

TOP LEARNERS

2019 FINAL REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Mission: To create a generation of graduates empowered to lift their own families out of poverty, begin to solve their own community's problems and serve as role models to other youth.

Our Top Learner project was a huge success in 2019. With most of the results in, **the students currently have a 90% pass-rate in 2019, which are our best results ever!**

We had 551 students from the Port Elizabeth townships at university, with 386 studying locally at Nelson Mandela University. By far our largest numbers ever.

The Masinyusane House of Excellence continued to provide safe housing, and promote a culture of success, for the most impoverished students. We are perhaps most proud of this intervention as it ensures that even those living in abject poverty are being given a pathway out. **In 2019, 100% of the students in the house passed.**

The highlight of the year was celebrating the graduation of 68 of our students. It was a very special moment for everyone, given what a long hard journey it's been. We are very excited to see these young stars take the next step in their journey as they begin their professional careers.

Many have begun their first jobs and an entire new learning experience has started. Over the

course of 2020, we will share a bunch of their stories with you.

For the students currently studying, we provided a wealth of support and opportunities. We had over 200 students receiving monthly stipends to ensure they can get to campus every day, buy something to eat, and study with less of a financial burden hanging over their heads.

Our team of mentors worked with the students every day, with a strong focus on first years and those struggling academically.

On the high school front, our team continued to visit all 34 township high schools and work to ensure all of those students have access to university.

We have submitted 1016 applications to university on the learners behalf, paying fees where necessary, and are working to ensure they apply to more than one university.

We currently have 331 high school learners on the database and are working with the universities and funders to ensure as many as possible are in university next year.

We hope you are inspired by the stories below and look forward to creating many more together in the years to come.

You have made an enormous difference in these kids lives.

Thank you again for investing in them. We have no doubt they will continue to make us all proud.

Sincerely,

Jim & Fiks



Project in Numbers

90%

Pass-Rate
in 2019

34

Township
High Schools

21

Students in
Masi Houses

68

University
Graduates

204

Students On
Stipends

331

High School
Learners

83

Learners Receiving
Career Guidance

551

University
Students

GRADUATES



2019 GRADUATES



In 2019, 68 of our students graduated from Nelson Mandela University. It was a time of emotions for all of us. Pride. Joy. Excitement.

The highlight of every year are our graduations. This year, we celebrated the graduation of 68 of our students.

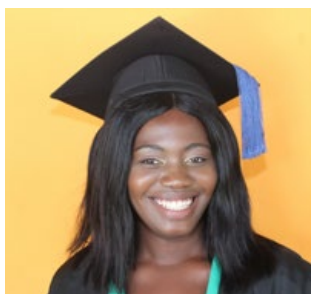
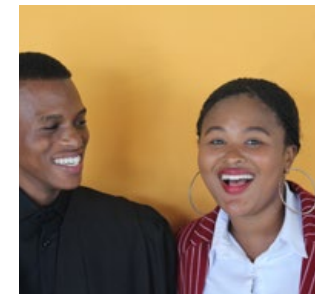
Their degrees ranged from Engineering to Psychology to Finance.

Masinyusane hosted graduation parties for each of the graduates families, including providing professional photography. We realized a few years ago that our students' families cannot afford to pay for graduation

photos, nor can they go out to a restaurant to celebrate. Given what a long journey it's been, and how big of a milestone this is for everybody, we wanted to ensure the day was extra special.

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

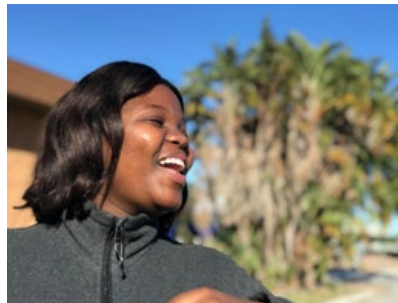
We will keep all of you posted with the next phase in their journey.



UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



UNIVERSITY FACES



**386 Students at
Nelson Mandela U.**

MASINYUSANE HOUSE OF EXCELLENCE



THE 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.

