



TOP LEARNERS

2020 Q4 REPORT

Table of Contents

University
Support



12

Executive
Summary



3

Graduates



17

Covid-19
Response



6

Employed &
Empowered



19

High
Schools



8

Appendices



21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Top Learner Project was a huge success in 2020, despite the unprecedented challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our high school initiative drastically increased access to university for our learners, while our university support structures enabled our students to achieve a 92.7% pass-rate!

Our Top Learner project continued to operate at near full capacity, despite the pandemic.

As detailed below, both our high school and university projects had been running throughout the pandemic. The project was on budget and we achieved all major goals and objectives.

Quick Highlights

- **Our High School Team submitted 1348 applications for university, NSFAS and bursaries.**
- **Our university students currently have a 93% pass-rate.**
- **Masi Houses are open and continue to be a life-saver for the most impoverished students.**

Universities all closed in March during the national lockdown, but were able to shift towards online learning in April. While each university's approach has varied, they are all pursuing an online e-learning approach.

The academic calendar has been bumped back by 3 months and will conclude in February 2021.

We have continued to operate our Masinyusane

Houses of Excellence, with students on a rotating schedule throughout the lockdown. The House is fully equipped and reorganized to ensure everyone's safety and health. We felt strongly that we had to continue to keep it open given the extreme poverty of some of our students.

The students will be living in the Houses throughout the holidays, ensuring they have a safe space to work and study during this academic extension.

The high schools all closed down in March with the nation-wide lockdown. However, the matrics were allowed to return in June. This had been, to say the least, chaotic.

With that said, our high school team was back in the schools during the first week of reopening and have been since. We have such close relationships with the high schools, and deadlines were approaching fast, so we wanted to make sure our matrics did not miss out on the opportunity to apply to universities and bursaries for 2021.

The team hit all of it's application goals and objectives this year, including submitting 1348 applications on behalf of the learners. This act alone will nearly double the number of matrics that attend university in 2021.

In addition to managing the entire application process for our high school learners, we have provided an enormous amount of food

assistance.

In direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdown, Masinyusane and our Project Unity partners have distributed over R3 million of food to our matric and university students. We have also handed over thousands of masks and hand sanitizers. Given the enormous pressure these matrics and university students are under, we are doing everything possible to ensure they can focus on their studies.

Regrettably, we have had a number of students lose loved ones to covid-19. This includes a girl in the Masi House of Excellence losing her mother. We are doing our best to provide the psychosocial support necessary to these students.

All in all, we are extremely proud of our team for persevering through a very difficult year. They put themselves at risk every day throughout the pandemic to ensure that we did everything possible to support our learners and students.

Finally, we offer a sincere 'thank you' to all of you for your continued investment into helping us build a generation of future leaders.

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

**~ Principal Sandi
Cingani High School**

Feature Story

Xabisa Gotyana

How hope, support & opportunity are helping Xabisa realise her dream and become a professional Engineer.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lizoZbQBJU&t=5s>

Project in Numbers

93%

Current
Pass-Rate

36

Township High
Schools

27

Students in Masi
Houses

165

University
Graduates

288

Students On
Stipends

299

High School
Learners

1348

University
Applications
Submitted

727

University
Students

COVID-19 SUPPORT



COVID-19 SUPPORT

With the support of a number of foundations and companies, Masinyusane launched a massive feeding project with Masifunde & United Through Sport.

The map to the right shows the scale of the project, reaching over 80 schools to date. We have been featured on eNCA news and in The Herald.

