

2023



IMPACT REPORT

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CEO'S REFLECTION

Halli Manolakos

EMPOWERING TOMORROW: MY VISION FOR SBF'S IMPACT IN SOUTH AFRICA'S PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE

In a world marked by relentless change, where technology reshapes our lives and social dynamics are moulded by the power of AI and social media, Students for a Better Future (SBF) emerges as a transformative force. Amidst this whirlwind, I recognise the unique ability of SBF not just to educate, but to shape leaders of the future, today.

In the fiercely competitive job market, one truth remains steadfast: the power of the SBF brand. It's not just a symbol; it embodies our unwavering commitment to nurturing resilient professionals prepared for the challenges of the real world.

Over the past year, I've delved deep into our brand's essence – questioning what it is, what it should be, and why it matters. I've envisioned a brand that signifies trust; one where our graduates' credibility echoes in every boardroom and office across South Africa.

Building trust: the foundation of professional connections. Trust isn't just a currency; it's the essence of our brand. Employers seek trust, not just degrees. Reflecting on what impresses me as an employer, I see our brand as the Andreas and Susan Struengmann Foundation – an embodiment of trust. Our ability to nurture this trust internally directly impacts our graduates' employability, enhancing their personal brands and establishing enduring credibility. My mission is to forge unshakeable bonds between graduates and employers, creating a legacy of trust that permeates professional spheres.

Crafting a unique narrative: rising above the noise. In the sea of resumes, the SBF brand must stand out with a narrative that is uniquely ours. This narrative is shaped by our graduates' resilience, their ability to navigate diverse backgrounds, and their profound self-awareness. By enhancing the SBF brand and disseminating these stories, we make a resounding statement. Our graduates don't just enter; they make a grand entrance, leaving a lasting impression on every desk they touch.

A vision for 2024: from ripple to tidal wave. As we step into 2024, my aspiration is for the SBF brand to evolve from a ripple to a tidal wave – a revolution. It isn't just a logo; it signifies change. It starts as a ripple in recruitment, gains momentum in camps, learning and networking, and eventually becomes a tidal wave of transformation in corporate South Africa. Employers aren't just hiring; they're welcoming visionaries shaping our nation's future. Our graduates aren't just finding jobs; they're trailblazers, reshaping industries, and leaving an indelible mark.

SBF: my commitment to empowerment. The Students for a Better Future brand isn't just a representation; it's a tidal wave – a declaration of our graduates' impact. It signifies their success, resilience, curiosity, and unmatched achievement woven into the professional fabric.

Every young person that SBF supports to break free from the chain of poverty needs to be empowered to own their brand. The SBF brand must evoke emotion and drive demand to hire these exceptional young scholarship recipients. We are privileged to witness their growth, and it's our duty to ensure they not only secure jobs but become architects of change, leaving a legacy wherever they go. **Together, we empower tomorrow.**



ABOUT THE CEO

PASSIONATE INNOVATOR | TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER | SBF SCHOLARSHIP ADVOCATE
As a passionate innovator and transformative leader, I am dedicated to illuminating the path to a future where innovation not only transforms our culture but also fosters lasting impact. My journey is deeply intertwined with the Students for a Better Future (SBF) scholarship programme, where I have worked tirelessly to revolutionise the way we approach education and empowerment.

DRIVING INNOVATION AND LASTING IMPACT
My mission is to drive innovation in education, empowering young minds with the knowledge and skills needed to shape a brighter tomorrow. Through the SBF scholarship programme, I am committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning, curiosity, and creativity. By harnessing the power of education, we can create a ripple effect that transforms communities and enriches lives.

REVOLUTIONISING THE SBF SCHOLARSHIP EXPERIENCE
At SBF, we are not just offering scholarships; we are revolutionising the scholarship experience. Through mentorship, tailored support, and access to cutting-edge resources, we enable scholars to thrive academically and personally. By providing a holistic educational experience, we are nurturing the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators who will drive positive change in our society.

JOIN ME ON THIS TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY
Together, we can revolutionise SBF's scholarship programme, making education not only accessible but also empowering and inspiring. Let's collaborate to create a future where every aspiring student has the opportunity to shine, where innovation knows no bounds, and where the impact we make today resonates for generations to come. Together, we can illuminate the path to a future where education is the key that unlocks limitless potential.

As we gather to reflect upon the profound impact our scholarship programme has made in the past year, I am honoured to present to you the outcomes, challenges and aspirations that define our journey towards **prestige** and transformative education journeys.

The past year has been a testament to our commitment to redefining the concept of scholarships. We have diligently worked towards creating a nurturing, **supportive**, and impactful environment, enabling our students and alumni to flourish as **strong independent thinkers** capable of transforming not only their own lives but also the communities they touch.

In 2023 our staff, scholars, alumni and students' parents and guardians have demonstrated exceptional resilience, determination and growth. Their achievements stand as a testament to the power of a scholarship programme that believes in the boundless **potential** of every individual. We have witnessed personal triumphs, academic milestones and unwavering parental support initiatives that have redefined the landscape of impact.

Looking forward to 2024, we are poised to adapt and evolve in response to the changing needs of our scholars and the world they inhabit. As **agents of self-change**, our focus remains steadfast on fostering innovation, inclusivity and empowerment. We have identified strategic initiatives and collaborative partnerships that will further enhance our supportive ecosystem (network of support), ensuring our scholars continue to thrive and succeed.

Our commitment to **transform** lives and communities remains unwavering. In 2024, we look forward to really targeted interventions, personalised support mechanisms, and comprehensive curated learning for our scholarship recipients, equipping our scholars to face the challenges of the future with confidence and courage through their wellness practices, and launching our new Susan and Andreas Struengmann Leadership Initiative. We are not just shaping individuals; we are shaping a collective future of positive change, leadership and impact.

I invite you to join us in celebrating the achievements of the past year and embracing the challenges and opportunities that 2024 brings. Together, let us continue to redefine, support, recognise the **potential**, nurture **strong independent thinkers**, and collectively transform lives and communities.

SUPPORTIVE

ALUMNI FEEDBACK

By providing access to quality education with psychological, social and academic support as well as life skills development, we support young people on a journey that starts in Grade 6 and ends with their first job. We do this to ensure that individuals with academic ability, financial need and potential have access to quality education, holistic support, and opportunities for growth.

The 2023 Network Survey has looked at all of these key dimensions:

- 1. Academic achievement
- 2. Economic attainment
- 3. Pro-social activity
- 4. Wellbeing
- 5. SBF feedback

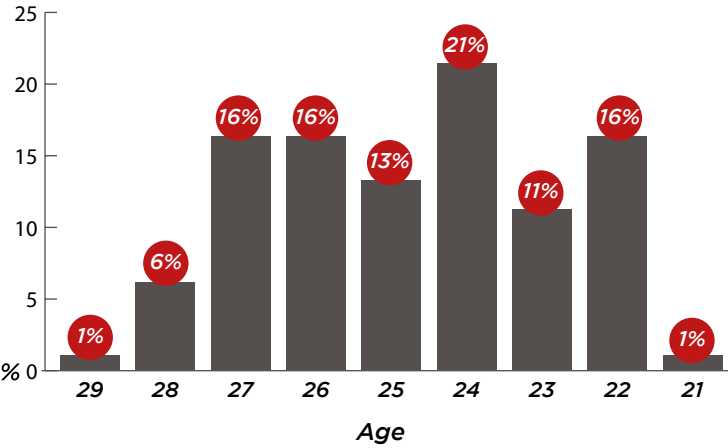
SURVEY RESPONSE RATE OF 69%

In August 2023, we launched the SBF Network survey, targeting a total of 166 Alumni from the years 2009–2015. In total, **114 alumni responded** to the survey, resulting in a response rate of 69% being achieved.

