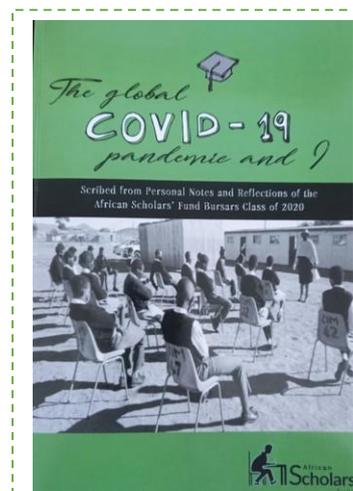


You can access these previous Newsletters at www.asf.org.za/reports . ECONOMIC SLUMP VS SOCIAL SUFFERING (2011); PUBLIC SCHOOLING – (fast becoming) PUBLIC ENEMY NO #: (2012); CHAOS MUST LEAD TO CONTEMPLATION, TO CONSULTATION AND FINALLY TO ORDER (2013); EXPRESSIONS OF “I AM” AN ASPIRANT STUDENT, A VALUED EMPLOYEE, A RESPECTED CITIZEN, AN EQUAL HUMAN BEING IS EVIDENCED “FAR AND WIDE” (2014); ONE YEAR AND A BIT LATER AND EXPRESSIONS OF “I AM, THIS IS MY VALUE, CAN YOU HEAR ME - DO YOU EVEN SEE ME” CONTINUES. THOSE THAT LOOK ON MUST ASK THEMSELVES: “WHAT ARE THE FILTERS THAT SHAPES MY EXPERIENCE OF THIS DRAMA CALLED LIFE?” (2015); WHAT SAY YE (2016); NOW IS THE TIME (2017); CHANGE AMIDST UNCERTAINTY (2018); WE’RE TRANSITIONING FROM THE “OLD” INTO THE “NEW” (2019); (no newsletter in 2020);

NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2021

COVID-19: THE PAUSE BETWEEN THE “OLD” AND THE “NEW”

SHOCK and fear gripped the world just as the year 2020 started to find its rhythm. China reports that an unknown and deadly virus has made itself known, and not long thereafter countries across the globe report the same. Panic rises, governments consult and its peoples are informed of an immediate world-wide hard lockdown. What on earth – this is unheard of! The reactions vary: some initially think “what utter nonsense”; others who follow the numbers of the ones that succumb to this deadly virus think “Oh my word, this is serious; and then there are those who start saying “Wait a minute, this is actually serious, because humanity is at risk not from a virus, but from a new world order being forced upon us”. Indeed, Covid-19 presents an unprecedented *moment critique* requiring us to pause, contemplate, consider and act in the best interest of Self and every Other – the world over.



THE ASF takes that initial shock and fear; more specifically the now further intensified challenges experienced by our young bursars and we give an opportunity for those in our care to express, to share and to experience a modicum of healing in telling their stories. Hanri Pieterse (MD, Oxford University Press – Africa) takes a personal interest in transforming our very roughly typed manuscript into a marketable publication. Without her remarkable support, the collection of stories might well have remained a mere collection unbeknown to many.

The Western Cape Public Library Services recognise the educational and potentially transformational value the publication presents and decide to make it available in both hardcopy and Ebook format. Do go and look for a copy at the library nearest to you (2022) – it is well worth the read. So, too, the publication finds favour and is endorsed by the Western Cape Education Department, who

commits to ensuring the publication’s presence in all their high school libraries.

Our personal commitment is to ensure that high school learners, in the better-resourced and semi-private schools, come to know of the publication too. To know of this very different reality experienced by their peers, that can help develop a better understanding and compassion for those thousands of ASF learners for whom teaching/learning came to a complete standstill when Covid-19 forced the lockdown of schools. ASF’s publication of our bursars stories is both a reminder of our unequal SA society and an acknowledgement of the impact of an unprecedented event.

The Global Covid-19 pandemic and I book will be available, for a limited period in hardcopy format, from the ASF Office (office@asf.org.za), whereafter you may download from our website (2022 – www.asf.org.za). It would make for a wonderfully thoughtful Christmas or New Year’s gift to share with family and friends.



IN ADDITION TO THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TOWARD OUR 2223 BURSARS, THIS YEAR, YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT ENABLED THE ASF TO PROVIDE:

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR OUR BURSARS IN 2021:

- ✓ Provide 580 Gr9 learners with a Subject Choice Advice Booklet
- ✓ Provide 441 Gr11 learners with a Career Guidance Workbook
- ✓ Provide 421 Gr12 learners with a NSFAS Online Application Guide
- ✓ Present the year-long ASF Computer Literacy Programme (MS Office Suite, Internet & Email) at Phandulwazi and Masibambane High Schools to 160 matriculants.
- ✓ Engage a full-time Maths Educator at Chris Hani High School
- ✓ Have Ambassador Marks present her Life Planning Motivation Workshop to learners from 3 schools
- ✓ Provide a safe haven for 2 x Gr12 bursars whilst they complete their final year at school
- ✓ Provide 250 bursars with a R250 Shoprite voucher (school, medical & food needs)
- ✓ Print hardcopies and make *The Global Covid-19 Pandemic and I* publication available in an E-book format

Indeed, at a time when many such organisations were forced to close their doors, your continued support enabled the ASF to do more than pay toward school fees and make funds available for uniforms and stationery. More than that, your loyalty and endorsement of the work of this Fund inspired like-minded donors to join hands in partnership with the ASF. So, it is with much enthusiasm that we welcome Terebinth Capital, Pinelands Rotary Club, The Bermuda and the Shuttleworth Foundations into our midst. When a new partner, one who's impossible dream was *To be the first African in space*, engages and comes back saying: "*There are no specific conditions attached to these donations and we simply wish that the ASF continues to operate as it does, and occasionally let us know how things are going*", then they have understood what this organisation is about because their heartbeat resonates with the work of The Fund, as does the heartbeat of every ASF donor. We are deeply grateful, but ...