Masinyusane's House of Excellence exists to provide the most impoverished students in the city with an opportunity to succeed with their university studies.

The students in the house come from informal settlements, live with 10+ people in a household and/or come from homes with severe challenges.

The house provides 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. In 2019, Fiks lived in one Masi House while Jim lived in the other.

Most importantly, the house has a culture of success that the 1st years quickly realise and adopt.

In 2019, the pass-rate was 100%!



CHANGING LIVES

TUITION

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have given me hope for the future. And made my dream of becoming a teacher possible."

Khaya Klei

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 three stories of lives saved:



Ethel Mavaivai

Ethel graduated near the top of her matric class and easily qualified for university studies.

The problem? She is Zimbabwean. Which means she has zero access to funding via NSFAS or bursaries.

Her dreams of continuing her education would have come to an end were it not for you.

With your support, she is currently enrolled as a 1st year Analytical Chemistry student.



Khaya Klei

Khaya was a high achiever in high school and had big dreams. Unfortunately, he became very sick in his first year of university and had to take a gap year.

Despite being granted medical leave, NSFAS neglected to process his paper work correctly and he was financially excluded.

Thanks to you, Khaya is now back on track to becoming one of the much needed teachers for tomorrow's generation of children.



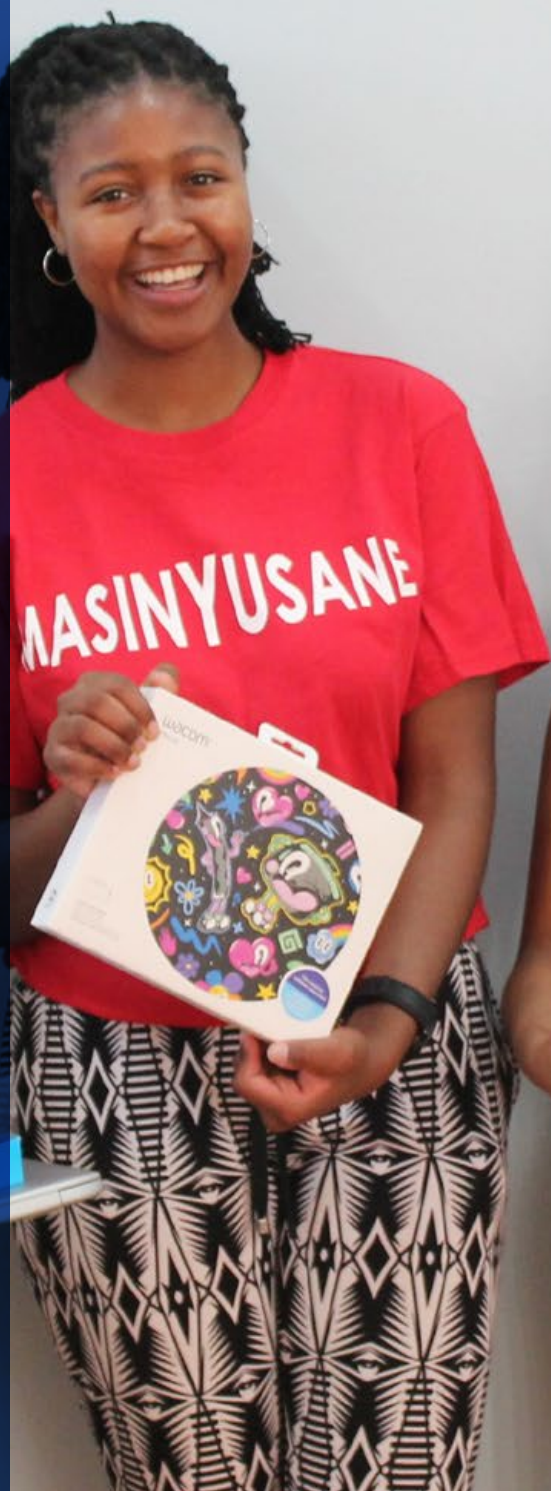
Asiphumze Ntabeni

Asiphumze realised within weeks that he had chosen the wrong course in 2017. Mechanical Engineering was not what he expected. However, financial aid does not let you change courses. You only have one opportunity.