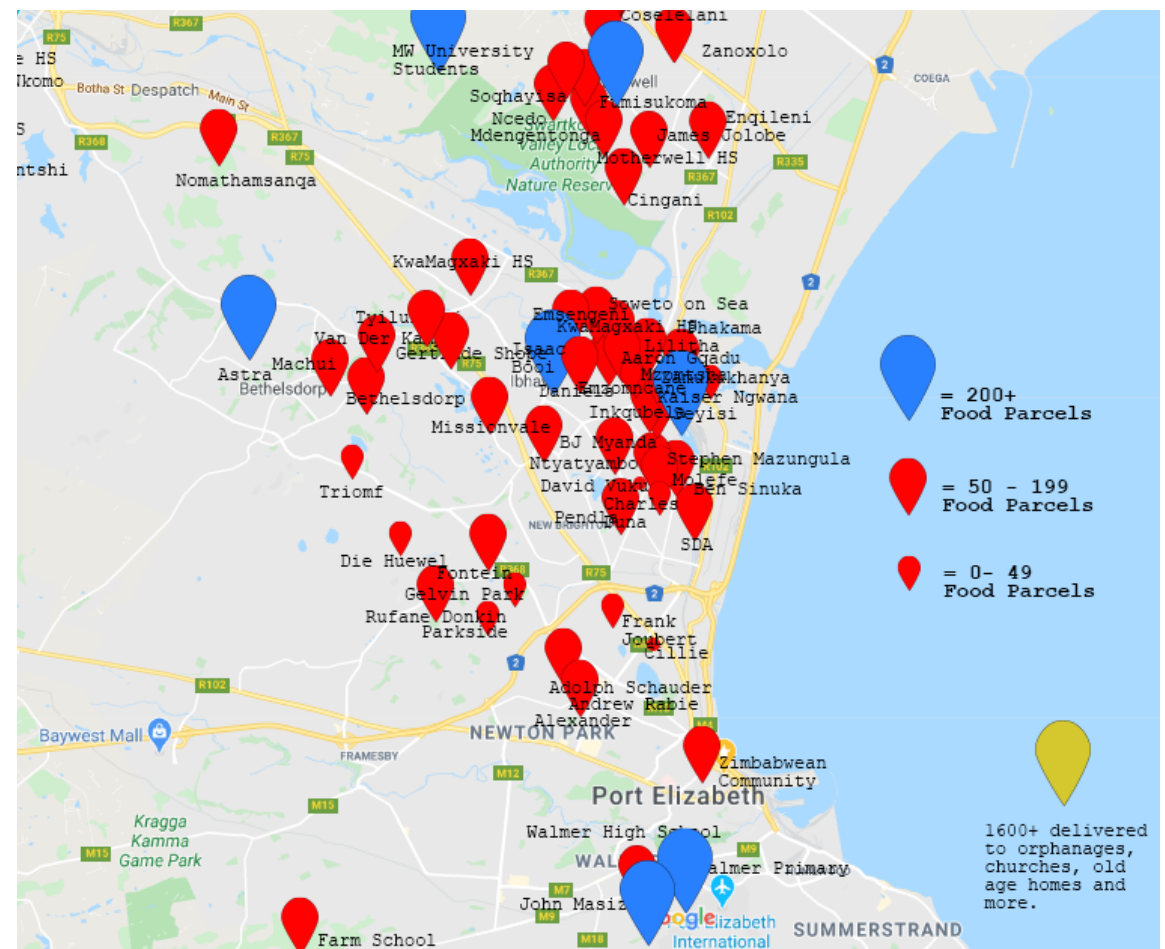
The schools cover the map of the city. Within those schools, we focused 25% of the food parcels on the poorest learners in Grades 8 - 11 and 75% on the matrics. In recognition of the herculean task of performing well in the face of a pandemic, we want to ensure that the matrics at least have nutrition in the stomachs.

“These families could not hold back their tears of joy due to excitement and gratefulness when they received them. They believed that those food parcels will make a huge difference at their homes.” ~ Principal Nolokwe

On the university front, Masinyusane distributed over R70,000 of food vouchers to our students. We have an extensive database of students' home information, in addition to the detailed reports from our team of mentors. Using that information, we allocated food vouchers from the local Motherwell Spar to the most impoverished families.

For high school students, we simply supplemented all of our visits with food parcels. So when our team visits a school to collect or distribute application forms, they are leaving a food parcel with a week's worth of food with each matric.

Finally, we continue to distribute thousands of masks and sanitizers to all of our students, learners and families.



HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORT



HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION

We are investing in ensuring EVERY qualifying learner from the 37 township 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 2021.

We have submitted 1035 applications to a variety of public institutions for these students. This includes filling in the entire form online, uploading their documents, triple checking everything and paying fees. It's a monumental task, especially given the challenges covid caused, including school closures and uncertainty among matrics.

But it will absolutely **change the lives** of many of the kids. 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.

