



W4C 2018/2019 IN A YEAR...

BY FUSING THE RUSH OF SURFING WITH EVIDENCE-BASED MIND/BODY THERAPY, WAVES FOR CHANGE (W4C) PROVIDES A CHILD-FRIENDLY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE TO VULNERABLE AND DIFFERENTLY-ABLED YOUTH LIVING IN UNDER-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND LIBERIA. THROUGH ACCESS TO SAFE SPACES, CARING, CONSISTENT MENTORS, AND PROVISION OF WEEKLY SURF THERAPY SESSIONS, W4C GIVES CHILDREN SKILLS TO COPE WITH STRESS, REGULATE BEHAVIOUR, BUILD HEALING RELATIONSHIPS, AND MAKE POSITIVE LIFE CHOICES.



YEAR AT A GLANCE

It's been another fantastic year at Waves for Change. If I think back to our humble beginnings, working with a handful of young people out the back of a trailer in Masiphumelele Township, 2018 takes on a greater significance. We've spent a year increasing our evidence base, deepening our understanding about why Surf Therapy works, and working with local and provincial government to help ever more vulnerable young people access our programmes. In South Africa today, children on the Autism Spectrum can experience Surf Therapy as part of their school day. Young people in out-patient programmes and young people coming into conflict with the law can access our programmes through referrals. This is a major step towards integrating Surf Therapy to health and education interventions in South Africa.

As we started understanding what makes Surf Therapy work, we began to share our learnings and programmes with more and more people. 2018 was the year we reached beyond South Africa. We did this by sharing. We know that connection to consistent caring adults and safe spaces are key if children growing up in and around violence are to fully experience childhood. We know that mastering challenging tasks like surfing transforms the way we feel about ourselves and is vital for cognitive and emotional development. As we've learnt, we've designed innovative new activities that are proven to help children understand and control their emotions in times of crisis.

We now have 48 surf mentors delivering Surf Therapy to over 1,500 children per week across South Africa and Liberia. As we shared our practice, so we seeded a brand new global initiative: The Wave Alliance. The Wave Alliance provides passionate people with the training, equipment and mentoring they need to bring the power of evidence-based Surf Therapy to their home coastlines. Surf Therapy now exists in Ghana, Liberia, Somalia, Trinidad, Peru, Costa Rica and Argentina. We have a lot to share, and we can't wait to keep sharing into 2019 and beyond!

We hope you'll keep following us on our journey... Thank you!

Tim Conibear

Founding Director/CEO



WHY SURF THERAPY?

Waves for Change works with various universities to understand how exposure to violence changes the way our bodies work, and how surf therapy helps us heal. We work in communities where access to preventative healthcare is inaccessible or unaffordable. We are finding ways to make therapy more accessible and more child friendly.

OUR APPROACH

THE CHALLENGE

Young people exposed to repeat stressful events, who lack supportive adults, feel negatively about themselves and adopt challenging behaviour patterns, reducing life chances.

W4C kids experience up to 8 traumatic events per year (USA is 5 per lifetime)

Depression is the #1 cause of illness and disability in youth worldwide (WHO)

REPEAT STRESSFUL
EVENTS

ABSENT CAREGIVER

PSYCHOLOGICAL
CHALLENGE



**Risk behaviour,
decreased life chances,
and social cost**

THE SOLUTION

Connect youth to caring adults, provide opportunities to succeed at challenging tasks and learn new coping skills.

SAFE SPACE

CARING ADULT

SURF THERAPY



**Positive self-identities,
adopt pro-social behaviour
patterns, emotional
stability, and autonomy**

92% of our participants say they feel happier and more confident.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SURF THERAPY?

HERE ARE OUR FIVE KEY PILLARS OF SURF THERAPY:

7 years of research has helped us design a programme that covers the key needs of young people experiencing trauma.

