

04

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Stories of impact, community connections, and the journey to wellbeing.

OUR IMPACT

PG 29

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

PG 38

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OUR IMPACT

2024

1:990

CK SOCIAL WORKERS TO LEARNERS IN OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

2021

1:23 000

STATE SOCIAL WORKERS TO LEARNERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Source: <https://bit.ly/3ECCG8w>

2024

1:440

WHEN WE ADD OUR CARE FACILITATORS, THE RATIO OF SUPPORT DROPS FURTHER

2007

1:32 000

STATE SOCIAL WORKERS TO LEARNERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“

The play therapy training has been incredibly helpful in equipping us to better support our learners. We have seen a significant, positive impact in their lives. Many of them are dealing with neglect and the majority are living with their grandparents, making it difficult for them to find someone to talk to. However, they now know that the CK office is available to assist them if they need help or someone to talk to. – CK EASTERN CAPE



SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING

“Everything can be taken from someone but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one’s attitude despite the circumstances.” - VIKTOR E. FRANKL

The people who live in the communities that we serve face multiple and complex challenges and, while we can refer them to support services (the “r” in our c.a.r.e. model), our role is not to change their circumstances. Our role is to listen to them, support them and guide them as they choose to reframe the way they view their situation and their future – as they embark on their journey to wellbeing. We cannot measure the emotional wellbeing of someone, but we do, at regular intervals, monitor the subjective wellbeing of educators (2024: twice a year) and learners (2024: quarterly), using the international standard WHO-5 index. We combine the individual scores into a group score. Scores below 52% indicate a possible risk of depression and are investigated; interventions are planned and administered and the group is then reassessed. This monitoring process is valuable on many levels. It tracks progress, identifies hot spots and is an input in the process of planning and adjusting our themes and activities. The group score sheet is also a valuable document to share, once anonymised, with the school leadership so that they can be part of a holistic response.

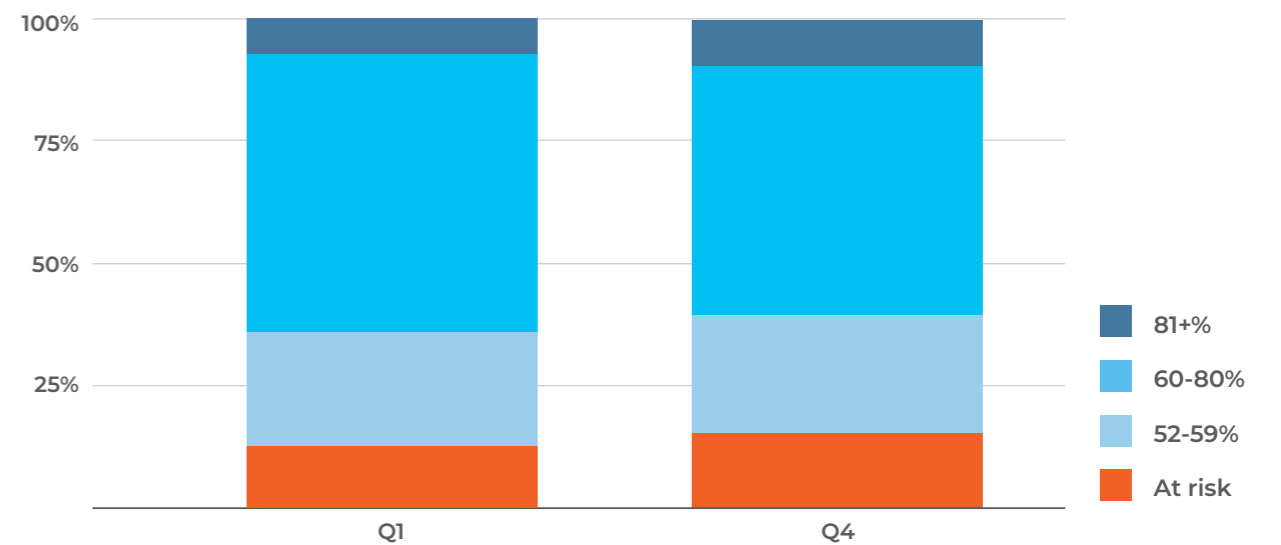
Please respond to each item by marking one box per row, regarding how you felt in the last two weeks	All the time					At no time
I have felt cheerful and in good spirits.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
I have felt calm and relaxed.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
I have felt active and vigorous.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
I woke up feeling fresh and rested.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
My daily life has been filled with things that interest me.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