We are now providing him with a second chance to study education.

With his energy and vibrant personality, we have no doubt he would an amazing teacher. We just hope he takes advantage of this incredible opportunity.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT



UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

Your generosity ensured that all of our students received the support they needed to succeed at University. With most studying from the townships, this support was critical in ensuring the students had the opportunity to focus on their books and not become overwhelmed by the stresses of poverty.

Bus Fare

Our top priority is ensuring our students are able to get to campus every day and attend classes without the burden of worrying about where today's bus fare money will come from. Most of our students have to take a double taxi and commute an hour to get to campus every day. It is expensive.

We noticed years ago that providing transportation stipends was one of the most beneficial things Masinyusane could do for the students. The burden of money, especially for students living off campus, had long been identified as the number one reason students drop out.

Moreover, we sent R500 to all of our students travelling to other universities to assist with the journey. It's far harder than it should be to get registered at another university (see Registration section below) and a little bit of transport money goes a long way for the students.

Textbooks & Laptops

Masinyusane donated a dozen laptops to our Top Learners in 2019. The laptops are invaluable to the students that live off campus since they have very limited access to the campus computer labs. Considering that all assignments must be typed, it's a massive disadvantage not to have a laptop.

We also purchased textbooks for a handful of students without funding, providing them with a fair chance to succeed with their studies.

Nutrition & Welfare

We have begun distributing welfare stipends to our most impoverished students. This allows them to purchase basic needs like food, but also the toiletries and every day items that allow them to attend school with dignity.



UNIVERSITY SUPPORT (CONT.)

Your generosity ensured that all of our students received the support they needed to succeed at University. With most studying from the townships, this support was critical in ensuring the students had the opportunity to focus on their books and not become overwhelmed by the stresses of poverty.

Registration Assistance

January & February are chaos for incoming university students every year. While our team is stationed on Nelson Mandela's campus all day, every day assisting our local students, it's much harder for students at other universities.

We rely on our network of older Masinyusane students to assist our younger kids. This alumni network has proved invaluable as our older students always step up and make us proud – welcoming the first years, showing them around campus, and assisting them in finding accommodation. This year we rented bedrooms at backpackers for students heading up to Pretoria or down to Cape Town giving them time to figure out where to find campus housing and how to register.

Employment Assistance

We recently helped place one young graduate, Yonela Maqashu, into an Electrical Engineering job and have been told she is flourishing. We also hosted a workshop in June on work readiness and how to find a job and interview well with some of our unemployed graduates.

Orientation

Masinyusane hosted 2 orientations for our students – one for local Nelson Mandela University students and one for students attending other universities.

The orientations make a big difference as our staff is able to explain an array of things to the incoming 1st year students. This includes explaining how NSFAS distributes funding, how to get your textbooks, the housing/transportation situation, where to find help if you're struggling and how to ensure you're registered properly.

The transition from big fish in a small Xhosa pond to the multi-cultural ocean of Nelson Mandela University is a challenging one for many students. We find the time we invest in orientations and workshops make a major difference to the students.



WORKSHOPS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



WORKSHOP & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

More than just academic stars, we are trying to build tomorrow's community leaders. We held numerous workshops to grow & develop our students outside of the classroom.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Masinyusane has partnered with some of the city's most influential women, in an effort at uplifting and grooming our students to realize that their careers do not begin on the day of graduation, but even during their student years. To this end we have had the Business Chamber's Tham-Tham Uduojie, Pathfinder and MyCity Tour organizer Lyn Erasmus van Vuuren, and Mrs SA Finalist Olwethu Nodada, host workshops on personal branding, how to alter one's mind set and break childhood and family fears of unworthiness, to become the great people they were destined to be. All workshops have been held at the Masinyusane House of Excellence.