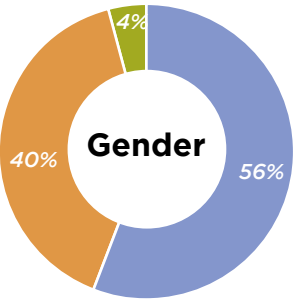
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey participants are aged between 21 and 29, with most of them (24/114) being 24 years old. 56% of them are female, 40% of them are male and 4% are non-binary. The majority of those surveyed reside in the Western Cape (89%).

Age of survey respondents



Matriculation year



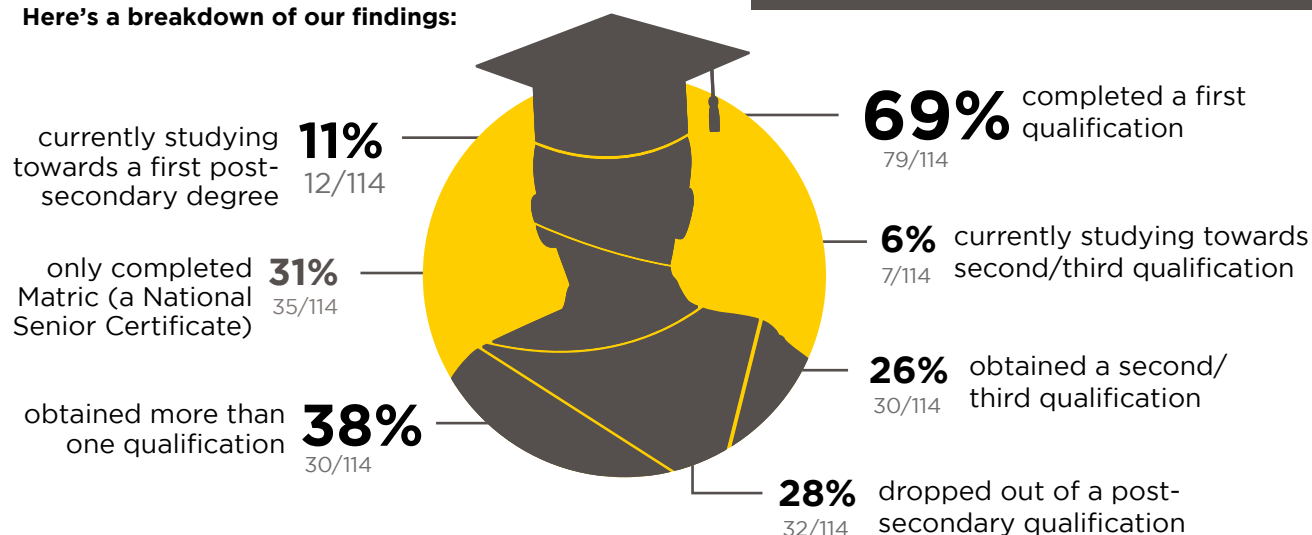
Non-binary Male Female

"Going to the school that I did was a turning point in my life and mindset."

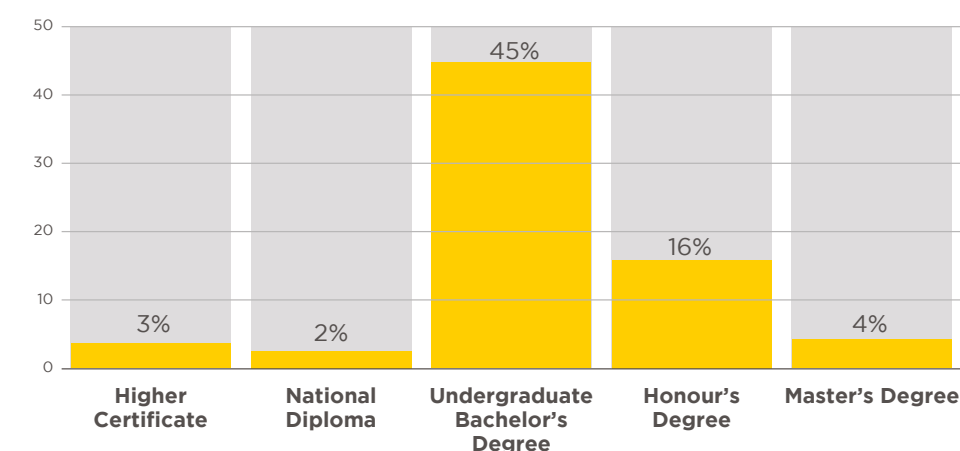
1. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The SBF programme has maintained a **100% Matric pass rate** since its inception in 2009. Our Network Survey found that 70% of SBF scholars started a post-secondary qualification after matriculating. **Here's a breakdown of our findings:**

What's happening nationally? In 2019 the national Matric pass rate was 81,3%, an increase from 78,2% of the year before. Although most Matriculants are passing, a much smaller proportion is able to access post-secondary education.

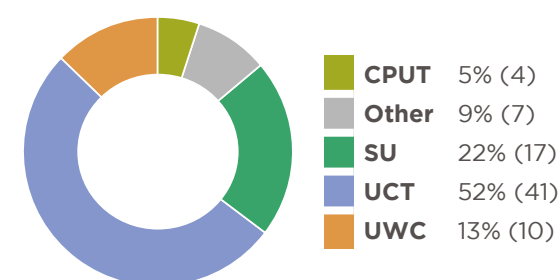


Qualification type



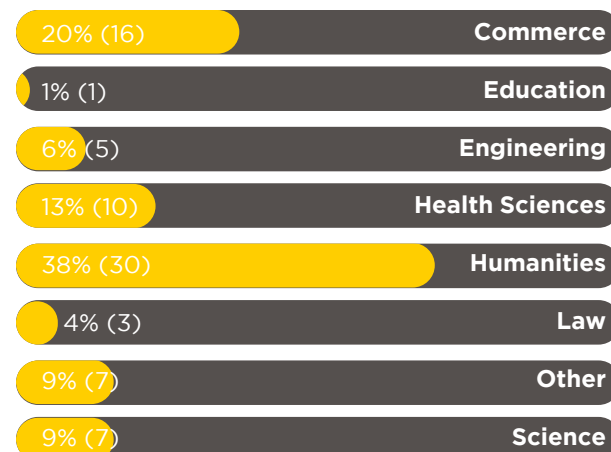
These findings are significant, highlighting our long-term outcomes where scholarship recipients enter post-secondary education, and ultimately penetrate opportunities for gainful employment.

Further analysis revealed that **the 79 (69%) who completed a qualification attended the following institutions within the indicated faculties.**



CPUT – Cape Peninsula University of Technology;
SU – Stellenbosch University; UCT – University of Cape Town;
UWC – University of the Western Cape.

