wave Alliance Partners 2022



Advocacy

Work with Orygen Global and developing a strategy

In 2022 Waves for Change formally launched its Policy and Advocacy department with the goal to 'Increase the number of young people ages 10 - 24 living in under-served communities who experience positive well-being.'

With a focus on five key objectives aimed at systemic change in mental health through awareness, task shifting, accessibility, and increased mental health funding. It is our goal to be part of creating a South Africa where mental health care is a relatable conversation for all. We are working toward seeing the measurable impact in this department by 2025.

1

Key decision-makers in the Western Cape Province integrate a mental well-being plan based on the W4C 5 Pillar Approach into the mental health service delivery pyramid by 2025.

2

Five new partnerships with national and provincial youth-based organisations are established by 2025.

3

20% of total budget comes from public funds by 2025. (Circa R2m).

4

Five new national corporates & foundations/philanthropists make a multi-year financial commitment to W4C by 2025

5

Establish 3 mental health partnerships with a national footprint by 2025

We would like to extend a thank you to our Advocacy Strategic development mentor, Orygen Global, a youth mental health organisation based in Australia and working with mental health organisations across the globe. Orygen Global, started a journey of Advocacy mentorship with our team through one-on-one meetings, group sessions and presentation.

This year has also afforded us opportunities to engage with national and international partners such as the South African Federation for Mental Health, South African Depression and Anxiety Group, and international partners such as United for Global Mental Health and Cities Rise.

We look forward to the exciting collaborations, partnerships, sharing and learning that this new journey promises



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THERAPY
is now in
SESSION

Campaign

"Therapy is now in Session"

and thank you to Now Boarding



R500k Public Fundraising Campaign

4,636 Surf Therapy sessions were donated by 137 incredible donors, supporting our fundraising campaign titled "Therapy is Now in Session". We loved the campaign's simplicity - for every R110 donated, a child's Surf Therapy session would be guaranteed. Alongside our newly developed brand and website by our pro-bono agency Now Boarding, they rallied multiple partners to ensure that Waves for Change was able to raise over R500,000 from the public in support of childrens' Surf Therapy sessions. We hope to increase that to R750,000 in the 2022/23 financial year.



4,636

Surf Therapy sessions were donated

137

Incredible Donors





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PROGRAMME BENEFITS

- Has been found to strengthen interpersonal connectedness and reduce impulsivity.
- Findings suggest that the program is an efficacious, trauma-informed intervention for violence-exposed youth.

BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

- Improvement in overall well-being
- Improvement in their emotion regulation skills

BENEFITS TO OUR COACHES

- Improvement in emotional control
- Improvement in goal-directed behaviours and impulse control

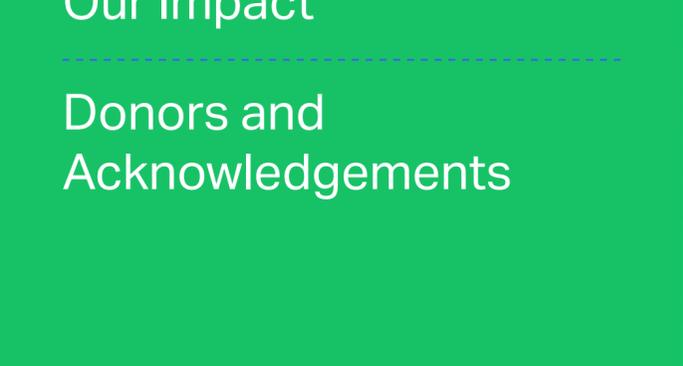
OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. More able to find volume control on strong feelings
2. To think of the long term and not just today
3. Better able to concentrate at school and
4. Make healthy choices and form healthy relationships'

OUTCOMES FOR COACHES

1. Are able to find the volume control on strong feelings
2. Model positive behaviours in response to difficult thoughts and feelings
3. Are more prepared to cope in further study / the workplace outside of W4C

LONG-TERM OUTCOME Our service reduces the risk of mental health challenges escalating during adolescence/adulthood, and reduces burden on the MH system in vulnerable communities



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Unicef
ViiV Healthcare
Waltons
Western Cape Government
Windfall Foundation
Wise Philanthropy
World Childhood Foundation
Zappistore

Research Partners

King's College London
Orygen Global
South African Federation for Mental Health
Stoked Research
The New School
University of Cape Town Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
University of Stirling

Individuals and In-Kind

Waves for Change's committed grant funding is incredible testimony to its work and the impact of our programmes. Grants of this nature is restricted and used only on agreed line items to help us to deliver quality services to thousands of children and young people every year.

We are therefore grateful to all of our individual and in-kind donors, locally and internationally. Your contributions play a pivotal role in allowing for more flexible support and enable us to continue being responsive to emerging needs when delivering child-friendly mental health programmes. Over this past year, your impact on growing and expanding our vision has been phenomenal.

A special word of thanks is given to our community-based partners, debrief psychologists, and referral partners.



Isiqalo Foundation Trust trading as Waves for Change

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