We will continue to search for achiever, influencers, and role models and have them share their stories and knowledge with our youth.



FREE TO CHOOSE

The programme is presented in a workshop style and seeks to introduce students to the realities of adult life by equipping them with techniques that help them to be self-aware and value driven.

During the employment readiness workshop students participate in self-awareness exercises that trigger self-reflection moments. By the end of the session students have established the vision and values that inform their behaviour and reactions, they have identified their strengths and limitations, and they are aware of possible threats and opportunities that will have direct impact on efforts to achieve their vision.

The programme also introduces students to what an acceptable conduct is when job searching and what recruiters look for when recruiting for talent. An exercise reviewing interview questions and how to link what they learned from the self-awareness exercises to articulate ones view in response to the questions asked.

MENTORING & COACHING



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.



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.

Similarly, our team rallies around students in need. In May, a dozen of us attended the funeral of another Masinyusane student’s grandmother. We consider all students family.

Fiks and Thuto (both featured to the left) led our mentoring initiatives in 2019.



HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORT



HIGH SCHOOL FACES



**331 High School
Learners**

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION

We are investing in ensuring EVERY qualifying learner from the 34 Port Elizabeth township high schools receives ACCESS to university.

High School Visits

Our high school team has been visiting all 34 Port Elizabeth Township High Schools every week to ensure we identify every single learner that qualifies for university. We currently have 331 learners on the database. Every learner has been provided a study / info pack and we are working to ensure we receive all the application paperwork and information needed.

Applications

We have already applied to Nelson Mandela University for all 331 high school learners on our database. More than that, we are excited to share that 146 have been provisionally accepted while only 51 have been outright 'rejected'. We will work with those 51 to have them reapply for another course. The balance of learners have 'pending' as their admission status.

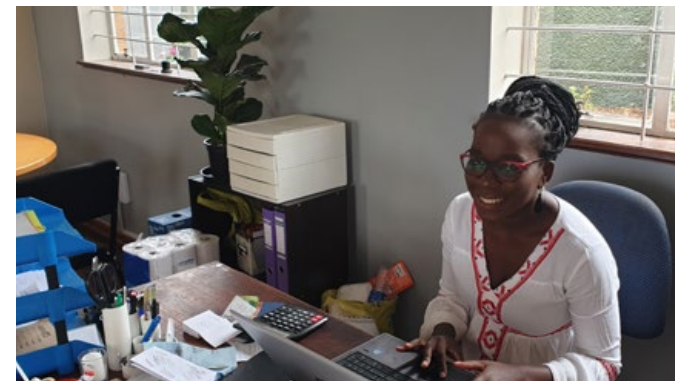
Moreover, we are working on applying to both other universities and for bursaries for the learners on the database. We have already sent 1016 university applications on behalf of our students to a variety of universities including NMU, UCT, UWC, UJ, UP and WITS.

Finally, we have dozens of bursary forms that have been submitted. This number includes the 30+ students we identified and sent to the Moshal Scholarship Fund camp.

Database

Our database, consisting of thousands of data points and multiple tabs, is being updated with more and more information every day. We use this to not only track all of the township learners, their applications and their statuses, but to share with bursars and funders to obtain additional funding for the students.

For example, Moshal Scholarships, mentioned below, cherry picks the top students off of this data base every year.



HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION (CONT.)

We are investing in ensuring EVERY qualifying learner from the 34 Port Elizabeth township high schools receives ACCESS to university.

Career Guidance

In April, we took students from Ndyabo High School on a 'take a girl to work day' to the Dedisa Power Plant in nearby Motherwell. As always, we will run a similar project with PWC and accounting students. Very few of our learners have parents that work professionally, so they have little concept of both what different careers entail and what opportunities exist in the workplace.

The learners get to receive encouragement and motivation from professionals, spend a few hours seeing what a 'real' job entails, and begin to formulate ideas about what they might want their own careers to be.

