

Mariannridge High School Mathematics Tutoring and Enrichment Project: A Report to Atisa Securities on its Gift for 2024

12 May 2024



2024 Cohort Orientation at Mariannridge Senior Secondary School Main Hall (13 April 2024)

Background: In August 2023 Atisa Securities donated R 126 000 to this project managed by the Umhlatuzana Education Fund, NPC. These funds will be used during the 2024 calendar year. Atisa confirmed that all the requirements had been satisfied for this donation to be counted toward Socio-Economic Development credits on the B-BBEE scorecard. 100% of the beneficiaries of this programme are Black as defined by the BBEE Codes of Good Practice.

The Mariannridge High School Mathematics Tutoring and Enrichment Project was founded in 2020 on a much smaller scale and builds capacity in mathematics for high school students in the Mariannridge area, which is a peri-urban former township just east of Durban. Although Mariannridge was originally established in the 1970s as a coloured township, the present population is nowadays almost exclusively Zulu. The schools in the area have suffered from low Matric pass rates although the pass rates at Mariannridge Senior Secondary School have significantly improved in the last few years. In 2020 this programme, which brings upper division students in the STEM subjects to Mariannridge, helped final year learners prepare for the Matric exam in Maths Literacy. This effort resulted in raising the pass rate from 57% in the previous year to 83%. In 2021 it was decided to re-organize the programme so that learners would enter starting at grade 8 and thus be able to benefit from four consecutive years of instruction. This was judged both by the tutors, ourselves, and the school leadership as preferable to focusing on trying to improve exam results at the very end. In 2021 the program served just grade 8, the plan being to add one new grade each year. In 2022 grades 8 and 9 were served, and in 2023 grades 8, 9, and 10. In 2023 the attendance each Saturday morning was approximately 200 learners taught by approximately 30 UKZN tutors.

Atisa Funding In the latter part of 2023 and continuing into 2024 part of the Atisa funding was used for tutor rewards and for remuneration of staff at the school working on Saturday mornings for the project. During 2023 we had an average of 30 tutors per Saturday coming to Mariannridge to teach an average of 200 learners from grades 8, 9, and 10. The tutors who are a pillar of the project receive a modest stipend, at approximately 30% of the going rate for this kind of work, financed by the Rotary Foundation, and it is key to this project for the tutors to feel that their contribution is sufficiently recognized. Atisa funds were also used to pay stipends for three people at the school, one person to ensure safety of the learners and attend to any discipline matters that may arise, one to organize the refreshments for the tutors and help with the record keeping (attendance of learners and tutors), and another to arrange and clean the classrooms used. Tutor transportation and stipends were covered with other funds. In 2024, as described in the next section, Atisa funding was additionally used to hire an onsite academic coordinator (for one day a week) and an administrative officer (to compile records of the project and deal with administrative matters other than finance).

Plan for 2024 The UEF Board of Directors met on 6 February 2024 to approve a programme for the 2024 school year. The following modifications to the programme were approved:

- Instead of relying exclusively on Rotarians for the management of the programme, two part-time staff members would be hired each for one day a week. The Academic On-Site Coordinator would be responsible for supervising and mentoring the tutors, ensuring the safety of the learners and dealing with any disciplinary matters, and liaising with parents and the schools. The other staff member would ensure necessary records are kept and also help with the liaison with parents. Mr Patrick Thomas, an experienced mathematics teacher at the school, was hired for the first position, and Ms Buyi Nkuku was hired for the second administrative position. The idea is that with proper mentoring of the staff, this project will become largely autonomous and self-sustaining, with the role of the Rotarians and members of the UEF Board eventually limited mostly to oversight, financial management, and fundraising.



- Rather than recruiting the students exclusively from Mariannridge Senior Secondary School, we would expand the programme to the surrounding schools keeping the number of learners served approximately the same. Each school would nominate approximately 50 learners to take part in the programme. The participating schools are Marriannridge, Thornwood, Dassenhoek and Niligiri. The students were chosen based on academic excellence and promise, and also on their ability to attend on a consistent basis.

Tutoring began with 32 tutors teaching 16 classes four for each grade. Grades 8, 9, 10 and 11 are being served this year, and the plan is to expand to include Grade 12 the following year. The next report for July will provide statistics and results for the 2024 programme for the first half year.

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