WHILST STILL IN THE COVID-19 PAUSE, WE NEED TO CONSIDER HOW WE ARE GOING TO RESPOND TO WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THE YOUNG WARDNS IN OUR CARE:



RECOGNISING OUR BURSARS' CHALLENGES:

How do we continue to motivate, empower, upskill these young learners that look to us for guidance, support and hope, yet find themselves existing in realities that offer under-resourced schools, sometimes poorly qualified educators, unemployed parents and older siblings, overcrowded households with no electricity / running water / sanitation, noisy and gang-riddled communities – no playgrounds, trees or flowers and not a blade of grass.

What do we say to our matriculants for whom their first year at university would probably be one of "stay at home, register online and keep up with your tertiary education" – how do they respond when they lack the basic resources, have no computer or smartphone and if they be lucky enough to have access, yet have no funds for data? How do we expect these matriculants to overcome the challenge of access to modern technology and if they be lucky enough to gain access, how do they deal with their lack of skill – i.e. basic computer literacy? We cannot bury our heads in the sand, for how would we respond to this generation when their frustrations catch up with them and they decide that surely this is not the life they were meant to live, but that this is the life that was brought upon them which stems from the lack of basic human rights, decent housing and – in particular – adequate, relevant education to better prepare them for the 4th and already emerging 5th industrial revolution world of work?

Does the answer lie in, for example, a UCT Online School? A resounding *Yes* for thousands, but an even louder cry of *No* for those many thousands still existing in realities that speak to lack of resources and poor, overcrowded households. However, does the future point to *online everything* – again, a resounding *Yes!* The challenge then, especially for organisations such as the ASF, is to enter into meaningful conversations toward solutions that offer hope, dignity and a means of self-empowerment that can, in fact, lead our emerging matriculants to eventual economic sustainability.

RESPONDING TO BURSARS' IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

The negative impact of Covid-19 on our bursars was experienced not only in terms of their academics, but also in the home and the broader community, leading to exacerbated emotions that left most feeling demotivated and uncertain as to what their futures held. In response, the ASF set aside the requirement that bursars achieve 50% across all subjects, which would determine whether or not they qualify for their second payment. **This year every bursar registered on our programme received their first and second payment.** The action did not go unnoticed with many of our bursars writing to express their gratitude and their resolve to doing well in their final exams. So, too, **the office was flooded with expressions of gratitude from the learners that received the Shoprite vouchers.**



2021 BURSAR RESULTS:

The 2021 end of year learner results will be available in the 2021/2022 Annual Report which we hope to bring to you towards the end of April 2022 – below follows the JUNE EXAM RESULTS:

The initial **intake for 2021 was 2233 learners**, of which five learners dropped out of school and a further five moved to different areas, hence changed the school they now attended. 2191/2223 (99%) learners submitted their June reports where the general rule is that adequate performance (avg. pass rate of 50% across all subjects) is necessary for ASF to continue providing support.

This year the ASF sponsored 422 Gr12 learners of whom one learner dropped out before writing her June exams. 410 (97%) of our bursars achieved the required 50% across all subjects, with a mere 11 bursars achieving a below 50% average. **We wish the 421 ASF sponsored matriculants that will sit for final exams in 2021 every success.** They go into the exam room having played catch up to the curriculum these past two years, in addition to much uncertainty regarding their continued academic journeys. May their **resilience and dedication** bear fruit and culminate in their well-earned celebration.

Akuphelo Klaas

Grade 12, Siphamandla Senior Secondary School (Western Cape)

"Learning from home is a struggle, especially when you are living in an informal settlement where learning is not considered as an important thing. The lockdown led to libraries being closed and I used to depend on libraries for studying. I prefer a quiet space for reading and my community is the loudest. This lockdown caused nothing but trauma in our lives. I had no interest for studying and going back to school. I thought that this was the end of the road. I dropped academically. Before the national lockdown I knew and believed that I will pass with flying colours. I knew that I would obtain a minimum of four distinctions, but now feel hopeless."

Azukiwe Tyatya

Grade 12, Toise Secondary School (Eastern Cape)

"Covid-19 really affected me both academically and mentally. It continued being a barrier throughout my last year of school, one I was supposed to enjoy dearly. My academics dropped drastically because of the virus. We had to stay at home first for three months and then longer. That demotivated me a lot. Although I was only indirectly affected by the coronavirus it really did affect my well-being.

My sense of self-worth and confidence dropped by the day. I doubted passing my trial exams, which I passed anyways. My self-confidence with regards to academics was at zero.

You are very gently reminded that

Donations to the ASF are tax deductible.

Bank: STANDARD BANK

Account Name: AFRICAN SCHOLARS' FUND

Account Number: 071404104

Branch Code: 025009

Swift Code: SBZA ZAJJ (Rondebosch)

Please visit our website: www.asf.org.za and view the short video clips at [ASF Youtube Channel](#)

May you and your loved ones experience a blessed and safe year, and may we come to know Peace, Joy and Love - for All.



Eliza James - Director