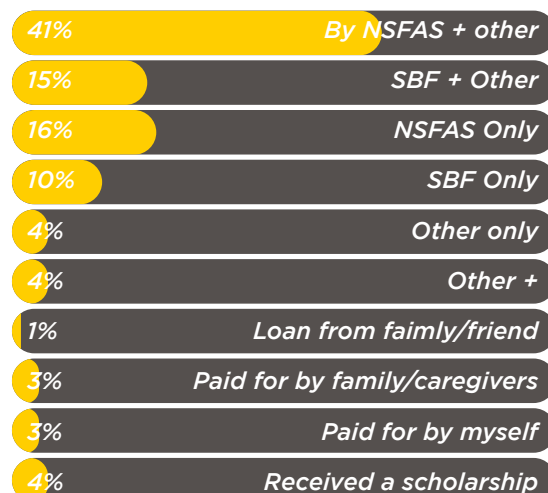
Faculties



It is interesting that we observe more females in science and health sciences, seeing as science has historically been a male-dominated field.

	FEMALE		MALE	NON-BINARY
	7 (44%)	Commerce	9 (56%)	0%
	0	Education	1 (100%)	0%
	1 (20%)	Engineering	4 (80%)	0%
	7 (70%)	Health Sciences	3 (30%)	0%
	20 (67%)	Humanities	8 (27%)	2 (6%)
	3 (100%)	Law	0	0%
	2 (29%)	Other	5 (71%)	0%
	6 (86%)	Science	1 (14%)	0%

Funding types



*Note: Other + means a combination of other funds.

A total of 43% received a SBF scholarship or financial support. **Below are the funders for those who received other funding or a scholarship:**

- Moshal Scholarship Programme
- Jakes Gerwel Fellowship
- Doris Crossley Foundation
- HCI Foundation
- Asset Bursary
- University merit awards
- Company Funding
- Western Cape Department of Health Bursary
- Yvonne Parfitt bursary
- Growthpoint GEMS
- Garden City Bursary
- UCT donor funding
- Wynberg bursary
- PwC

2. ECONOMIC ATTAINMENT

SBF scholars access quality education and are provided with opportunities for growth through workshops, networking and coaching; students and alumni are supported with access to potential employers with the intention of securing their first meaningful jobs or becoming gainfully employed.

The Network Survey measured economic wellbeing through proxy indicators of employment status, income from labour, and other questions to ascertain whether scholarship recipients had already started breaking poverty of the mind to enable them to generate wealth and finally break the chain of poverty for themselves and their families.

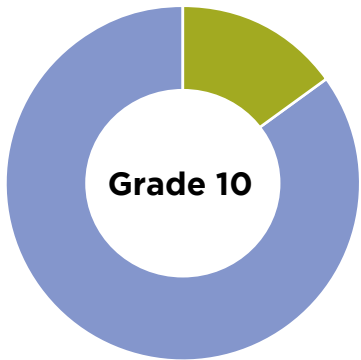
How do we compare nationally?

As of June 2023, the South African Youth unemployment rate is 60,7%. By comparison, 29% of SBF alumni are unemployed – this number is more significant when we consider that 17% of SBF alumni are not currently pursuing employment (they are studying towards post-secondary qualifications). The real unemployment rate for SBF alumni is therefore 12%.

71% of SBF alumni are employed. Out of the 71%, 57% are in full-time employment, 9% are employed part-time and 5% are full or partly self-employed.

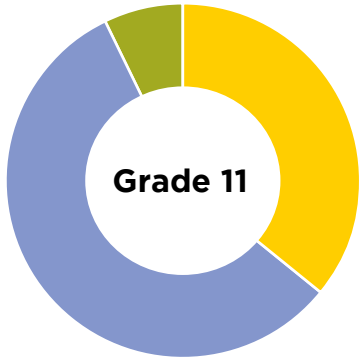
"I felt really supported. Even when I met my coach after getting a job, she was still helpful."

SBF HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP



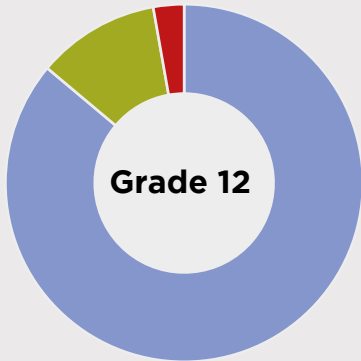
Grade 10 performance

85% on track for BP (23/27)
15% on track for DP (4/27)



Grade 11 performance

57% on track for BP (8/14)
7% on track for DP (1/14)
36% on track for HC (5/14)



Grade 12 performance

86% on track for BP (31/36)
11% achieved a DP (4/36)
3% failed (1/36)

70% Grade average

97% Pass rate

LEVELS OF PASSING MATRIC

1. Bachelor pass (BP)

- Minimum 40% for Home Language
- Minimum 50% for 4 other High Credit subjects (excluding LO)
- Minimum 30% for two other subjects

2. Diploma pass (DP)

- Minimum 40% for Home Language
- Minimum 40% for 4 other High Credit subjects (excluding LO)
- Minimum 30% for 3 other subjects

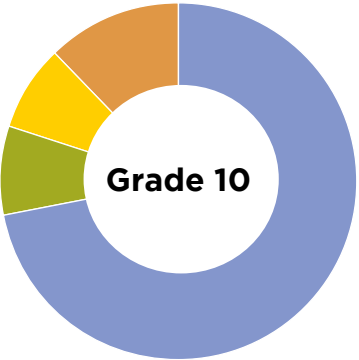
3. Higher Certificate (HC)

- Minimum 40% for Home Language
- Minimum 40% for 2 other subjects
- Minimum 30% for 2 other subjects

4. National Senior Certificate (NSC)

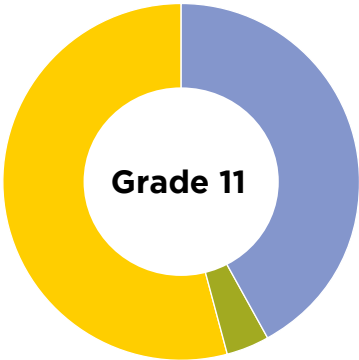
- Minimum 40% for Home Language
- Minimum 40% for 2 other subjects
- You can fail one subject

GROOTE SCHUUR HIGH SCHOOL (GSHS) SCHOLARSHIP



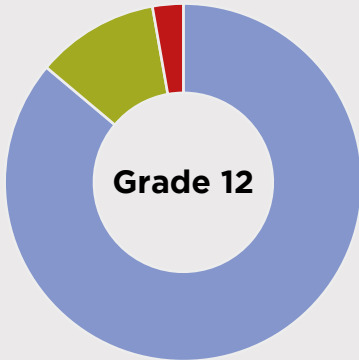
Grade 10 performance

72% on track for BP (18/25)
8% on track for DP (2/25)
8% on track for HC (2/25)
12% on track for NSC (3/25)



Grade 11 performance

42% on track for BP (10/24)
4% on track for DP (1/24)
54% on track for HC (13/24)



Grade 12 performance

80% on track for BP (20/25)
16% achieved a DP (4/25)
4% achieved a HC (1/25)