Connection to consistent adult support

Access to challenging new tasks

Access to a safe space

W4C teachable moments/psych-education

Connection to new opportunities, training, and employment



BANANAS CULTURE

At Waves for Change our children's behaviour is guided by our bananas culture, which means we protect, respect, and communicate. By having a culture, we create a psychologically safe space and sense of belonging, which is vital to healthy mental development and building resilience!

▼ RESPECT

▼ PROTECT

▼ COMMUNICATE



REFERRAL IN



```
graph TD; A[REFERRAL IN] --> B[12 MONTH SURF THERAPY COURSE]; B --> C[GRADUATE TO WEEKEND SURF CLUB]; C --> D[APPLY FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP & LIFESAVING TRAINING]; D --> E[APPLY FOR COACH LEARNERSHIP]; E --> A;
```

W4C PROGRAMME FLOW

We understand the importance of safe spaces and belonging in the healing process. The Waves for Change pathway helps young people grow up through Waves for Change .

**APPLY FOR COACH
LEARNERSHIP**

**12 MONTH SURF
THERAPY COURSE**

**APPLY FOR YOUTH
LEADERSHIP &
LIFESAVING TRAINING**

**GRADUATE TO
WEEKEND SURF CLUB**

SOUTH AFRICA

- 1,092 children reached through weekly Surf Therapy
- 435 children reached through weekend surf clubs



LIBERIA

- 85 children reached through weekly Surf Therapy
- 38 children reached through weekend surf clubs



2018 REACH:

During 2018, we reached an excess of 1500 children (aged 11 to 16) across all 6 our programme sites;

Of which overall 39% (585 children) were female.

W4C SURF THERAPY: THE FIVE PILLARS

Through active engagement with a range of sport for development organisations, a range of international surf therapy programmes, and numerous tertiary academic institutions, we have tried and tested five key pillars needed to improve mental health, which subsequently underpin our surf therapy programme.

This report provides an overview of how we performed in 2018, on delivering quality surf therapy programmes to the most vulnerable children, with reference to the five key pillars of our service...





PILLAR 1: CONNECTION TO CONSISTENT ADULT SUPPORT



At W4C, we know that when adults care for children and make them feel safe, it can boost their psychological safety, self-worth and sense of belonging. Caring surf mentors use their time in the water with children to accelerate the formation of trust and show them what it feels like when they are really protected and respected.

2018 evidence that children at W4C felt connected to their surf mentors:

- ✔ 84% of children reported coaches show them what good behaviour is
- ✔ 76% of children reported their coaches listen to them, when they need someone to talk to
- ✔ 80% of children reported they feel they can share their feelings with their coaches

W4C surf mentors are young people aged 18 to 26, who come from the same communities as the children in our programme.

2018 Caring Adult Stats:

45 Surf Mentors (aged 18 to 25) trained (40% female)

Qualifications in Surf Coaching, First Aid, Life Saving, Trauma Therapy, Child Protection, Monitoring and Evaluation, Youth Leadership (YES), NLP

Weekly debriefs with Child Psychologist

At W4C, we provide children with a unique opportunity to experience something fun, new and challenging. We've tailored the learn to surf experience into interactive games. Children work together to overcome the many challenges thrown at them by the ocean and its waves.



PILLAR 2: ACCESS TO A CHALLENGING NEW TASK



Surfing is difficult. When youth succeed at a new task, it is a big success. When mentors and peers celebrate this, it can improve the esteem, confidence and self image of a child. While we learn to surf, we learn from failure in a healthy way; we also learn to name, cope with and master new emotions. Waves for Change mentors witness and celebrate the success of their surfers, and inform the parents and teachers, which increases and improves the support systems for the child.

Access to a consistent, safe space promotes a feeling of psychological safety. W4C mentors create a supportive environment where surfers practice and learn new behaviours, form healthy relationships, build self-confidence, and have lots of fun!



PILLAR 3: ACCESS TO A SAFE SPACE

A W4C, 'safe space' is not only a physical safe space, but more importantly, an emotional safe space... At every W4C site, we celebrate our successes together and can feel free to share our emotions and experiences, the good and the bad.

