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ACADEMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Learner Support Programme Impact Survey

The findings show strong evidence of positive beneficiary-reported outcomes, particularly given the relatively large sample size of 1,020 completed surveys from 2,078 beneficiaries (49.1% response rate). However, it is important to distinguish between reported outcomes and causally proven impact.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the 2026 Learner Impact Survey conducted among beneficiaries receiving financial and mentorship / social support through the programme. At the time of reporting, 1,020 surveys had been completed and processed from a beneficiary population of 2,078 learners, representing a response rate of 49.1%.

The findings indicate overwhelmingly positive outcomes across key educational, psychosocial, and financial wellbeing indicators. More than nine in ten respondents reported improvements in academic performance, reduced financial stress, enhanced self-confidence, improved wellbeing, and increased clarity regarding subject selection and future career pathways. Furthermore, a substantial majority reported positive effects on school attendance and perceived meaningful differences between programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Overall, the results suggest that the programme is achieving its intended objectives of reducing barriers to educational participation while strengthening learner resilience, confidence, and educational aspirations.

1. Programme Reach and Survey Participation

Indicator	Number
Total beneficiaries	2,078
Surveys returned and processed	1,020
Response rate	49.1%

A response rate approaching 50% provides a robust basis for programme evaluation, although the possibility of response bias should be acknowledged, as learners with stronger programme engagement may be more likely to participate.

2. Key Outcome Metrics

Financial Wellbeing

Reduced Financial Stress

- 1,001 learners (98%) reported reduced financial stress.

This represents the strongest outcome measured in the survey and provides compelling evidence that the programme is effectively addressing one of the primary barriers to educational participation among learners from under-resourced communities.

Interpretation

Reduced financial stress is likely to contribute to improved educational engagement, lower absenteeism, improved concentration in class, and greater household stability.

Educational Outcomes

Improved Academic Performance

- 952 learners (93%) reported improved academic performance.

This finding suggests that the combination of financial support and social interventions is contributing positively to educational achievement.

Interpretation

The result indicates that removing economic barriers and providing additional support structures may be enabling learners to participate more fully in their educational activities and perform more effectively academically.

Improved School Attendance

- 789 learners (77%) reported a positive impact on school attendance.

While this remains a strong result, it is notably lower than other programme indicators.

Interpretation

The finding suggests that attendance remains influenced by factors beyond programme control, including transportation challenges, family responsibilities, community safety concerns, illness, and school-level factors.

Significance

Attendance may represent an important area for future programme strengthening and targeted intervention.

3. Career Development and Educational Planning

Mentorship Impact

- 960 learners (94%) reported positive outcomes from mentorship and/or workshops.
- Learners specifically reported greater satisfaction with subject choices and improved career clarity.

Interpretation

The guidance appear to be successfully addressing an important developmental need among learners by helping them make informed educational and career decisions.

This outcome is particularly significant given the role that subject selection plays in determining access to tertiary education and future employment opportunities.

4. Psychosocial Outcomes

Improved Self-Confidence and Wellbeing

- 963 learners (94%) reported improved self-confidence and overall wellbeing.

Interpretation

This finding demonstrates that the programme is delivering benefits beyond financial assistance.

The development of self-confidence, resilience, and wellbeing is strongly associated with:

- Improved educational persistence
- Better academic outcomes
- Increased motivation
- Enhanced future orientation

The results suggest that the programme's social support components are generating substantial psychosocial value.

5. Comparative Perceptions of Programme Value

Difference Between Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries

- 924 learners (91%) reported observing a marked difference between programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Interpretation

This result indicates that learners perceive programme participation as producing tangible and visible benefits.

The finding may reflect:

- Improved access to educational resources
 - Greater confidence
 - Reduced financial pressures
 - Increased educational engagement
 - Better preparedness for future opportunities
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6. Overall Outcome Assessment

The survey demonstrates exceptionally high levels of reported positive outcomes across all major programme objectives.