60% Grade average

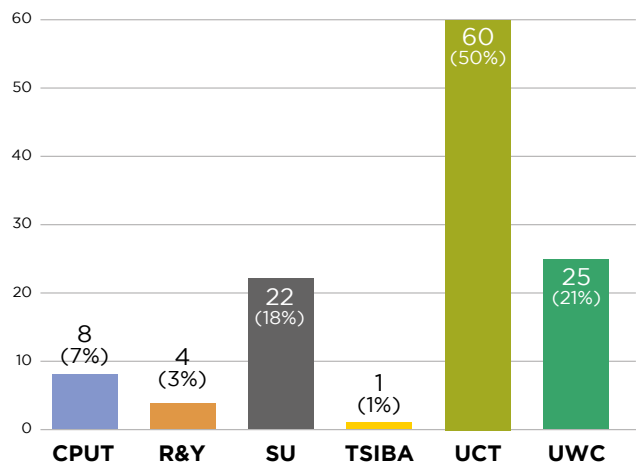
100% Pass rate

POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMME

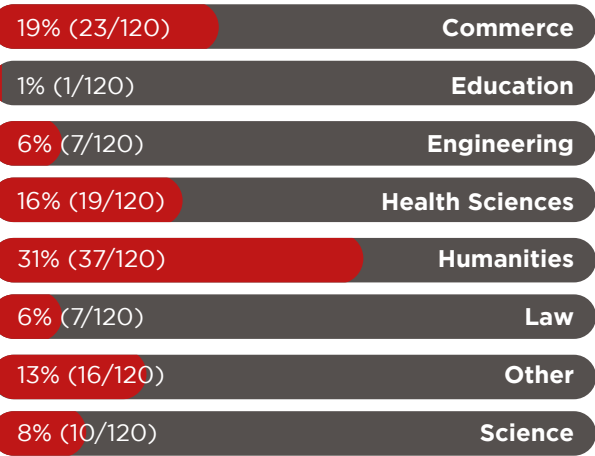
120

students in the Post-Secondary Programme in 2023

Students per institution

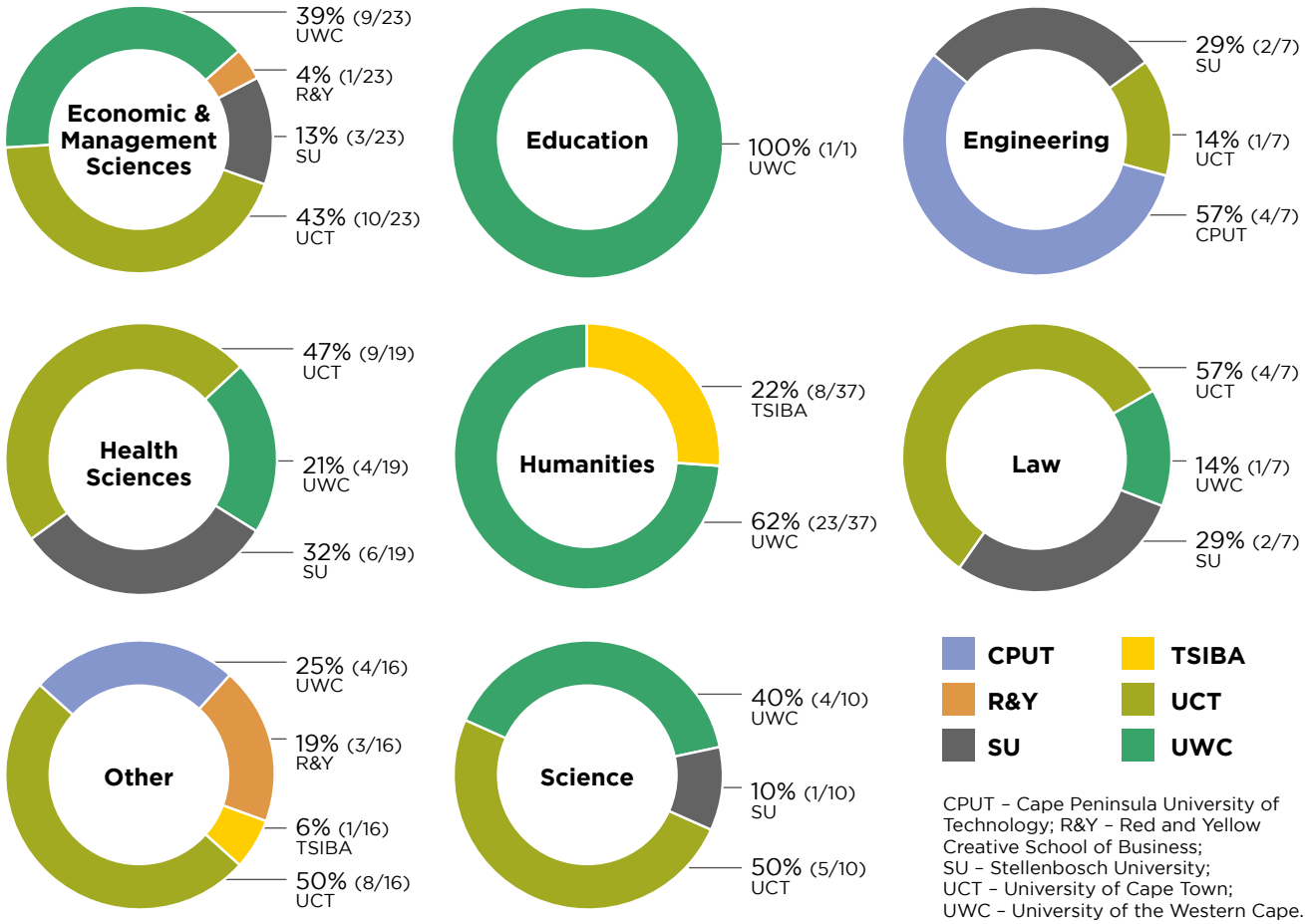


Faculties

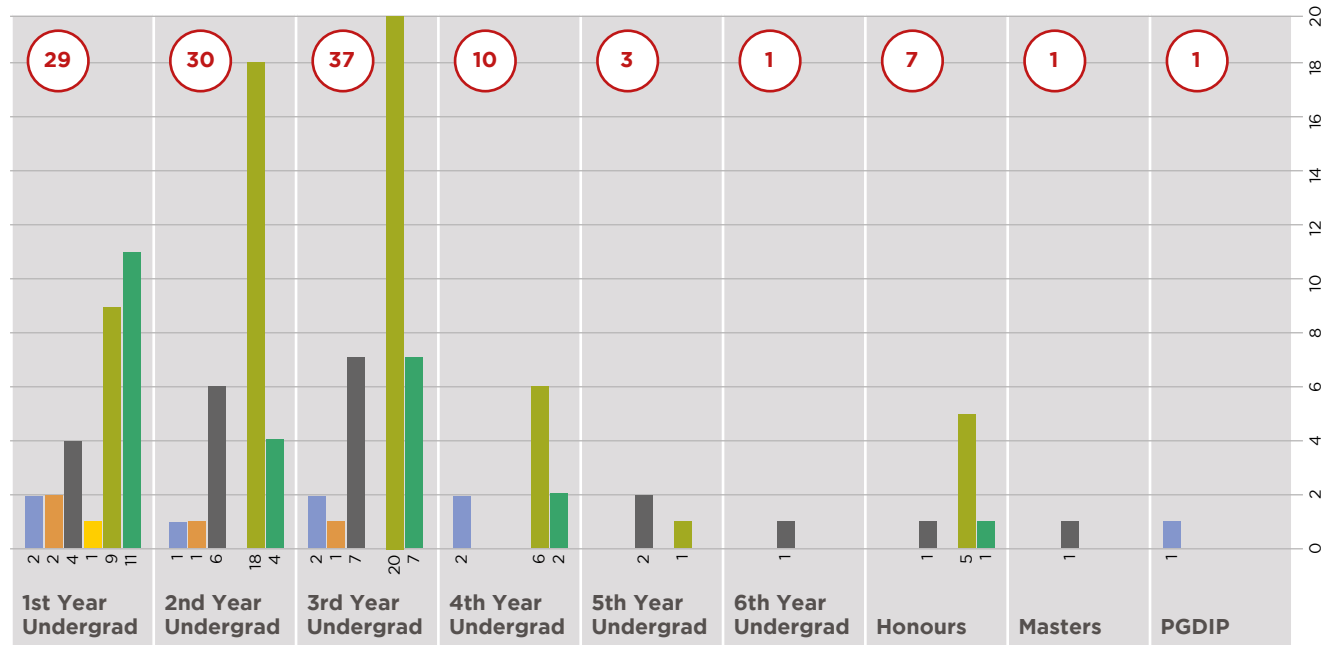


IMPACT

Faculties per institution



Student level per institution



IMPACT

NEET: CATALYSING AN ECONOMIC SHIFT

In the late 1990s, the term NEET emerged, denoting young individuals who were “Not in Education, Employment or Training.” This category included unemployed jobseekers and those outside the labour force not actively seeking employment. In our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, we emphasised the imperative for our scholarship recipients to access post-secondary studies in the right fields, catalysing a significant economic shift and fulfilling our vision of breaking the chains of poverty.

Addressing educational barriers: Many young people in South Africa today find their path to post-secondary education obstructed by substandard primary and secondary education, coupled with limited access to quality Early

Childhood Development (ECD) programmes. The persistently high unemployment rate in South Africa exacerbates the chain of poverty and inequality. For youths residing in marginalised communities, the opportunity for high-quality education remains scarce, compounded by a context where over half of students leave high school without passing the final Matric exam. Consequently, a significant portion of our youth is excluded from further education and training. Shockingly, in 2018, 35% of young people aged 15 to 29 fell into the NEET category, directly impeding their prospects of gainful employment.

Intentional tracking for change: In response, we initiated a systematic tracking system for school leavers who complete Matric but do not pursue post-secondary education, as well as a significant investment into academic support in high school to assist those who are not achieving the SBF target of a 60% average (now a Bachelor’s pass). This proactive approach enables us to identify critical intervention points and design targeted solutions.