Breaking into smaller groups provides a platform where each child's voice and feelings can be heard

Evidence that children felt safe at W4C:

- ✔ When comparing children who just joined W4C and children who have been with W4C for 6+ months, 79% reported they never speak to someone when they are upset; while 81% of those in the W4C programme reported they always or sometimes speak to someone about their feelings
- ✔ Similarly, while less than half (43%) of new children reported feeling safe at the beach; 94% of children (after 6+months at W4C) reported they felt safe at the beach



PILLAR 4: WAVES FOR CHANGE TEACHABLE MOMENT

The Waves for Change curriculum uses games and activities to help youth build supportive friendships and learn new skills to cope with emotions like stress, anxiety, and fear. Surfers learn coping strategies such as breathing exercises, meditation and mindfulness techniques. The beach provides a space where surfers can practice and master these behaviours together.

Evidence that children benefited from the W4C curriculum:

Participants gaining new ways to deal with traumatic events:

93% children reported they have learnt new ways to calm down when something bad happens to them; and

Participants who report improved feelings of happiness, hope, confidence and self-esteem:

96% liked themselves more since joining W4C.

Participants who report decreased involvement in anti-social or violent behaviour:

77% reported they have learnt to not always get angry quick or easy.



PILLAR 5: CONNECTION TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Once surfers complete their 12 month Surf Therapy course, Waves for Change creates access to surf clubs, lifesaving clubs, and ongoing training which helps integrate youth new peer groups and maintain the vital new skills and relationships forged through W4C.

In 2018, an excess of 500 children accessed ongoing and new opportunities, after completing 12 months of Surf Therapy at W4C:

- ✔ Our surf clubs were the largest in their kind in respectively S.A. (with 435 children) and Liberia (with 38 children)
- ✔ 20 children participated in various surfing contests
- ✔ 30 children qualified as Nippers; with 5 competing at the National Champs
- ✔ 5 children obtained their full-time lifeguard qualifications



MEET ANNELISSA

Annelissa Mholi (25) joined W4C in 2017 as a junior mentor and has been working as a senior mentor at our Khayelitsha site since 2018. Annelissa's passion for children is evident in the way she works with our children. Annelissa's hunger to develop as an individual has driven her to take on more responsibilities and leadership in the organisation. Annelissa has since 2018 been a Peer Youth Researcher at W4C; which, in addition to her senior mentor role, involves monitoring and evaluation tasks, where she assist with collecting data from our children, to help inform our service, based on children's voices. **"The ocean accepts me as I am."**

MEET ALICE



Harper's (Liberia) first female surf coach! Alice Wesseh (28) joined W4C in 2017.

MEET MELREEN

Melreen de Villiers (27) joined W4C in 2015 as a volunteer and worked her way up to a senior coach in 2017. In 2018, Melreen was appointed at W4C as our Monitoring Officer. During her journey at W4C, Mel completed her Child & Youth Care, as well as Extended Education Practitioner qualifications. As a top performer in the latter, Mel will be representing W4C at the Rutgers University Learning Tour in Newark, USA, in September 2019. **"Surfing takes my mind off stress or anger. It makes me feel I can overcome whatever difficulties I face."**

SURF MENTOR TOP STORIES



MEET YANGA

Yanga Mpopoma (29) joined W4C in 2010 as a participant, making his way through our 12-month surf therapy programme; whereafter he actively participated in our weekend surf clubs. In 2014, Yanga continued his journey at W4C as a junior surf mentor and earned his senior spot in the team in 2015. Yanga was a consistent, caring mentor to children at W4C and we didn't want to let him go...but end-2018, Yanga was employed at Lifestyle Surf Shop as a surf coach and is now one of their most successful staff!