Limitations: This data is gathered at partner schools who have received our interventions. We do not have control data from schools who do not have CK services. We also do not have baseline data gathered from the schools before we partner with them. We do not view this data as research data, but rather as survey data representing a point in time.

EDUCATOR WELLBEING

“Teacher wellness is important. I’m glad they take that into consideration and do team building sessions with the staff.” - EDUCATOR

EDUCATOR WHO-5 GROUP SCORES ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS



In Term 1 of 2024, nine (9) of our 78 partner schools (1 596 educators) had an educator group score below 52% on the WHO-5 subjective wellbeing index indicating a possible risk of depression. In Term 2, thirteen (13) of our 89 partner schools (1 872 educators) had an educator group-score below 52%. There were individual educators scoring in the “at risk” band, across the country, but all of these educator group scores below 52% were at schools in the Western Cape.

One of our teams based at a high school in Stellenbosch wrote: **“Unfortunately not all the educators completed the questionnaire, but those who did were very focused. It seemed as if the questions really made them think and reflect. It was concerning to see that quite a few educators are not doing so well.”**

“The WCED job cut announcement has added an unusual amount of pressure and stress.”

Educator wellbeing has an impact on learner wellbeing (p 33), and this year we started to monitor teachers twice a year. This monitoring took place at the end of the school year and we don’t feel confident in drawing conclusions on the cause and or effect, just yet. We are, however, curious and we now have some information that we can use, together with other inputs, such as our annual CK M6 survey, to initiate a conversation.

FEATURE STORY

IN THE TRENCHES

By Renate van der Westhuizen
Apex High School Principal



This week has been a true test of resilience in Eersterivier. With temperatures soaring to 38 degrees, the streets are engulfed in dust and humidity, drugs and violence. As we approach the upcoming test series, the restlessness among our students is palpable. Teachers are grappling with illness, which means other teachers must sacrifice free periods to invigilate. Our battles range from uniform issues to struggles with discipline, respect, late arrivals, gangsterism and attendance. It seems like we're in a constant struggle with parents, students, and the community.

The day kicks off at 06h15 with a parent meeting, where I find myself explaining to a parent why their child smoking dagga before school is a bad idea. I then see more desperate parents to hear that their child does not have a school yet, or their child did not come home or they have just given up hope. After encouraging parents, you turn to warm and demanding again, getting kids to make the right choices. You try to encourage teachers to see the positive in all of this, to see the mission, knowing damn well it feels hopeless. By 10h30, doubt creeps in, and I question whether the fight is worth it.

At 11h17, a powerful message arrives from a 2022 graduate of our school. She shares a picture of her university ID and expresses gratitude, saying, **"The school equipped me to study what I always dreamt of studying."**