The graph below provides a snapshot of 55 tracked Matriculants and their post-school status.



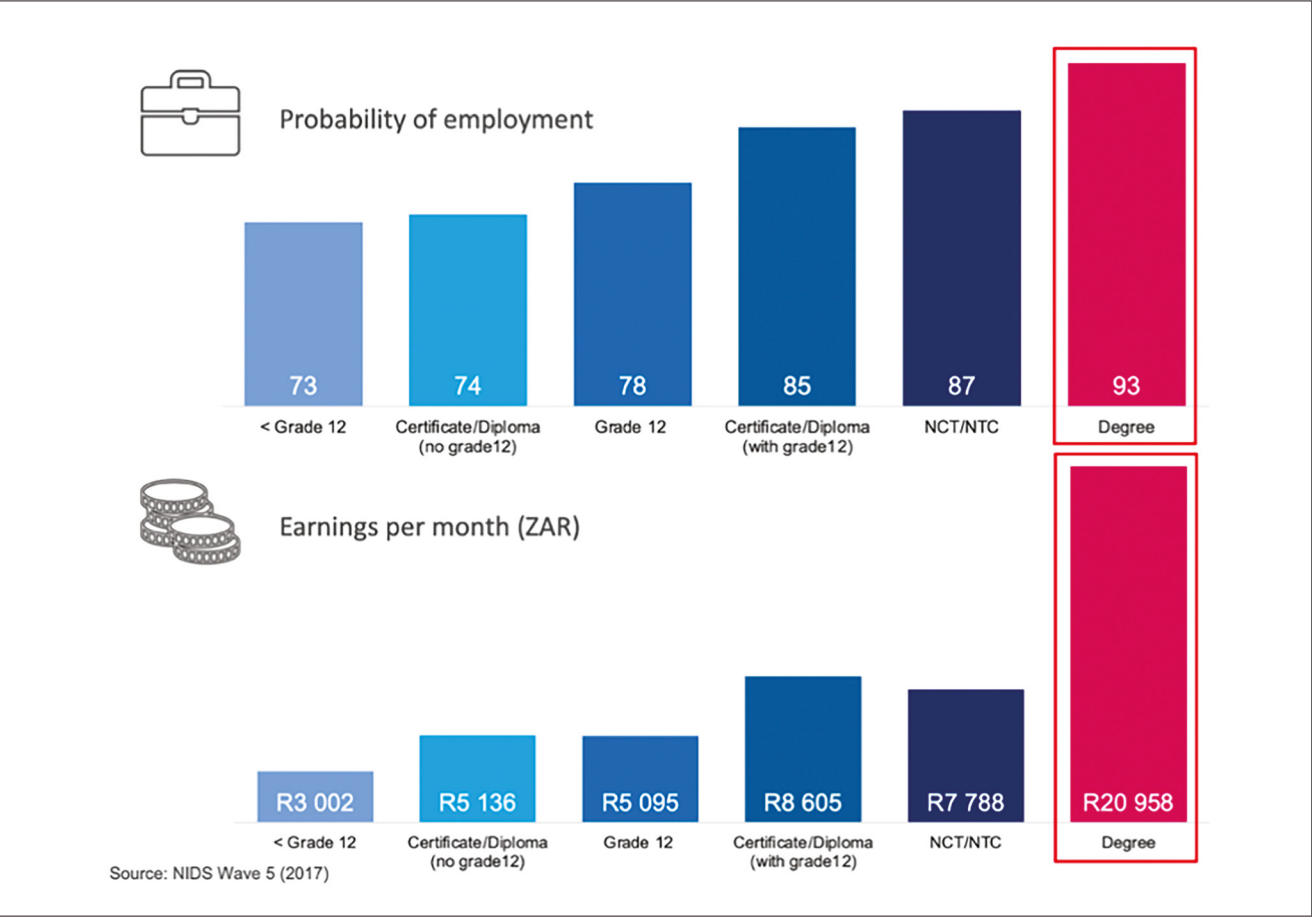
Our response to this issue of limited access has been to provide access for marginalised scholars to holistic education at the high school level. However, our own data of 2022 Matrics pursuing post-secondary studies indicate that much more work is needed to encourage scholars at the high school level to continue their studies and therefore to make a real difference in their circumstances.

In August, we launched an awareness campaign targeting senior high school scholars and their parents, delivered at key touchpoints such as the annual Parent Expo and Grade 12 high school camp. At these events, we emphasised the transformative power of quality education.

The transformative power of quality education: Elevated levels of education play a pivotal role in

breaking the intergenerational chain of poverty, profoundly impacting employment opportunities and income in the contemporary labour market. A consensus, both locally and internationally, underscores the pivotal role of quality education in determining employability and income levels. In South Africa, the infographic on the next page clearly demonstrates how significantly a university degree impacts earning potential:

Enhancing access to high-quality education emerges as a paramount strategy in our battle against poverty. Post-Secondary, particularly tertiary, education stands as a beacon of hope, holding the potential to obliterate the intergenerational chain of poverty. Citing the 2011 Census, individuals aged 25 to 29 who completed post-secondary studies are 14% more likely to gain employment than those



with a Matric qualification. Furthermore, university graduates experience a staggering 36% increase in employability and enjoy a 60% higher income compared to their Matric counterparts.

EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION

To manifest our vision of breaking the chain of poverty, our focus must remain steadfast on nurturing young individuals who excel in workplaces, obtain highly competitive university qualifications and possess the skills essential for success. Central to our strategy is the Learning Potential test, a robust tool offering evidence-based assessments and predicting the potential outcomes of qualifications, whether bachelor’s, master’s or doctorate degrees. Our strategy guides us towards our ultimate goal: empowered graduates who are resilient, consistently employed, and on the verge of building wealth and achieving financial independence. Such individuals are not only cognisant of their mental, physical and social wellbeing, but also adept at making informed life choices.

Addressing high attrition rates: South Africa’s graduation rate of 15% ranks among the lowest globally, as reported by the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE). For previously disadvantaged South African youth, numerous factors contribute to this high attrition rate. These factors include wrong subject or course choices, lack of family support,

academic pressures, mental health challenges, financial constraints and an inability to effectively manage time.

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND POTENTIAL

Catalysts for transformation: Access to quality education, honing the right skills and recognising one’s potential stand as the pivotal levers for transformative change. In our pursuit of a brighter future, these principles will continue to guide our endeavours, driving our mission to empower generations and eradicate the scourge of poverty.

LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

We have already implemented various interventions to address these challenges, including executive coaching, one-on-one development conversations, psychosocial support, mentorship programmes and workshops. The launch of our prestigious SASLI programme is intended to both inspire and motivate our young people to look towards a tertiary qualification rather than just a strong Matric finish. The integration of our eight attributes have been explicitly designed to help scholars make informed course choices, manage their time efficiently and critically engage in their studies.



We intentionally build our relationships, responses and services on the knowledge that most of our scholars, students and their families have experienced trauma. To this end, our in-depth trauma-informed training in 2022 with all programme staff affirmed our strategic commitment to continue working through a trauma-informed lens.

One of the key trauma-informed principles is the bottom-up approach, which recognises that people cannot learn effectively until they have been given the opportunity to restore (create safety, regulation and calm) and reconnect (feel a sense of belonging and connection). With this knowledge, the programme staff have built “restore” and “reconnect” activities at the start of all their touchpoints with scholars and students, resulting in more responsiveness and better engagement with the scholars and students.

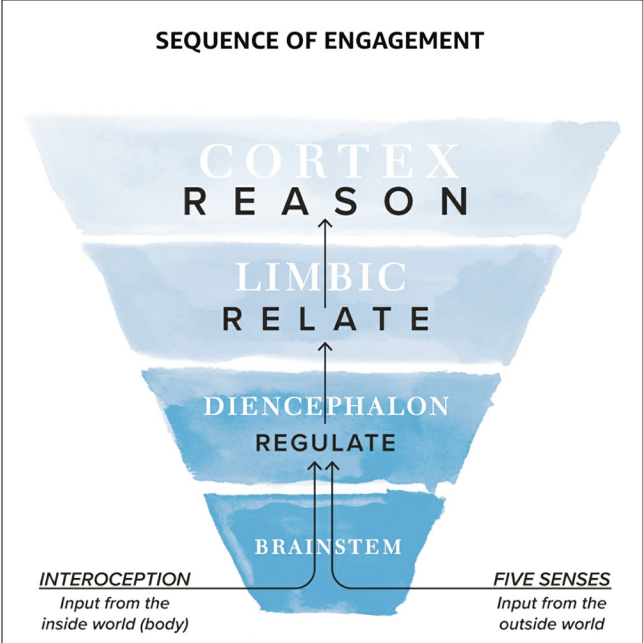
One of our key interventions has been the design of a short 30-minute workshop on trauma and the brain, informed by the principles in Dr Bruce Perry’s Neurosequential Model (right).

The learning outcomes of this workshop are:

- 1. Understand the basic physiology of the brain.
- 2. Understand the impact of trauma on the brain.
- 3. Appreciate that stress can have both positive and negative effects.
- 4. Explain how trauma/stress affects learning.
- 5. Display knowledge of various regulation techniques.

This session can be easily adapted for various audiences and, in the past year, we facilitated the session at our Parent Expo. The impact of this intervention has been that parents now have an understanding of the bottom-up approach and

will be able to co-regulate with their children. This will result in improved parent-child relationships and in turn will promote the emotional wellbeing of both parent and child. A similar session has been facilitated with our scholarship recipients who will be entering the High School Programme in 2024. In addition to the facilitated session, parents and scholars also made a glitter jar which is a helpful metaphor in understanding how we need our thinking brain (cortex) to be calm before we can learn.





FUTURE PLANS

In 2024 we plan to deliver this workshop to scholars and students across the High School and Post-Secondary Programmes in order to further embed this knowledge in the SBF family.

One of the key shifts in 2024 will be to focus on holistic wellness development and support and to move away from focusing solely on psychosocial support. Focusing on holistic wellness is important because it acknowledges the complexity of human health and wellbeing, offering a more balanced and sustainable approach to leading a healthy and fulfilling life. It encourages one to consider all aspects of your wellbeing, making it a valuable framework for improving and maintaining good health.

Wellness is not a passive or static state, but rather an “active pursuit” that is associated with intentions, choices and actions as we work towards an optimal state of health and wellbeing. We will be working towards growing an understanding of holistic wellness in our scholarship recipients and encouraging them to develop personal sustained wellness practices across all six dimensions of wellness.



TRANSFORMING LIVES

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AT SBF: A TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY

At SBF, our unwavering commitment lies in empowering parents and recognising the pivotal role they play in shaping the destinies of our scholars. Acknowledging the barriers of history, limited educational opportunities and economic challenges faced by many parents, we have made parent empowerment a central focus of our mission.

In understanding the intricate context of our scholars within partner schools, the dynamic landscape of the Future World of Work and the evolving educational pathways, we firmly believe that informed and engaged parents are key to ensuring the success of our scholars.

CREATING SELF-OWNERSHIP AND COLLECTIVE SUPPORT

What have been our challenges?

Historically, parents were often disengaging or disempowered from integration into their children’s school lives, were not attending school meetings and events, and often withdrew from contributing due to being disempowered or feeling excluded. In 2020, SBF began working with our parents through intentional work, starting our Parent Forum as a direct intervention.

Successes:

Our Parent Forum has served as a catalyst, uniting parents within their school communities. Here, they collaborate, solve challenges collectively and bolster



each other’s confidence to actively participate in their children’s educational journey. Through these interactions, parents were able to begin advocating for their children more, finding inspiration and shared solutions, and being empowered to drive their own educational narratives.

FUTURE WORLD OF WORK: SHAPING KNOWLEDGE

Challenges

We have often experienced a disjunct between parents’ advice to their children and the fast-paced, ever-changing employment landscape, leaving our scholars with conflicting advice and misunderstandings as to the best way forward. Typically, parents place pressure on their children to help the family out of poverty, and because the children have little information about the future themselves, this has a big impact on the decisions they make going forward. As a result, we have seen students: choosing study pathways they aren’t interested in; struggling to be successful in their post-secondary studies as their course is misaligned to skills; studying towards the wrong careers; not finishing their studies; and lacking motivation later on in their courses.