"When I was at school, I was thinking about what I can do to be the best I can be in the future and always dreamt big about how I can change my life to be better. When I joined W4C, every wave that I caught became a part of the story of my life. I always set my goals by the waves that I caught; with every wave I took I remembered that I can be the best through the W4C hands. I am grateful for everything they taught me, like the bananas culture (protect, respect and communicate), and all the skills and qualifications they gave me that I can use in my future, like lifesaving, surf coaching and first aid. I will always remember W4C, because they are like my family; when I cry, you wipe my tears and when I am happy, you are happy."

MEET JODINE

Jodine Siegelaar (27) joined W4C as a junior surf mentor and earned her senior stripes in 2015. Being a natural born leader, Jodine took on extra responsibilities as a senior coach, such as taking ownership of the surf club programme at our Muizenberg site. But Jodine always had bigger dreams and goals for herself...she knew she wanted to give back to her community and protect the most vulnerable. In 2019, Jodine made her move and took up a learnership at the South African Police Service, where she aims to build her career.

When Jodine describes her first wave, it sounds more like a love story than a replay of an athletic sport. "I feel lighter when I am surfing. It makes me so crazy happy to catch that big wave,"



CHILD PARTICIPANT TOP QUOTES

"I come to surf because I know my coach will be here, and she will look after me and show me how to be bananas to my friends."

"My power object helps me calm down. When I wear it or touch it then I think of being at surfing and I feel happy"

"I used to fight a lot at school. Nobody used to like me. But now since I've been a surfer at W4C, I learnt about being BANANAS and I fight less with people. Now my friends at school like me more."



"Sometimes my mom says I must stay home to look after my little brother, even though my other brother can go play in the street with his friends whenever. Because I'm the girl, I must do things at home before I play or do sport. But at surfing, I can play, and have fun, and do what I want to do."

"When I'm at surfing, I can do things I never thought I could do. No one else in my family surfs, but I surf, and that makes me feel special!"

TOP STORIES:

NEW HOUT BAY SITE

In February 2018 we launched a new Surf Therapy programme in Hout Bay, in partnership with SA Pro Surfer Frank Solomon and the Sentinel Ocean Alliance. Based from the Sentinel Ocean Alliance Centre on Hout Bay Beach, four W4C Surf Mentors have launched twice weekly Surf Therapy programmes. This will become 5 days weekly from July 2019. We're stoked to connect more and more communities to the power of Surf Therapy.



MORE INCLUSIVE SURF THERAPY

Teacher observations of out-of-school youth who participated at W4C included:

Increased social connectedness

Increased sense of belonging

Experienced something different and challenging

Increased sense of mastery and feeling
proud of themselves

Increased sense of ownership and independence

In 2018 we broadened and diversified our target population to make our services more inclusive and reach vulnerable children that need our services the most.

Our specialised morning programmes reached an excess of 100 children on the Autism Spectrum, children referred from health care institutions, as well as children who have been expelled from school and referred to W4C as part of an initiative to re-engage them in the education space.



Evidence that children benefited from the W4C curriculum:

"Thank you for giving my child the opportunity to be part of your program. There is quite some improvement in the way he does things. I noticed now he wants to be part of his peers. There were boys his age playing street football the other day, and to my surprise he went and kicked the ball with them, whereas before he would just let the ball roll over and not help them out. Also his speech has improved and he likes to speak English a lot!"
- Parent of participant with ASD

OUR EVIDENCE

We continue to grow the evidence base of Surf Therapy! In 2018, we completed three studies looking at the experiences of children in our surf therapy programme. Here's what we found:

Surf therapy and children on the Autism Spectrum

After completing a pilot surf therapy programme with children with ASD, initial observations of the unique benefits of the programme for this group of children included:

- More confidence;
- Improved social interaction and bonding with both peers and adults;
- An increase in communication initiation; and
- Increased verbal output

Unintended outcomes of the pilot programme on surf mentos included increased understanding and decreased stigmatisation of mental illness and autism