We are also happy to report that we successfully submitted all NSFAS forms received, ensuring that each of these students receives funding next year.

In addition to managing and submitting applications at multiple universities, bursaries and NSFAS, our team is distributing study guides, food parcels and hosting motivational talks with learners. We are incredibly proud of the team's efforts during an extremely difficult year.

Number of High Schools	37
Number of Top Learners Identified	299
Number of Study Packs Distributed	289
Number of University Applications Submitted	1035
Percent of Financial Aid Applications Submitted	94%
Number of Bursary Applications Submitted	77



HELPING HIGH SCHOOLERS GET TO 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 housing. Therefore, you must show up in other city and accommodate yourself 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 a week in a hostel, and provided travel stipends to all of our students.

There is no way they would be there without us.

46 Students
at Rhodes
University

37 Students at
University of
Cape Town

16 Students at
Wits University

43 Students at
University of
Johannesburg

51 Students
University of
Western Cape

12 Students at
Cape Peninsula
University

14 Students
at Pretoria
University

22 Students at
Walter Sisulu
University

2020 ORIENTATION



The final step of our high school team's journey with their learners is to host our University Orientation days. In 2020, we hosted two.

There is always a lot of anxiety and uncertainty on behalf of our top matrics 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

We are investing in a generation of university graduates that will be empowered to uplift their own families, solve their own community's problems and serve as role models to other youth.

The Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing National Lockdown resulted in the universities closing for 2 months. Residences were closed and all students were sent home.

Six weeks into the lockdown, the universities had all decided to transition to online learning. This was chaotic, to put it mildly. Professors took drastically different approaches to their courses and many of our students struggled immensely with ill-prepared professors and instructors.

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 lost family members due to covid, while others had breadwinners lose jobs.

Despite these unprecedented challenges, our students managed to obtain an incredible 92.7% pass-rate.

On our side, we continued to provide an enormous amount of support to the students. Our mentors were in contact with them every week. We had been distributed food parcels, food vouchers and monthly stipends to hundreds of them. We purchased laptops and textbooks.

Importantly, we continued to keep our Masi Houses of Excellence open. These were safe havens for our most impoverished students and were literally the difference between the students making it through the year and not doing so.

All in all, the university students were lucky to be in a position to continue with their studies. Academically speaking, the pandemic has left them relatively unscathed in comparison to younger learners who cannot attend schools, workers who cannot attend work and other members of society who are locked down in their home.

With your support, we were able to ensure another outstanding performance by the students during a near impossible to imagine year.



MASINYUSANE HOUSE 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, even though campus is closed.

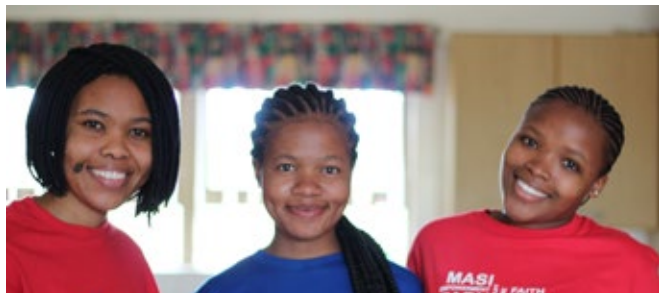
The students in the house come from informal settlements, live with 10+ people in a household and/or come from homes with severe challenges. They are the 'poorest' five percent of our entire cohort of students.

The odds of them succeed via the new e-learning pathway offered by the university was

simply not realistic.

We regret to share that the mother of one of these students has passed away from covid-19. It's been very difficult, but the other students have rallied around here with love and support.

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.



**27 Students
Sponsored by
You**

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:



Asanda Mrwali

Asanda is in her 2nd year of a Higher Certificate in Business Studies. Last year, she passed 80% of her classes, but wasn't allowed to continue into the Diploma programme without passing all of her modules.

She is an example of a student that often falls through the cracks, because despite passing 80% of her modules, NSFAS will not fund her for this year as she is repeating modules in a Higher Certificate Course.

You are ensuring that her education can continue and isn't derailed by an obscure policy.



Ethel Mavaivai

Ethel is in her 2nd year of a Diploma in Analytical Chemistry on a full Masi scholarship. She once again did outstanding with her studies, passing all of her classes!