Solutions

A crucial aspect of our parent focus has been orienting parents to the Future World of Work. We

have facilitated dialogues exploring the rapidly shifting employment landscape and the essential skills – our attributes – required to navigate this future. By emphasising the significance of a university education in securing meaningful employment, we’ve equipped parents and their children with a competitive edge, preparing them for the demands of tomorrow’s workforce.

Alongside this work we have been doing with the parents, we have been giving the same information to our young people and school leadership. This way, we help to empower all stakeholders with the knowledge they need to make well-informed decisions that align with students’ personal goals and visions. Providing a co-created space for parents to explore and understand these shifts means that there is no longer a chasm between the information received at home versus at school and from SBF, and scholars therefore have a clearer way forward in terms of their career trajectory.

SUPPORTING PARENTAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND NAVIGATING THE TWO WORLDS FACED BY OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Challenges

Based on the evidence presented from our DEIB survey with our scholars, it was evident that

the children did not feel they could have honest conversations with their parents about the challenges they faced at school or about their new friends. As our scholars go through high school, they often need to adapt to a new culture (changing their accents, styles and stories) in order to fit in, and navigate new experiences such as sleepovers or lavish birthday parties (to name a few). The high school journey has often come at the cost of the parent-child relationship, leaving our scholars feeling their parents don't understand them – they might feel, for example, that their parents aren't listening and require them to be grateful for the scholarship despite their challenges. Compounding this complexity is the reality of most of our parents: they are often working extremely hard to provide for the family, have limited knowledge of the world their children are traversing as scholarship recipients, and haven't been equipped with how to have dialogues with their children.

Solutions

In order to support dialogues and belonging between the parent/guardian and the child, and to encourage parental engagement in the lives of our scholars at school, SBF has partnered with Life Choices to facilitate an 8-week Life Choices Parenting course. All high school parents have now successfully completed the course! The course provides a safe space for parents to delve into their parenting styles, triggers, and strategies for navigating the complexities of the adolescent years.

In addition, we have provided talks on effective communication, adolescent mental health and gender issues, based on parental requests, empowering them to connect meaningfully with their children.

Despite the successes of the course, we have experienced some challenges. It is difficult for parents to commit time to a course for eight weeks, and some of the Prep parents are not able to attend all of the sessions as a result. Additionally, last-minute mobile data arrangements are often required due to parents not having sufficient data for the session. SBF also often needs to arrange or facilitate follow-up sessions to embed the learnings for the parents.

WHAT DOES TRAUMA DO TO THE BRAIN?

Why does this matter?

Living in South Africa, the impact and effects of daily trauma affect us all, and scholars and parents can only benefit from understanding the brain's response and how to combat the effects of trauma for the long-term benefit of improved family dynamics and academic performance.

"In addition to the Life Choices Parenting course, we have provided talks on effective communication, adolescent mental health and gender issues, based on parental requests, empowering them to connect meaningfully with their children."

Solutions

One of the key knowledge transfers we have focused on is ensuring parental understanding of trauma and its effects on the brain. By illuminating the brain's response to trauma and imparting techniques for regulation, we've empowered parents with tools to cope with stress triggers. This knowledge has not only empowered parents to navigate their own challenges, but also enabled them to support their children effectively, fostering emotional resilience and improved academic performance.

PARENT EXPO

Challenges

Historically, parents have turned to SBF to solve many of their challenges, something that is not our mandate. In developing the referral database and in providing networks for families to turn to for support, we reduce the burden on our organisation whilst empowering families to solve their own problems within their communities and reduce the negative impact of the challenges on the scholars.

Solutions

During our annual Parent Expo, our parents were provided a unique platform to connect with various community support organisations. Legal services, substance abuse support, counselling and parenting advice were among the resources explored. Through this expo and our community services referral database, parents have gained access to vital resources, addressing challenges within their homes and communities.

OVERARCHING LEARNINGS

Challenges persist, notably in parental commitment to courses due to lengthy durations. A proposed solution involves exploring varied course formats to accommodate diverse schedules. Additionally, ensuring sufficient data support for virtual sessions is essential to enhance participation.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR 2024?

- Investing in our parents is a key focus for 2024. Our priorities will be to expand the reach of our Parent Forum and to facilitate opportunities for increased engagement with our forum, reps and the school staff at school events. We hope to implement this vision alongside the Forum members, thereby exploring any additional opportunities we could tap into at each school.
- In addition, parents have already identified opportunities to engage more with one another to expand the SBF parent network. Suggestions from parents have included the creation of a parent hiking club. Such initiatives will be led and run by parents, creating community bonds outside of and apart from SBF. We would like to identify additional opportunities for connection and community building such as this.
- We will be sharing more of the work that we do with our scholars with the parent body as well so that they can share in the learnings, and, in turn, support their children and reinforce the learnings at home. We will be following up on course content and information through a WhatsApp series for Life Choices/other talks, sharing nuggets/snippets of information to remind them of their learnings and reinforce actions at home.
- We will be exploring additional/alternative parent courses for our parents in the year to come in order to build on their skills and knowledge, and continue to expand the growth journey with them.
- Lastly, we would like to engage with our Prep Parents more, identifying their specific needs and developing plans with them for their own support and growth as they head into High School with their children.

CONCLUSION

We are convinced that this ever-growing and expanding holistic approach – encompassing wellness resources, future-oriented education, parenting skills and community connections – has transformed the social, emotional and academic support structures for our scholars. In nurturing informed and empowered parents, we pave the way for enhanced advocacy, informed decision-making and strategic career guidance for our scholars. Together, as a united community, we ensure that the full potential of our scholarship programme is realised, transforming lives and shaping a brighter future for all.

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Team at SBF has long been integral to supporting the High School Team by managing tasks such as coordinating uniform distribution, allocating devices, updating scholar banking information and handling scholar transport payments. Additionally, they've been entrusted with front-of-house and office management responsibilities.

The dedicated Programme Administrators, Nwabisa Dopholo and Ishraq Mohamed, have significantly expanded their roles, embracing additional responsibilities with enthusiasm. They've assumed ownership of our physical workspace, ensuring the seamless operation of our office, including maintenance and liaising with external service providers.

Two years ago, the introduction of our new database prompted their active involvement in maintaining accurate records and conducting regular audits. This robust data management process supports our Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, enabling her to confidently use data to further her work. Their invaluable assistance in the verification process during recruitment has been critical to the success of this initiative.

Another noteworthy development has been their responsibility for introducing Preparatory and Grade 8 scholars to the use of their devices, thereby enhancing their academic journey. This includes teaching troubleshooting skills and optimising device performance.

Nwabisa and Ishraq have cultivated strong relationships with scholars, parents and students who visit our office, often serving as the initial point of contact. Their capacity to identify administrative process gaps and provide practical solutions has been instrumental. This, in turn, has prompted the programme teams to recognise the value of including the Administration Team in event logistics planning.

The dedication, hard work and personal growth of both team members have elevated their confidence and proficiency. This recognition led to Ishraq's well-deserved promotion to

Systems Administrator, where she now supports our Monitoring and Evaluation Lead.

As we look forward, the team is primed for exciting opportunities. Our commitment to agility and our steadfast embodiment of our organisational values will continue to guide our work in the future. The Administration Team remains a cornerstone of our success, consistently rising to new challenges and embracing innovation to better serve our vision.