Surf therapy and gender

At W4C it is important to not only make surf therapy accessible for girl children, but ensuring they have a good and valuable experience during their journey with us. In 2018, we worked with USAID and Making Scents to research how we can make our service more gender-responsive. Our findings included:

- Surf mentors, children, teachers and parents held negative gender norms & stereotypes (e.g. the beach isn't safe for girls and surfing is mainly for boys), creating barriers for inclusion
- Gender-sensitisation training for coaches increased awareness and gender-responsive surf therapy
- Increased gender-responsive surf therapy resulted in decreased girl drop-out rates & increased awareness of positive gender norms amongst both boys and girls

Surf therapy short term outcomes

Using pre and post tests, over a 6-month period, we compared children in W4C's programme and children on a waiting list. Our quasi-experiment produced the following statistically significant outcomes on the mental health of our participants:

- Improved feelings of happiness and feeling good about themselves;
- Reduced fighting and violent behaviour; and
- Of those children who associated themselves with a gang before entering the W4C programme, most state they didn't belong with a gang after the programme.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

In 2019, we will be working with nearly 1,800 children (1,200 in Surf Therapy and 600 in Surf Clubs) across all our programme sites in S.A. and Liberia

Over the next 5 years, our aim is to deepen the impact of our work across our existing 5 sites in the Western and Eastern Cape. We will develop and strengthen our community referral systems opening access to even more vulnerable children and youth. We will also increase the training and mentoring offered to our coaches.

Two of our main programmatic focus areas are:

Cost effective, community based support for the most vulnerable children:

W4C are partnering with hospitals and trauma units within the communities who are now referring children that are either on a waiting list or have been seen by clinical professionals after experiencing serious abuse or trauma; and

Making Surf Therapy inclusive:

W4C currently provide 120 children with **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** with weekly Surf Therapy. Through an adapted curriculum, W4C support children to integrate coping strategies into their lives, practice socially appropriate behaviour and promote physical activity. Over the next strategic period, W4C aims to make sites inclusive through physical adaptations, such as integrating visuals and routines that promote meaningful participation of this group, and specialist training so our team are equipped to support children with Autism to become independent young people and reach their potential.



OUR 2 BIG RESEARCH PROJECTS IN 2019 INCLUDE:

- In partnership with The New School university in New York, we are using Heart Rate Variability to assess the impact of trauma on children's bodies, and how surf therapy may help children overcome the effects of trauma and adversity
- In partnership with the University of Cape Town, we are diving deeper into the unique benefits of surf therapy on children with Autism, while learning how to adapt our programme to ensure it speaks to the specific needs of these and other neuro-diverse children

WHAT WE NEED TO RUN A W4C SITE:

SURFBOARDS:

EACH SITE NEEDS 30 SOFT-BOARDS & 20 HARD-BOARDS



TRANSPORT:

GETS KIDS SAFELY TO THE BEACH AND ALLOWS COACHES TO CONDUCT HOME VISITS



COACHES:

1 COACH PER 8 KIDS, TRAINED AS SURF COACHES, LIFE GUARDS, CHILD CARE WORKERS



WETSUITS:

EACH SITE NEEDS 60 WETSUITS



FOOD:

EACH SURFER RECEIVES A NUTRITIONAL MEAL



MANAGERS:

1 MANAGER PER SITE





CONSIDER SUPPORTING US

GET A KID SURFING AND
PROVIDE SURF THERAPY

Cost per child, per programme: 2,000 ZAR

EQUIP A SITE OR SPONSOR
A KEY COST

Site operation each year: approx 900,000 ZAR

CREATE A JOB:
HELP TRAIN & EMPLOY COACHES

Junior Coach stipend, per month: 2,500 ZAR

2018/2019 FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



2018/2019 FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



PEPFAR
A U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

YOUTH POWER
LEARNING



And thank you to our photographers: Nic Bothma, Tao Farren-Hefer, Marike Herselman, Jamie Hancock