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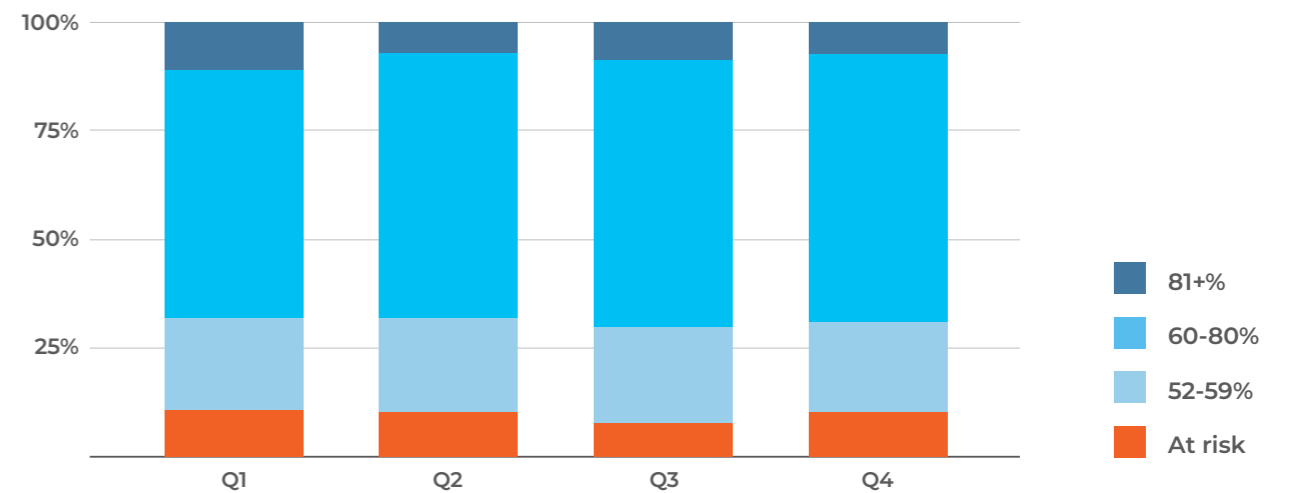
In that moment, it becomes crystal clear – yes, it is unquestionably worth the fight. If we don't fight, who will?

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LEARNER WELLBEING

LEARNER WHO-5 GROUP SCORES ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS GRADE 4 -11, EXCLUDING MATRIC LEARNERS



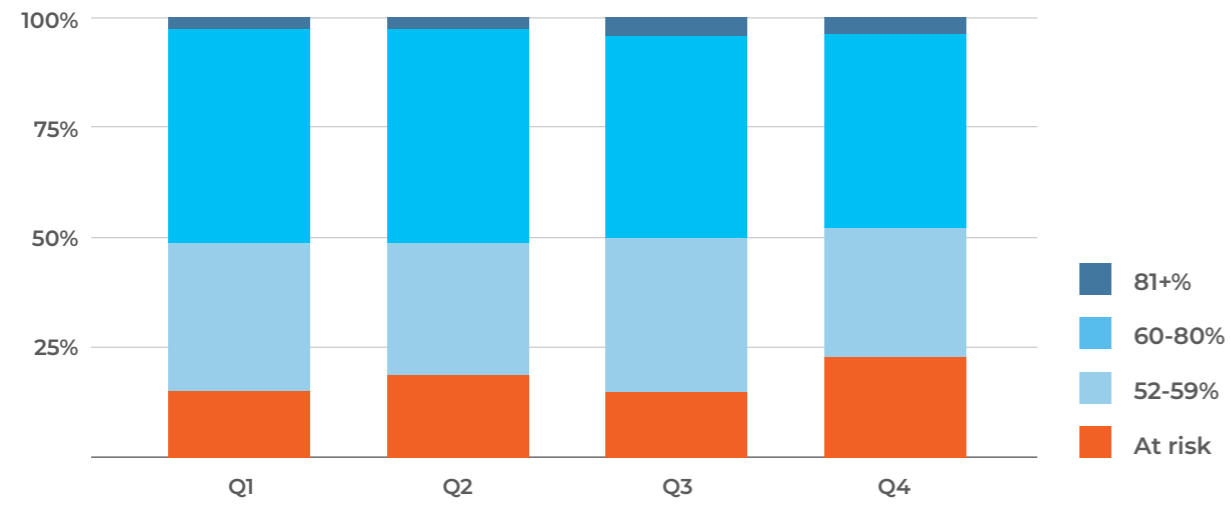
	At possible risk of depression <52%	52-59%	60-80%	81%+	Learners	Classes
Q1	34	68	184	33	9 045	319
Q2	37	78	227	23	10 561	365
Q3	29	84	232	30	10 196	375
Q4	38	74	229	24	10 502	365

