



TOP LEARNERS

2021 Q1 REPORT



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Executive Summary

Our Top Learner Project was a huge success in 2020, despite the unprecedented challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The academic year officially ended in February 2021 and our students achieved a pass-rate over 92%.

Quick Highlights



- Our High School Team has already visited 40 high schools and created v1 of our 2021 high school database.
- We have moved 22 students into our Masi Houses of Excellence; each of which is equipped to be as covid-safe as possible.
- We have assisted hundreds of students with registering and navigating the new covid-19 enrollment protocols.

Our Top Learner project is off to a great start in 2021.

Our high school team has already visited 40 high schools, speaking to Grade 12 classes about the year ahead and what it will take to make it to tertiary.

During that process, we identify every single learner that, based on their academic results, could qualify to go to university. We then buy study guides, develop customised study packs of old exams and memos and prepare student profiles to enable us to help apply to universities and bursaries across the country on their behalf.

This year we have appointed a full-time staff member to look after our rural area high schools as we deepen our work in those communities and expand assistance outside of the city. Needless to say, the need is often much greater in these schools.

We have already compiled a database with over 292 Grade 12 learners that could potentially attend university in 2022 and will be working tirelessly to help them get there.

On the university front, our team has been working overtime to help students get registered for studies this year. With the academic year postponed due to covid and many courses being transitioned to

online learning, the process is confusing for many students.

We began by hosting orientations in town for two cohorts of students: 1. Those traveling to other cities and 2. Those studying locally at Nelson Mandela University.

Both groups were introduced to their student mentors, provided stipends to help get their year started and given guidance about how to travel, how to find accommodation and how to get registered.

It is a particularly intimidating process for our 1st years traveling to other cities, many for the first time in their lives. Having our student mentors at their side and being introduced to other students attending the same institutions makes a huge difference. Many are also comforted by the fact that senior Masi students are on their respective campuses and always available to help.

Locally, we have identified many of our most impoverished students - those who live 10 to a home, those in wooden shacks, those who are orphaned - and moved them into our Masi Houses of Excellence. Each of these students will be provided with a safe, inspiring and supportive environment from which to concentrate on their studies.

Together, we are creating a generation of graduates empowered to uplift their own families, solve their own community's problems and serve as role models to other children. Thank you for making this all possible.

“Masinyusane has become a beacon of hope to the schooling community.”

**~ Principal Sandi
Cingani High School**

Feature Story

Ethel Mavaivai

Ethel was looking for a job as a house maid when Masinyusane stepped in to send her to university and pursue her dreams.



[Click HERE to watch video](#)

If link doesn't work in your PDF viewer, please click here -> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tOS9Xl094M&t=150s>

Project in NUMBERS



208

University
Graduates



40

Impoverished High
Schools

292

High School Learners

877

University Students
Across the Country



Project in NUMBERS

93%
2021 Pass-Rate



22
Students in
Masi Houses



250+
Students On Stipends



51
Students
from Rural
Areas

HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORT

www.raisesouthafrica.org



**MASI
NYUSANE**

Empowering Through Education

High School Intervention

We are investing in ensuring EVERY qualifying learner from the 33 Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) township and 7 rural high schools receives ACCESS to university.

Masinyusane's High School team has been visiting all of our high schools, meeting the matrics, collecting their information and explaining the steps we will take together to get as many of them as possible admission and funding for university in 2022.

We have already compiled our 2022 database and are developing our student profiles. The team is also busy creating customised study packs and distributing study guides to learners.

Over the next six months, we will submit thousands of applications on behalf of these learners, helping them navigate the costly and confusing process.

The intervention changes the lives of hundreds of students. Many will gain university acceptance whereas without us they would not have (application rates were 14% prior to Masi intervention, 80%+ after). Others will have the opportunity to travel/live/study outside of Port Elizabeth (most only apply locally). Others will have the option to choose from variety of potential fields of study.

Together, we will more than double the number of 2021 Grade 12s from these schools that obtain admission and funding to university for 2022. You will have drastically changed the trajectory of their lives.



