

MINING FOR POTENTIAL

BURSARY FUNDING ALONE WON'T UNEARTH THE GOLD



How do promises of free higher education, #feesmustfall protests and youth unemployment impact the mining industry? Since mining companies are required to provide bursaries as part of their Social and Labour Plan commitments, how can companies be sure that such programmes really make an impact?

Since 2014, Beulah Africa Development has been running a Bursary Fund for well deserving, but underprivileged individuals and through this we've heard and seen many testimonies of how an opportunity to education has radically changed the course of history for some young South Africans. #itsBeulah. In the famous words of former President Nelson Mandela "education is the most powerful weapon that can change the world." Tertiary education can break the cycle of poverty in just one generation, allowing individuals to make better informed decisions, find better employment and ultimately be socially responsible citizens of the country.

In the recent SONA (state of the nation address) newly elected president, Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed that free higher education will be phased in for poor and working class undergraduate students over the next five years. This means that students from households with a combined gross income below R350,000 will be able to receive bursary funding if they are beginning their undergraduate studies at a public university, for the first time in 2018. Each subsequent year new first-time entrants (FTEN) will participate in the Bursary Scheme, thus covering all years of undergraduate studies by 2022. Bursaries will be administered by NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) and will cover tuition fees and learning materials. Universities will assist to determine which candidates are eligible to receive further accommodation, transport and subsistence allowance benefits. Students who benefit from the funding will have to contribute to the South African economy for at least the number of years that they were funded and will further have to achieve satisfactory academic results to enable continued funding. Students will be allowed one year of 'grace' in order to complete their undergraduate studies (i.e. complete a three-year degree in four years or a two-year diploma in three years), and will be required to 'pay it forward' by logging a minimum of 10 days (80 hours) of community service from their second year onwards. The proposed funding initiative will create much needed opportunities for specifically poor and working-class students.

It is worth noting that there exists an additional need to provide funding to students who are too rich for the proposed DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training) funding scheme but still too poor to be able to afford tertiary education. This group has previously been termed the "missing middle" and is often overlooked with funding initiatives. The resources needed to cover

accommodation, tuition and living expenses may amount to more than a R100 000 investment per student per year.

The necessity of sufficient and secure funding is undisputed, but some may argue that a sole emphasis on providing the necessary funding is exactly why many support programmes do not reach their full potential. So how might support programmes go beyond merely being an ATM, to unearthing the gold that students carry?

Equip students for their studies and beyond: In 7 Habits of Highly Effective College Students, author Sean Covey suggests that students need to have a compelling why, solid academic skills, and effective life skills to achieve success. By focusing on developing proactive and balanced students equipped with the aforementioned skills, support programmes will equip students to implement habits that will carry them long after they receive their certificates.

Monitor results regularly and emphasise "growth": Applying the appropriate dose of encouragement and admonishment during quarterly face to face student engagements are pivotal to maximizing student potential. A support programme that focuses on assessing the progress made rather than merely assessing whether students passed or failed, gives students courage to embrace challenges, overcome setbacks, while liberating stronger students to achieve their very best.

Establish smaller learning communities: Students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, often find it intimidating to interact with lecturers. As such, creating non-threatening smaller learning communities allows students the freedom to wrestle with difficult concepts, to learn how to articulate their understanding or lack thereof and to teach each other. Appointing peer mentors who recently passed the same academic year taps into a wealth of relevant expertise that will further increase the accountability and effectiveness of small learning communities.

Conduct self-evaluations: Some of the most powerful changes occur when they are self-discovered. Asking students to reflect and write down the actions that they feel they need to stop, start and continue will reveal remarkable insights and save countless counselling hours.

Aim to develop independence not greater dependence: Support provided to students (whether through funding or support structures) should always aim to encourage and stimulate increased student responsibility rather than crippling students with increased dependability on a support programme.

Mining for potential by means of tertiary education bursaries is a worthwhile but too costly endeavour to settle for less than maximum social investment returns. Since bursaries remain a Mining Charter requirement, companies should ensure that their initiatives provide full and secure funding as well as effective student support structures.

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ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR WSP-ATR SUBMISSION 30 APRIL 2018? WE CAN HELP!

The Skills Development Act (2008) requires companies to pay SDL (skills development levies) to SARS on a monthly bases and to submit a WSP-ATR (Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report) annually to the company's relevant SETA. As experts in the skills development field, Beulah Africa will ensure that your WSP-ATR is submitted to your relevant SETA effectively and on time.



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WANT TO MAKE AN EVEN GREATER IMPACT THROUGH YOUR BURSARY PROGRAMME? JOIN US!

The Beulah Africa Development Bursary Fund was officially launched in 2014 and allows its sponsors 18A tax benefits and 100% socio-economic development points on the BBBEE scorecard. We believe education is the best method to break the cycle of poverty, not only for the individual, but also for his/her whole family. The Bursary Fund therefore supports underprivileged, but well deserving, individuals. We provide financial backing, social support, mentoring and personal coaching to the bursaries students. You can partner with our existing Bursary Fund or contract us to manage your Bursary Programme on your behalf.



WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE STATUS OF EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY? GET INVOLVED!

Beulah Africa proudly participates in the Voices Unite initiative. Voices Unite is a large-scale national research study focusing on South African tertiary students. This multi-organisational undertaking aims to reach +1 million tertiary students and survey more than 30 000 to inform real change and youth empowerment. The voices of our future leaders will unite on topics such as: the state of tertiary education, job readiness, youth unemployment and student views on a range of industries. Visit the inonafrica.com website to download the info pack and the pilot study report.

ABOUT THE WRITERS

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