When we look at this graph our response is curiosity: **"I wonder what is happening here, I wonder what this graph is telling us."** Since the data is anonymised, we can also share these graphs with our schools' committees and learner committees. Shared curiosity and shared ownership of wellbeing – and an added benefit of learners seeing real, live, relatable data and the practical application of interpretation.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW WE USE THIS DATA:

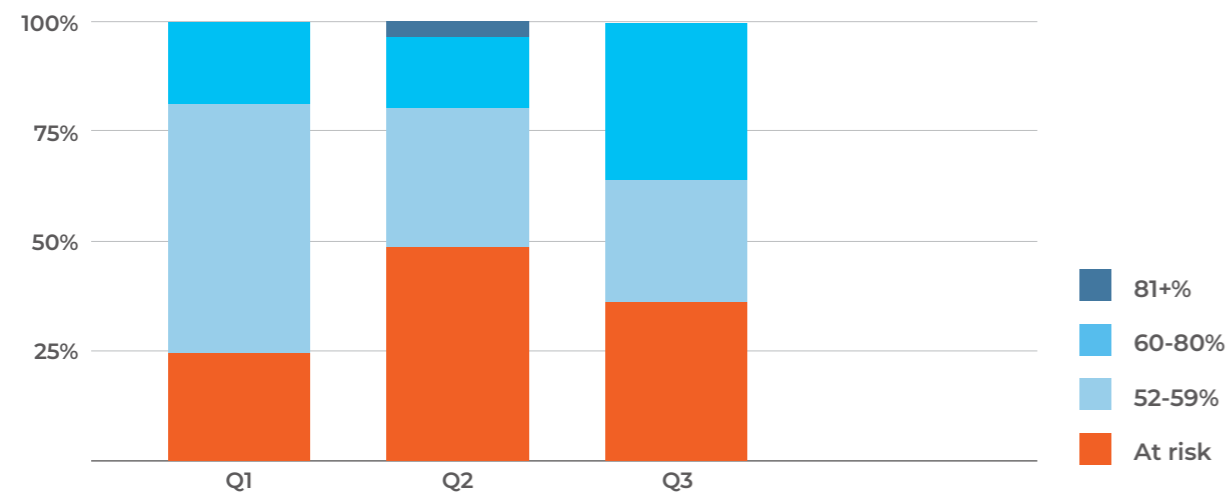
Our team at a partner primary school in Cape Town wrote: **"In the WHO-5 scores, question 4 and 5 were flagged in a few classes; in response, we conducted group sessions focusing on the importance of sleep and finding healthy hobbies. After these theoretical sessions, we recognised the need to provide the learners with practical tools for relaxation. A yoga instructor kindly volunteered to facilitate a session with our Grade 7 learners. The learners and the educators were excited about this session, with some of the educators noting that Grade 7s had been experiencing a lot of stress and anxiety with their high school applications and preparing for the transition to high school."**

**LEARNER WHO-5 GROUP SCORES ACROSS ALL HIGH SCHOOLS
GRADE 8 -11, EXCLUDING MATRIC LEARNERS**



	At possible risk of depression <52%	52-59%	60-80%	81%+	Learners	Classes
Q1	16	36	52	3	3 512	107
Q2	20	33	52	2	3 451	107
Q3	18	41	54	4	3 342	117
Q4	25	31	48	3	3 207	107

GRADE 12 / MATRIC LEARNER WHO-5 GROUP SCORES ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS



	At possible risk of depression <52%	52-59%	60-80%	81%+	Learners	Classes
Q1	9	12	4	0	699	25
Q2	12	8	4	1	712	25
Q3	9	7	9	0	674	25