Number of High Schools 40

Number of Top Learners Identified 292

Number of Study Packs Distributed TBD

Number of University Applications Submitted TBD

Percent of Financial Aid Applications Submitted TBD

Number of Bursary Applications Submitted TBD

HELPING HIGH SCHOOLERS get into university

You have drastically increased our ability to enroll students at other universities, giving learners from our townships the opportunity to travel, live in another city and access other universities.

Masinyusane's high school team makes an enormous effort to unlock access to other universities for our learners. We apply (and pay fees for) up to five universities for each learner. This equates to thousands of applications each year.

However, even after being accepted, the road to enrolling at a university outside of Port Elizabeth can be difficult.

Some institutions require you to be present before assigning accommodation. One must show up in another city and accommodate themselves for a few days until the housing lists are sorted out

Needless to say, this is an impossible expense for our students. This year, we once again bought bus tickets, paid for hostels, and provided travel stipends to all of our students.

There is no way they would be there without us.

24 Students at
University of
Witwatersrand

52 Students
at Rhodes
University

20 Students at
Cape
Peninsula
University

46 Students at
University of
Cape Town

59 Students at
University of
Johannesburg

77 Students at
University of
Western
Cape

19 Students at
Pretoria
University

21 Students at
Walter Sisulu
University

2021 orientation

We hosted two orientations this year.

There is always a lot of anxiety and uncertainty on behalf of our first year students to begin the year.

How will they get to their university? Where will they live? How do they register? What if they are on a waiting list? What if they have no bus fare? Which course should they choose?

Our orientations answer all of those questions and more. We host two separate sessions, one for those

leaving Port Elizabeth and one for those studying locally.

Students get to meet our alumni students at other universities, form WhatsApp groups with those attending the same university as themselves and make travel plans together.

Our high achieving older students share their secrets and offer advice. While our own team of mentors answers dozens of questions and explains Masinyusane's robust support system.





UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

University support

The 2021 year continues to consist predominantly of online learning. Though engineers and science students use the labs.

It goes without say that our students are at an enormous disadvantage when it comes to e-learning. They live in crowded households without adequate study space. Many have lost family members due to covid, while others had breadwinners lose their jobs.

We continue to provide an enormous amount of support to the students. Our mentors were in contact with them every week. Our team distributes food parcels, food vouchers and monthly stipends to hundreds of them. We also purchase laptops, data and textbooks when needed.

Importantly, we continued to keep our Masi Houses of Excellence open. These were safe havens for our most impoverished students and are the difference between these students making it through the year

and not doing so.

The unique challenges of covid have made tutoring, study groups and individual support very difficult. It has also become unsafe to host our typical personal development and skills workshops and leadership trainings. We all remain hopeful that a vaccine is on the way and those 'extras' can resume.

In the meantime, our mentors are putting extra effort into supporting the students most affected by the pandemic. South Africa's has some of the highest covid-related death rates and job loss numbers in the world. The isolation everyone feels compounds this difficulty.

In times like this, we are especially grateful for our student mentors, such as Fiks, and the love, energy and support they bring into our students lives.



Masinyusane houses of excellence

Masinyusane is providing housing to some of the most impoverished students in Port Elizabeth. Without this assistance, these students would be deemed as a high 'failure' risk due to living in abject poverty.

We have kept our Masinyusane Houses of Excellence open for our most impoverished students, though strict protocols are followed.

The students in the house come from informal settlements, live with 10+ people in a household and/or come from homes with severe challenges. They are the 'poorest' five percent of our entire cohort of students.

The house continues to provide the students with a safe, secure home next to campus. It includes study areas, free food, computers & internet access and daily mentoring from Masinyusane staff.

We have developed a strong culture of success, led by our senior students. This filters down each year into the first years and results in a group of supportive students that work hard, help one another and push each other to achieve.



Tuition

You are ensuring that finances do not get in the way of promising youth from Port Elizabeth's townships in obtaining their education. Despite the Free Education initiative, a handful of students fall through the cracks every year. Without your assistance, none of them would be in university today. The following are two stories of lives changed:



Shaza Qalela

Shaza, pictured to the left with Jim, is one of Masinyusane's most inspiring stories.

