

## THE KHULISA DIVERSION PROGRAMME

*“I made a decision what I did was wrong and I will never do it again. The programme had a role in my decision” – Diversion Participant*

### Background of Khulisa

Khulisa is a non-profit organisation (registered under Section 21 of the Companies Act) established in 1997. The organization functions nationally, has service points in 8 provinces and is expanding internationally.

Khulisa has forged partnerships with local and international NGOs as well as with the following government departments: Correctional Services, Education, Foreign Affairs, Health, Justice, Social Development, Community Safety, Housing and Labour.

The organisation is in the process of being SETA accredited.

Khulisa’s performance is monitored using a system that provides statistical information, trend analysis and impact analysis and assists in predicting future outcomes.

### What is Diversion?

Diversion is a process of channelling children away from the formal court system to programmes that are reintegrative. Diversion happens when a child acknowledges responsibility for the act and both they and their respective parents or guardians agree to go the Diversion route. Diversion allows a child to avoid the stigmatising and often brutalising effects of the criminal justice system as well as affording the child the opportunity to avoid a criminal record. Diversion in essence teaches children to be responsible for their actions and teaches them the life skills to avoid further trouble. Diversion is very closely linked to the concept of restorative justice. Restorative justice is about offenders making amends for what they have done and trying to heal relationships between offenders and their victims, families and communities.



## Khulisa and Diversion

Khulisa was given seed funding by USAID who were looking to work with NGO's to implement Diversion. The pilot project was implemented in Alexandra. An external evaluation was conducted and some of the results can be viewed with the key findings. The Diversion programme was then piloted in Newcastle (KZN Midlands) and was extensively rolled out throughout the Natal province as it started showing positive results.

The "Positively Cool" Diversion Programme is a life skills programme incorporating a number of essential skills necessary for the effective management of a child's life. As the bill has adapted and changed so has the need for the organisations thinking on the implementation of the programme. Khulisa is thus in the process of offering a range of other Diversion options to meet the needs of the Child Justice Bill and offer the justice system a range of options when they are considering Diversion.

The "Positively Cool" Diversion has also been recently updated to ensure topics and activities are relevant and realistic to the children Khulisa is working with. Added to the "Positively Cool" Diversion are two other programmes dealing with sexual offences and offences that are violent and aggressive – both of which are in pilot stage currently. These forms of crime are very serious in nature and more often than not there are specific reasons why children commit these crimes, with these programmes we want to ensure these reasons are dealt with and children understand the seriousness of what they have committed.

## Diversion Options Offered by Khulisa

### **"Being Positively Cool" – Junior "Mini" Diversion Programme:**

8 weeks, for youth aged 8 – 13

### **"Being Positively Cool" – Senior "Mini" Diversion Programme:**

8 weeks, for youth aged 14-18 who have committed less serious offences

### **"Being Positively Cool" – Senior Diversion Programme:**

16 weeks, for youth aged 14-18 who have committed more serious offences

### **"Facing Your Shadow – Sexual Diversion Programme:**

16 weeks programme for youth aged 14-18 who have committed a sexual offence

### **"Silence the Violence" – Violent and Aggressive Behaviour Diversion**

**Programme:** 10 week programme for youth aged 14 – 18 who have committed an offence that is violent in nature



### **Diversion Orders including:**

- Oral/Written Apology
- Reporting Order
- Supervision and Guidance
- School Order
- Family Time Order
- Positive Peer Association
- Symbolic Restitution
- Community Service
- Family Group Conferencing
- VOM

### **Outcomes**

- Each programme will include one or more of the following outcomes:
- Development of self awareness
- Development of self management skills
- Building self esteem and self image
- Replace negative behaviour with positive behaviour
- Understanding the impact of behaviour on self and other people
- Rebuilding of damaged relationships in the community
- Empowering self in peer relationships

### **Target Audiences**

Children aged 8 – 18 who have committed a Category 1 or 2 offences and have been approved by the court for diversion to a community programme. The programmes also include at-risk children who are referred by schools, social workers, and family or community members.

### **Case Study**

Sipho Chabalala a Divertee from Newcastle, KwaZulu Natal says, “I was caught stealing a box of stock cubes from a supermarket and soon found myself in a police station in town, charged with theft and the possibility of a criminal record. I was so angry at my helplessness and poverty. Rather than be sentenced, I was assigned to a social worker who enrolled me into Khulisa’s Diversion programme. That facilitator gave me personal attention and taught me about how to handle life. Soon my problems changed into opportunities. Now I *want* to plan my day. I feel so alive.”