SUCCESS STORIES

During her final session, a long-term client in Grade 12 who was referred for sexual abuse, anxiety and suicidal ideation, reflected on what she had learnt during her time with Community Keepers. She gave consent for this to be shared. She enjoyed attending the self-esteem therapy small group. By attending the group, she felt that she was not alone, and that she was not the only one experiencing challenges. This encouraged her to begin her journey of healing. A vital lesson she learned was how to focus on what she could control; she realised what her parents' expectations were and made peace with them. She was also able to identify and acknowledge that she had unrealistic expectations of herself and added unnecessary pressure to her academic performance. She has grown in multiple ways. She is more self-aware. She has become more aware of her emotions, can express them better and can now manage them. Her communication and coping skills have improved. A vital lesson learnt was the importance of balancing academics and her mental health.

A Grade 7 learner, distraught over her home situation, was referred to us by a concerned friend after expressing suicidal thoughts. She was deeply emotional at the start of counselling. Recognising the severity of her situation, we referred her case to the Department of Social Development (DSD), which conducted home visits and provided support to address the family issues. Her educators, already aware of her struggles, offered strong support. After a few sessions, there was a noticeable improvement in her emotional wellbeing – she began smiling more and feeling happier at home. She also shared that her family relationships had improved.

Behavioural challenges at the school have escalated significantly, to the point where an educator had to seek legal intervention. This month, the same group of learners attended school under the influence of substances. Some of these learners are clients of CK and are enrolled in group therapy. Many come from extremely challenging backgrounds and carry deep emotional wounds. In most cases, their behaviour reflects the underlying struggles they face. We remain committed to providing a safe space to support their healing process.

The learners in this school have experienced a number of challenges due to neglect, and feeling unsafe in the community, which affects them at school. We are also struggling with the lack of discipline and bullying. For our Anchoring services we focused on the classes that had the most reported bullying, namely Grade 4 and 5. A learner in Grade R said: “Nathi nontlalontle siyafuna ufundiswa nguwe” (Translation: “We also want to be taught by you, social worker”). Our Anchoring services have been mainly focusing on the Intersen phase. The Care Facilitator will prepare anchoring services that will be done with the Foundation Phase.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

Our whole-school approach goes beyond providing services – it fosters an inclusive, collaborative process. We encourage a shared vision and standardised practices while allowing each school-based team the flexibility to tailor their rollout plans to meet their school's unique and evolving needs.

Our bottom-up philosophy is rooted in the belief that people best understand their own challenges. To support this, we incorporate the Johari Window approach in planning meetings, encouraging reflection on potential blind spots.

"Being on the committee has taught me to be kinder, more respectful, and mindful of others. I love and respect myself more. CK really makes a difference in our lives."

– Learner

Our model relies on representative committees and structured input, gathered through formal meetings, questionnaires, workshops, focus groups, service evaluations, and the tracking of ad hoc feedback. Combined with referral trends and WHO-5 findings, these insights help shape a comprehensive picture of each school's needs.

The unintended impact of these committees is the growth participants experience. Many learners have shared

how this opportunity has boosted their confidence and leadership skills.

At a primary school on the outskirts of Stellenbosch, the CK school-based team wrote:

"We held our final learner committee meeting this month, celebrating their dedication in 2024. They reflected on their growth and shared their excitement about continuing in 2025. Notably, 90% of our committee will be prefects next year. We are grateful for their ideas and efforts in anchoring services this year."

"When we established the Learner Committee, members were selected by the principal, including some who did not have a strong reputation at school. Since joining the CK office team, they carry themselves with more pride. One learner, who previously failed two terms, is now passing – an achievement their educator is thrilled about. This warms our hearts and reinforces our commitment to providing love and support where needed."

"Being in the CK learner committee has boosted my confidence. I'm no longer shy speaking in front of others, and I love helping people." – Learner



JAMIE-LEE PIETERSEN
Care Facilitator : Lynedoch Community School