When reviewing students who have failed at university, "I chose the wrong field" is one of the top reasons. As noted above, our students are not familiar with many of the university courses and often choose 'blindly'. For this reason, we have partnered with Nelson Mandela University to provide customised career guidance to some of our city's own Top Learners.

In August 33 learners from our schools attended two hours career counseling assessment over a period of two days at the Missionvale campus.

The career assessment is aimed at identifying learners' interests, abilities, personality, life-roles, and values. Learners were engaged in exercises that help them understand the building blocks of self-awareness and how this will enable them to make better informed decisions about the careers they chose. All input gathered from the learner assessments was then analysed and each learner was provided with a report that provides them a guideline on areas of interests based on six personality types and their corresponding work environments.

Learners appreciated the insight they gained from the career assessments and are looking forward to applying what they learned in their career decision making.



HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION (CONT.)

We are investing in ensuring EVERY qualifying learner from the 34 Port Elizabeth township high schools receives ACCESS to university.

Partners & Bursaries

As noted above, in April we took students from Ndyabo High School on a 'take a girl to work day' to the Dedisa Power Plant in nearby Motherwell. As always, we will run a similar project with PWC and accounting students. Very few of our learners have parents that work professionally, so they have little concept of both what different careers entail and what opportunities exist in the workplace.

We will be making additional decisions around career guidance interventions in the coming quarter.

Welfare & Assistance

In August we helped coordinate the distribution and collection of Moshal bursary application forms from learners across all high schools in Port Elizabeth. Moshal selected 35 Motherwell learners to attend Moshal selection camp which occurred on the 27th to 29th September 2019. The camp offers an amazing opportunity for learners to gain insight about team work and networking with learners from other parts of the Eastern Cape. We are proud that we had the highest number of applicants selected to be part of the Moshal selection camp compared to other NGO's Moshal partners with in the Eastern Cape. This reflects the effectiveness of our High School project.

Number of High Schools	34
Number of Top Learners Identified	311
Number of Study Packs Distributed	311
Number of University Applications Submitted	1016
Number of Financial Aid Applications Submitted	305
Number of Bursary Applications Submitted	100+



ANNEXURE A: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN CHECKLIST

High School Top Learners	Status
1. Visit all 35 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 – Mar)	Completed
3. Provide all learners with Masinyusane study packs, study guides, and previous exam papers (Jan-Mar)	Completed
4. Career guidance and assessment (May)	Completed
5. Distribution and assistance with completion of University application forms (July; using June results)	Completed
6. Paying of Application fees (July)	Completed
7. Distribution, assistance in obtaining documentation, and proper online submission for NSFAS applications (Sept-Oct)	Completed
8. Scanning and online data entry of forms for every student (Sept-Oct)	Completed
9. Working with admissions to ensure admission, change programmes applied for, and scheduling testing (Sept-Dec)	Completed
10. Identifying bursary-eligible learners and assisting with application process (Feb-Dec)	Completed
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)	Completed

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)	Completed
4. Distribution and management of taxi fares, welfare allowances (monthly)	Completed
5. Distribution of laptops/computers when available	Completed
6. Distribution of new and/or 2nd hand textbooks from partners	Completed
7. Home visits to learners who are under-performing (monthly)	Completed
8. Running/Outsourcing Leadership, Study Skills, and/or Personal Development workshops (monthly)	Completed
9. Work with University to develop systems and interventions that correlate with success (ongoing)	Completed
10. Developing a mentorship programme	Completed

Masinyusane House of Excellence	Status
1. Identify 20 Top Learners for our Masinyusane House of Excellence (Feb)	Completed
2. Ensuring the House maintains a culture of hard work, excellence, and success (daily)	Completed
3. Providing mentorship, tutoring, and guidance to learners in house (daily)	Completed
4. Organise personal development workshops and guest visits to the house (monthly)	Completed
5. Organise monthly food deliveries to the House (monthly)	Completed

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