Born and raised in New Brighton, he used to study with Jim while in high school. He would go on to attend university at the University of Cape Town studying astrophysics.

When family tragedy struck, Shaza lost his funding. However, Masinyusane has him back in school as he pursues degrees in Astrophysics and Biology.

Shaza dreams of traveling to space and exploring the solar system for signs of microbial life. We are incredibly excited for his future and have no doubt he will blow us all away with his accomplishments.



Ethel Mavaivai

Featured in the video above, Ethel remains one of our most beloved students. Her humility and gratitude are infectious.

We include her in this section again to share that she has finished her coursework and begun her workplace studies.

Ethel's dream of becoming a scientist are being realised. Please take a moment to watch the video above to gain an appreciation of the incredible difference you are making in these students' lives.

"Thank you so much for everything you have done for me, you have brought hope in my life. You made me step my legs through the university gate. I will never forget you in my life. Thank you so much."

Mentoring & coaching

Masinyusane provides coaching and mentoring to all of our university students. We focus most time and energy on both first years and students failing their courses. This has become one of the most important aspects of the project during this Covid-19 pandemic.

The transition to first year of university is a difficult one. Our students went to high school in Xhosa speaking environments, at under-resourced schools, and were all the “big fish in a small pond.”

Once on campus, one can quickly become overwhelmed by the English medium, multi-cultural, fast-paced environment. No longer the smartest learner in the class, many of our students have their confidence shaken those first few months. This becomes even more pronounced if the March exams do not go well.

Our team works very hard to ensure we are boosting up our kids, helping them make the transition, and being there to listen when they need it the first 6 months. Our mentors have made the successful transition themselves and understand the “struggle”. While hard to measure, we often feel this support is among the most important that we can offer.



Sometimes all a failing student needs is to know that someone still believes in them. We do our best to intervene the second we realise a student is struggling. Always willing to pay for tutoring or counseling, we often find that the students simply need a little reassurance and someone to make an action plan with them to get back on track.

At other times, more serious intervention is needed. Many of our students come from very difficult backgrounds, many having suffered serious trauma in their upbringing. These ‘ghosts’ occasionally reveal themselves when one is in a stressful environment (such as university exams). Masinyusane works with a number of counselors to ensure that our students always have access to help when they need it.

The mentoring aspect of our programme has become twice as important given the emotional toll the pandemic is having on our students. We are lucky to have such a committed staff.

Masinyusane prides itself in going above and beyond for our students and the dedication of mentors such as Fiks (above) and Thuto (left) are perfect examples.

A photograph of a young Black man in a black graduation cap and gown, smiling broadly. He is wearing a white shirt and a patterned tie. A woman, likely his mother, is standing next to him, wearing a colorful, patterned headwrap and a matching top. She is also smiling. The background is a light-colored brick wall. A semi-transparent red diagonal line runs across the image from the top left to the bottom right. The word "GRADUATES" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the lower part of the image.

GRADUATES



Project graduates

Since launching our Scholarship Fund, **208** of our students graduated from university. Each graduation is special; a time of many emotions for all of us. Pride. Joy. Excitement.

The highlight of every year are our graduations. Unfortunately, covid has prevented us from hosting graduation parties in 2020 and that will likely be the case in 2021 again.

We are planning on hosting professional photo shoots this year for each of the graduates to try and recreate some of the magic they are missing out on. It feels petty to complain about a graduation ceremony while covid has caused such devastation

to so many, but want to do our best to appreciate the huge mountain each student has climbed in order to receive their diploma.

We are very excited to see the young stars enter corporate South Africa and prove themselves. While it's a difficult job environment, our graduates are resilient and many are finding ways of gaining experience.

We will keep all of you posted with the next phase in their journey.

This achievement seemed like an impossible dream not long ago. Thank you for helping to make those dreams a reality.





EMPLOYED & EMPOWERED

"I am so proud to be an Electrical Engineer at Engie Peaking Power Station.

It has been challenging, but I am learning so much.

Thank you to all the donors and to Masinyusane for helping me to work towards my dreams."