Outcome Indicator	Positive Response
Reduced financial stress	98%
Improved self-confidence and wellbeing	94%
Positive workshop impact	94%
Improved academic performance	93%
Difference to non-beneficiaries observed	91%
Improved school attendance	77%

Highest Performing Areas

1. Financial stress reduction (98%)
2. Psychosocial wellbeing (94%)
3. Career and subject-choice support (94%)

Strong Educational Outcomes

1. Academic performance (93%)
 2. Attendance (77%)
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Emerging Trends

Trend 1: Financial Support Produces Broad Secondary Benefits

The strongest outcome—reduced financial stress—appears closely aligned with improvements in academic performance, confidence, wellbeing, and educational engagement.

This suggests that financial assistance functions as a foundational intervention enabling broader developmental outcomes.

Trend 2: Psychosocial Support Enhances Educational Outcomes

The near-identical outcomes for:

- Mentorship / Workshop impact (94%)
- Confidence and wellbeing (94%)
- Academic performance (93%)

suggest a strong relationship between psychosocial support and educational achievement.

This reinforces the importance of maintaining both financial and social support elements within the programme.

Trend 3: Attendance Remains a Relative Constraint

Although 77% reported improved attendance, this remains substantially lower than all other indicators.

This suggests that attendance is affected by additional structural factors that may not be fully addressed through financial assistance alone.

RISKS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Risk 1: Attendance Barriers Persist

Despite strong overall results, nearly one-quarter of respondents did not report attendance improvements.

Recommendation

Undertake focused investigation into:

- Transport challenges
- Household responsibilities
- School safety concerns

- Health-related absenteeism
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Risk 2: Reliance on Self-Reported Outcomes

The survey measures perceptions rather than independently verified outcomes.

Recommendation

Strengthen monitoring systems by incorporating:

- School attendance records
 - Academic report cards
 - Grade progression rates
 - Matric pass rates
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Risk 3: Non-Response Bias

Approximately 51% of beneficiaries had not yet responded.

Recommendation

Increase participation rates through:

- School-based survey drives
 - Mobile survey completion sessions
 - Follow-up engagement with non-respondents
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Risk 4: Longitudinal Impact Measurement

Current data captures current perceptions but does not yet demonstrate long-term outcomes.

Recommendation

Track:

- Matric completion
- Tertiary enrolment
- Employment outcomes
- Alumni progression

EVIDENCE OF PROGRAMME IMPACT

While caution should be exercised regarding causal attribution, the consistency and magnitude of positive responses provide strong evidence that the programme is contributing meaningfully to:

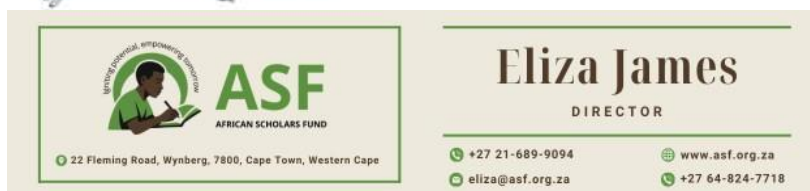
- Reduced financial barriers to education
- Improved academic performance
- Increased educational engagement
- Enhanced learner wellbeing
- Improved confidence and resilience
- Greater career readiness and future planning

The findings indicate that the programme is generating substantial educational and developmental value among learners attending under-resourced schools.

CONCLUSION

The 2026 Impact Survey provides compelling evidence that the programme is successfully advancing its mission of supporting learners from under-resourced schools. Beneficiaries overwhelmingly report positive outcomes across financial, academic, psychosocial, and career-development domains. The programme's integrated model of financial assistance and social support appears particularly effective, producing benefits that extend beyond immediate educational needs to broader learner wellbeing and future readiness.

Future evaluation efforts should focus on strengthening objective outcome measurement, improving response rates, and tracking longer-term educational trajectories. Nevertheless, the current findings demonstrate a highly effective intervention with significant perceived impact among participating learners.



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