The remarkable growth and success of this team can be attributed not only to their unwavering

commitment and tireless efforts but also to the invaluable support of their dedicated manager, Melinda Sauls. The consistent practice of one-on-one meetings, goal setting, self-driven learning and successful implementation of new skills has undeniably been the driving force behind their achievements. Furthermore, the manager's effective approach of holding team members accountable while granting them the autonomy to thrive has played a pivotal role in fostering their substantial growth.

SHAPING LIVES

ISHRAQ: A PARADIGM SHIFT

When Ishraq Mohamed, our System Administrator, first joined SBF she was only intended to help out for a few weeks as an intern. However, her exceptional potential soon became evident, prompting her to seize the opportunity when the permanent position of Programme Administrator became available. She has been with SBF for over five years, recently moving to her current role.

Ishraq admits that she was quite reserved when she began her journey with us as at 21. "When I first started, speaking in front of a group of people was intimidating for me. I was always afraid of saying the wrong thing."

She attributes her transformation to the support she received from SBF: "I was isolating myself from the world, but the genuine care and support I got from the team helped me through that difficult time."

As part of SBF's comprehensive support system, she was encouraged to see a psychologist, whose sessions enabled her to better comprehend and manage her anxiety. "I'm in a much better place now," she reflects, adding that she's entitled to an annual "duvet day" to focus on her mental well-being. Ishraq also finds solace in the various wellness activities SBF offers, including yoga, breathwork, and eco therapy.

Having begun her career in retail, she reflects that her people skills were invaluable but also a stepping stone to a more challenging and fulfilling role. "I wanted to experience a different, more rewarding work life, and started exploring administrative roles."

She resigned from her job and applied for various roles through a recruitment agency, ultimately leading her to SBF, where she has thrived ever since.

Over time, she's cultivated an interest in data analysis and, when SBF introduced the new



Salesforce database, Ishraq wanted to be part of that endeavour. In early 2023, she moved into her new role as System Administrator, which keeps her in the realm of Operations and Administration, but also sees her supporting the Monitoring and Evaluation team.

Her future aspirations include transitioning into a role with a more data-centric focus. Reflecting on her days in retail, Ishraq sees a stark contrast: "In sales, I persuaded people to spend their money on luxury items. At SBF, it's completely different. We aim to impart financial literacy to students and educate them on handling money wisely. At SBF, we focus more on giving than receiving."

More about Ishraq

Ishraq lives in Cape Town with her husband and their six cats. As an avid video game player, she recently completed her journey through the Uncharted series. Additionally, she finds great pleasure in watching Arendsvlei, a TV series her husband plays a pivotal role in producing.

SIBAHLE: ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Sibahle Majola, our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Lead, had been working as a programme coordinator and in programme implementation for 5 years when she decided that she needed a new challenge. Coming from a social work background, she wanted to learn new skills, and specifically developed an interest in data analysis.

She left her role in Gqeberha (then Port Elizabeth) as programme coordinator and moved to Cape Town to work at loveLife as an Administrator, then pursued an MPhil degree specialising in Programme Evaluation at UCT.

"This move was exciting. I had only been to Cape Town before for job interviews, and never for more than two days," says Sibahle. A month into the course, COVID-19 struck, and her studies were moved online.

Sometime in the third quarter of 2020, the High School Coordinator position opened up at SBF and Sibahle was the successful candidate. At the time, she was working on the research component of her degree. The M&E lead at the time, Aliyah Mullajie, took Sibahle under her wing, mentoring her and helping to expand her knowledge in the field.

"I worked with her on exit interviews for SBF," says Sibahle. "She was sort of training me to move into the M&E space, and I appreciated that a lot."

Eventually, when Sibahle got the role as Monitoring & Evaluation Lead, she naturally shifted from the implementer's perspective into the evaluator's perspective. She says her previous experiences equipped her with the right questions to evaluate the success of programmes.

"I bring an extra layer of experience to the role," explains Sibahle. "I've been in programme development, curriculum development and I've been a programme implementer. Now that I'm at the analysis level where I get to evaluate and monitor those programmes, I still have a sense of what the implementers go through and what are reasonable expectations."

Looking back, she does not plan to ever move back into the social work field. She says that her role at SBF offers her a different, more interesting way of working with people (something she has always loved). "I don't necessarily have to physically see every person – it's about getting to know people's



"Failure is not a bad thing at SBF. You try something; it works or it doesn't work; you move on. It's a rapid environment, and there are always new ideas because of our openness to failure."

experiences, ensuring that we're making the right impact."

Working at SBF has been very rewarding to Sibahle, and she appreciates that all ideas are heard and tested. "Failure is not a bad thing at SBF. You try something; it works or it doesn't work; you move on. It's a rapid environment, and there are always new ideas because of our openness to failure."

More about Sibahle

As a plant enthusiast, Sibahle loves growing her own indoor jungle and visiting Kirstenbosch. In her free time, she compiles and curates music playlists, sings karaoke and enjoys games like 30 Seconds. Her all time favourite TV shows are The Boondocks, Seinfeld and The Golden Girls.

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT: A COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATION

As we come to the conclusion of this Impact Report, it provides us with a moment to reflect on our journey, the ever-changing landscape of education and employment, and the critical steps we must take to continue shaping the future. Our unwavering commitment to breaking the chains of poverty through providing our scholarship recipients with access to quality education, psycho-social support, life skills and professional development remains the cornerstone of our mission.

THE REALITY OF THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK

With today's rapidly evolving job market, one thing is certain – change is constant. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is reshaping industries and job roles. Automation and artificial intelligence are altering the employment landscape, making adaptability a fundamental requirement. Skills such as problem-solving, creativity and emotional intelligence are becoming increasingly valuable. We must therefore remain steadfast in our commitment to keep this at the forefront of our endeavours.

To prepare our alumni for success in this dynamic environment, we must focus on building academic knowledge together with the development of essential life skills and critical attributes through our programme work. Quality education should never be limited to the subject matter; it must expand its offering to integrate critical and analytical thinking, self-management, agility, innovation, building collaborative relationships, and being goal-driven and financially literate. The future requires this of us if we wish to create a world where every child can achieve their true purpose and realise their dreams!

THE NEED FOR ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

While access to basic primary education is available to all young people in South Africa, access to quality education remains a privilege reserved for a few. The high levels of unemployment and pervasive

inequality underscore the importance of our work – to identify scholars who demonstrate potential and to provide them with an education and opportunities that will enable them to transform their own lives, their families, and ultimately, their communities. In doing this, we must approach our challenges with the same passion, innovation and critical thinking that we expect from our scholars and students. We are building the foundation upon which the next generation of young people will change the world for good.

TO SEE THE SHIFT, WE MUST SHIFT

Our journey cannot be undertaken alone. Brokering and maintaining strong, values-based partnerships with our schools, partner universities, parents and the community remain integral to our success. Our partnerships enable us to amplify our impact, access additional resources and create a nurturing environment for our scholars and students. We must evolve to meet the changing needs of our context, but remain committed to supporting every child, young adult and family. As a team we are dedicated to our vision, and as we look towards 2024, may we remember that the true measure of our impact is not just in the number of scholarships we provide, but in the transformation we bring to the lives of those we serve. We will therefore continue to be agile, continually adapt, innovate, and be critical in our thinking.

We are committed to supporting our scholars, students and alumni for lifelong success. Together, we can transform our country and create a better future for every child!