~Yonela Maqhashu

Employed graduates



Asanda Ngwendu
nurse in Sterkspruit



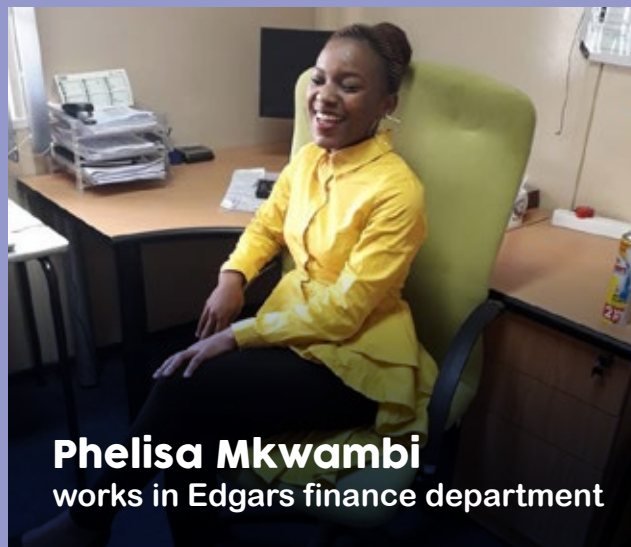
Viwe Xuba
teacher in the Eastern Cape



Thamie Mkhosana
economist at First National Bank



Siphethuxolo Ntsudwane
working at David Stuurman airport



Phelisa Mkwambi
works in Edgars finance department



Thulie Grootboom
works in accounts at the municipality



**You are helping
to build a generation
of leaders in the South
African townships.**

APPENDICES



Annexure A Implementation Plan Checklist

High School Top Learners		Status
1	Visit all 40 schools and identify Top Learners based on Grade 11 results (Jan – Mar)	Completed
2	Have all learners fill out detailed forms and develop our database (Jan – May)	Completed
3	Provide all learners with Masinyusane study packs, study guides, and previous exam papers (Jan-Mar)	Ongoing
4	Career guidance and assessment (May-Aug)	Not Yet
5	Distribution and assistance with completion of University application forms (July; using June results)	Not Yet
6	Paying of Application fees (July)	Not Yet
7	Distribution, assistance in obtaining documentation, and proper online submission for NSFAS applications (Sept-Oct)	Not Yet
8	Scanning and online data entry of forms for every student (Sept-Oct)	Not Yet
9	Working with admissions to ensure admission, change programmes applied for, and scheduling testing (Sept-Dec)	Not Yet
10	Identifying bursary-eligible learners and assisting with application process (Feb-Dec)	Not Yet
11	Reaching out to bursars and advocating on behalf of our kids (Feb-Dec)	Not Yet
12	Identification of learners most in need of housing assistance, including home visits (Feb-Dec)	Not Yet

All University Top Learners		Status
1	Host orientation for all first year students	Completed
2	Track results, academic performance, and maintain up-to-date database (monthly)	Completed
3	Intervening at the first sign that students are struggling (ongoing)	Ongoing
4	Distribution and management of taxi fares, welfare allowances (monthly)	Ongoing
5	Distribution of laptops/computers when available	Ongoing
6	Distribution of new and/or 2nd hand textbooks from partners	Ongoing
7	Home visits to learners who are under-performing (monthly)	Ongoing
8	Running/Outsourcing Leadership, Study Skills, and/or Personal Development workshops (monthly)	Not Yet
9	Work with University to develop systems and interventions that correlate with success (ongoing)	Ongoing
10	Developing a tutoring/mentorship programme	Not Yet

Masinyusane House of Excellence		Status
1	Identify 20 Top Learners for our Masinyusane Houses of Excellence (Feb)	Completed
2	Ensuring the House maintains a culture of hard work, excellence, and success (daily)	Ongoing
3	Providing mentorship, tutoring, and guidance to learners in house (daily)	Ongoing
4	Organise personal development workshops and guest visits to the house (monthly)	Not Yet
5	Organise monthly food deliveries to the House (monthly)	Ongoing

Appendix A High School Faces



Appendix B University Faces



517
Students at
Nelson Mandela
University