The Masinyusane team loves Ethel, she is kind, hard-working and driven to succeed.

"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.

While the leadership workshops we run were transitioned to Zoom, we still managed to have all the students finish the course.

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.





GRADUATES

PROJECT GRADUATES



Since launching our Scholarship Fund, 165 of our students graduated from Nelson Mandela 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. This year, we were expecting to host graduation parties for our students once again. Unfortunately, all ceremonies were canceled due to the covid-19 pandemic.

Over the life of this project, we have seen 165 students graduate from Nelson Mandela University.

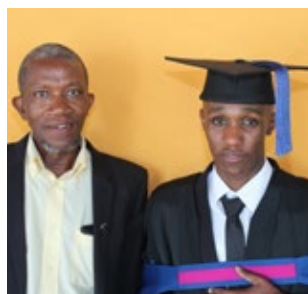
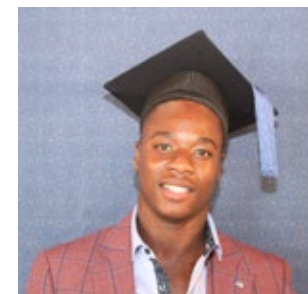
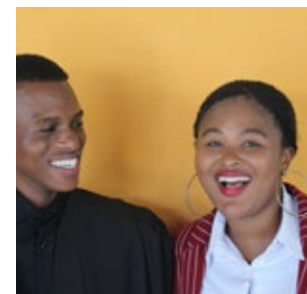
We will have to postpone those graduation celebrations and revisit in 2021 (or whenever

the pandemic allows).

We are very excited to see the young stars enter corporate South Africa and prove themselves.

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 is currently a nurse in Sterkspruit.



Viwe Xuba is currently a teacher in the Eastern Cape.



Thamie Mkhosana is an economist at First National Bank



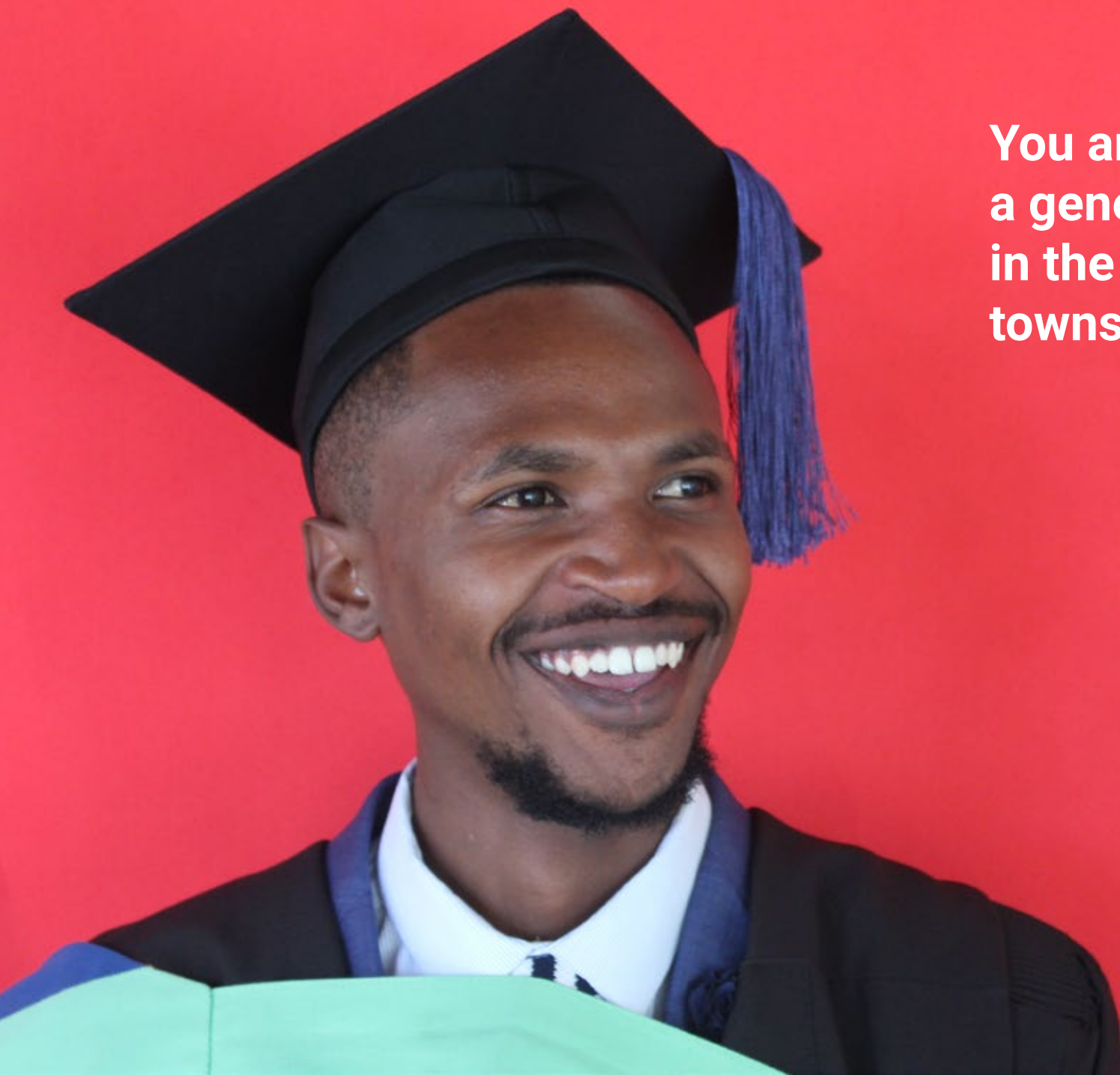
Siphethuxolo Ntsudwane is working at the Port Elizabeth airport



