

IMAGINE SCHOLAR

IMPACT

REPORT

2025



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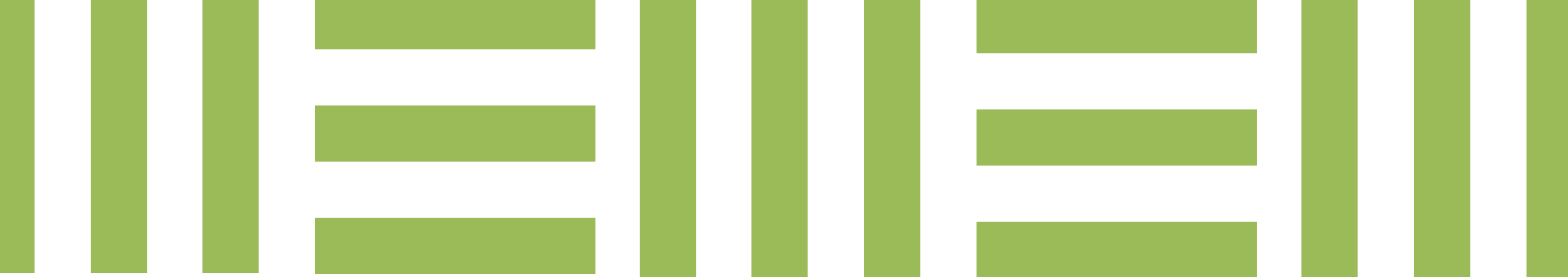
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LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends & Supporters,

As we step into our 17th year, I've found myself reflecting on how this work continues to evolve.

I keep coming back to a simple question: what does it actually mean for something like Imagine Scholar to grow well? Not just grow bigger, but grow deeper, more human, more aligned with what we set out to build. To become more sustainable and resilient, unfolding naturally through young people truly coming alive and taking ownership of the vision.

At its core, nothing has changed. We still believe deeply in finding young people with a special spark, the ones who are hungry, curious, and ready to build something bigger than themselves, and walking alongside them for the long haul. That belief remains our foundation. But what's been most exciting is what's evolving out of that core.

Over the past year, three meaningful areas of expansion have emerged, all natural extensions of the original thesis.

The first is in our local schools. Our alumni are no longer just supporting programmes, they're helping shape entire ecosystems inside schools. They're bringing teachers in, creating communities of belonging, and building cultures that feel different. There's a level of heart and ownership there that's hard to fully capture, but you feel it the moment you walk into one of these spaces. This year, they worked with hundreds of students in weekly programmes and reached thousands more through outreach, planting meaningful seeds of possibility and hope.

The second is through partnership. We've always believed that ideas, when lived and shared, can travel further than any single organisation. This year, that belief is taking shape. We've begun working alongside Mosaic in Limpopo to explore what a

different but aligned model of human-centred education could look like. They're hiring Imagine Scholar alumni, our teams are learning from each other, and there's a genuine sense of shared purpose. It's humbling to see incredible educators look to our work and say, "there's something here worth building from."

The third is through job creation. One of the most inspiring developments of my career has been our partnership with PACE Car Rental. They've now hired 13 Imagine Scholar alumni into professional roles – in HR, finance, and operations – and these jobs can be done remotely from our community. It creates a simple but powerful dynamic: a company gets exceptional people, and a community gets opportunity. The goal is to grow this from 13 to potentially hundreds of jobs in a remote campus we're building across the street from Imagine Scholar. The impact that kind of income can have in a place like ours is hard to fully explain, but you can feel the shift it creates.

We haven't drifted from the core idea. If anything, it's becoming clearer. The most powerful way to create lasting change is to invest in extraordinary individuals and help them build a network that lifts an entire community.

We've begun imagining what this could look like over the next 10 years, how many teachers will be leading differently, how many doctors and health workers will be shaping local systems, how many ventures will be built from within the community itself.

Something very powerful is building momentum.

If you're reading this, you're part of that story. Imagine Scholar has always been deeply human, built through relationships, trust, and belief over time. None of this happens without people who see something here and choose to walk alongside it.

So thank you. We're incredibly grateful to be on this journey with you.

Warmly,
Corey



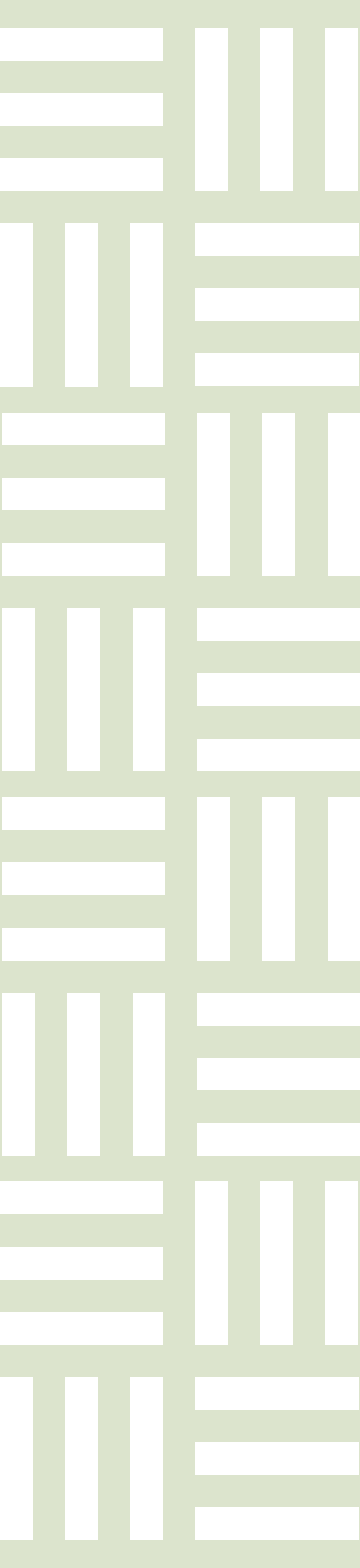
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WHO WE ARE

An introduction to Imagine Scholar





OUR IMPACT MODEL

At Imagine Scholar, we have always believed that the most transformative investment is not just in a young person's education – it is in who they will become, and what they will go on to build.

Our model is intentional. We enter a scholar's life at a pivotal moment – high school – when identity, ambition, and possibility are still being shaped. We don't simply prepare them for university. We walk alongside them through every transitional phase: through the uncertainty of first-year studies, through the professional world, and beyond. We are not just investing in a student. We are investing in a future leader, a future changemaker, a future neighbour.

When you invest in an Imagine Scholar, you are not simply funding a bursary or a programme. You are catalysing a chain of impact that extends far beyond anything we can fully measure today.

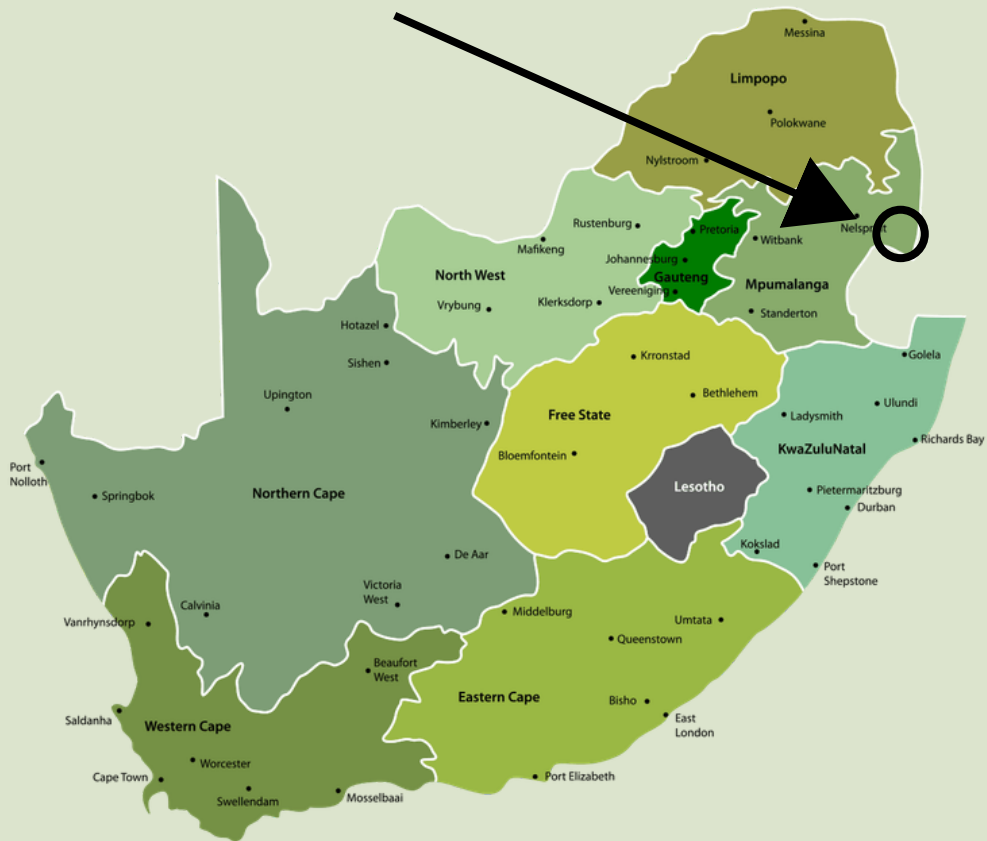
The short-term return is a young person whose life is transformed – who accesses opportunities they never thought possible, who discovers their own extraordinary.