Phelisa Mkwambi works in the finance department at Edgars



Thulie Grootboom works as the municipality in the accounts department



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

ANNEXURE A: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN CHECKLIST

High School Top Learners	Status	All University Top Learners	Status
1. Visit all 35 schools and identify Top Learners based on Grade 11 results (Jan – Mar)	Completed	1. Host orientation for all first year students	Completed
2. Have all learners fill out detailed forms and develop our database (Jan – Mar)	Completed	2. Track results, academic performance, and maintain up-to-date database (monthly)	Completed
3. Provide all learners with Masinyusane study packs, study guides, and previous exam papers (Jan-Mar)	Completed	3. Intervening at the first sign that students are struggling (ongoing)	Completed
4. Career guidance and assessment (May)	Canceled (Covid-19)	4. Distribution and management of taxi fares, welfare allowances (monthly)	Completed
5. Distribution and assistance with completion of University application forms (July; using June results)	Completed	5. Distribution of laptops/computers when available	Completed
6. Paying of Application fees (July)	Completed	6. Distribution of new and/or 2nd hand textbooks from partners	Completed
7. Distribution, assistance in obtaining documentation, and proper online submission for NSFAS applications (Sept-Oct)	Completed	7. Home visits to learners who are under-performing (monthly)	Partial (Covid-19)
8. Scanning and online data entry of forms for every student (Sept-Oct)	Completed	8. Running/Outsourcing Leadership, Study Skills, and/or Personal Development workshops (monthly)	Completed
9. Working with admissions to ensure admission, change programmes applied for, and scheduling testing (Sept-Dec)	Completed	9. Work with University to develop systems and interventions that correlate with success (ongoing)	Completed
10. Identifying bursary-eligible learners and assisting with application process (Feb-Dec)	Completed	10. Developing a tutoring/mentorship programme	Partial (Covid-19)
11. Reaching out to bursars and advocating on behalf of our kids (Feb-Dec)	Completed		
12. Identification of learners most in need of housing assistance, including home visits (Feb-Dec)	Underway		
Bonus: Launch a massive covid-19 assistance project providing critical food, support and assistance to our schools, learners and students.	Completed		
		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)	Underway
		3. Providing mentorship, tutoring, and guidance to learners in house (daily)	Underway
		4. Organise personal development workshops and guest visits to the house (monthly)	Underway
		5. Organise monthly food deliveries to the House (monthly)	Underway

APPENDIX A: HIGH SCHOOL FACES



**291 High School
Learners**

APPENDIX B: UNIVERSITY FACES



447 Students at NMU