The long-term return is a community reshaped – by the professionals, the innovators, the teachers, the builders who came through this programme and chose, in their own ways, to give back.

That is the Imagine Scholar model. That is the **ripple effect**. And it is only just beginning.

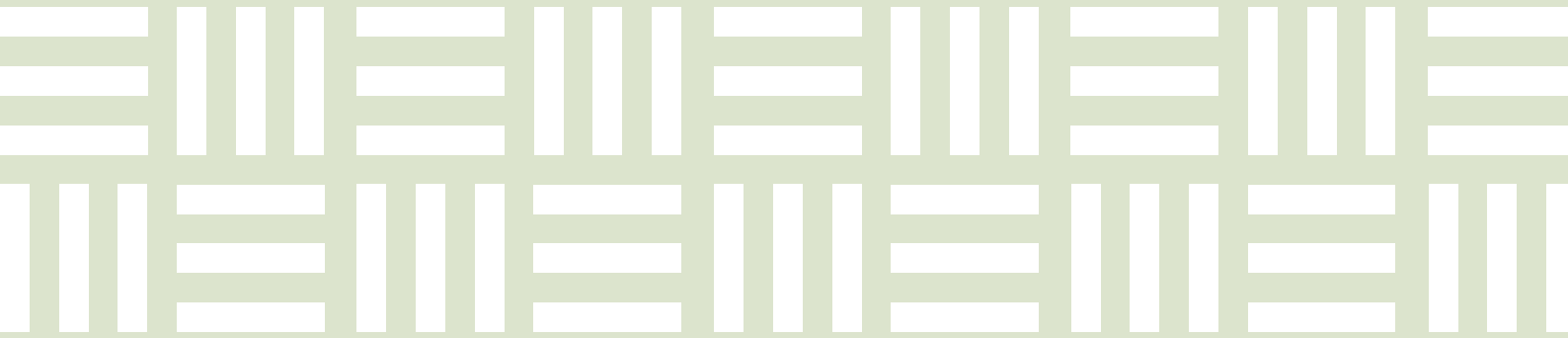
WHERE WE WORK

Imagine Scholar is rooted in the Nkomazi region— the pocket of land south of Kruger National Park, bordering Mozambique and Eswatini.



Home to roughly 500,000 people, Nkomazi is a place full of life, hustle, and a strong sense of community. The region also faces real headwinds: a large and diverse immigrant population, higher-than-average unemployment, and limited pathways to higher education. Power and running water come and go on a schedule rather than on demand. Yet families adapt, plan ahead, and keep going.

That resilience is exactly what Imagine Scholar builds on.

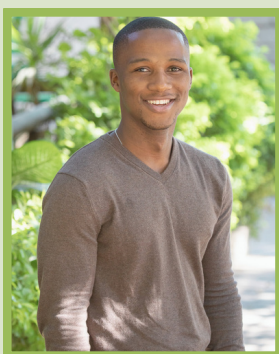




THE IMAGINE SCHOLAR TEAM

THE ALUMNI WHO CAME BACK

Our South African team is made up entirely of Imagine Scholar alumni. They came through the programme, felt its impact, and chose to come back – not because they had to, but because they wanted to create the same opportunities for the next generation that had once been created for them.



**Banele
Nkalanga**



**Carol
Sithole**



**Junior
Nkosi**



**Justice
Ripinga**



**Marcos
Tibane**



**Noluthando
Nkuna**



**Thenjiwe
Ndimande**



**Zinzi
Nsingwane**



**Zodwa
Madonsela**

This is also what sustains the organisation over time. Imagine Scholar doesn't just produce alumni; it ***produces people who feel ownership over its future***. As long as that thread holds, the mission carries itself forward.



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OUR PROGRAMMES

How we bring our mission to life



HOW DO WE DO IT?

OUR PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

1 COMMUNITY BUILDING - HYPING & 'YES, AND' ENERGY

The foundation of our work isn't a curriculum — it's a feeling. From day one, we cultivate a space where young people want to show up: high-energy, warm, and full of the kind of contagious momentum that makes hard things feel possible. Coaches model it, activities reinforce it, and peers catch it from each other — a summer-camp magic where celebration is louder than judgment. Because when young people feel genuinely bonded and safe, they stop playing it safe — and that's where real growth begins.



2 SHARED DREAMING - BEING EXTRAORDINARY

At the heart of our community is a shared belief, almost a shared delusion, that a life rich with meaning, impact, and aliveness is worth chasing, even when it means going against the grain or sitting with discomfort. We lean into Howard Thurman's question: not what does the world need, but what makes you come alive? To help scholars find their answer, we bring alumni back as guest speakers who deconstruct their choices, their risks, their lives, and invite scholars to treat each story like a tile in a mosaic, gathering pieces and slowly arranging their own portrait of who they're becoming.

3 STUDENT LED - POWER IN THEIR HANDS

Too much of education happens at young people, and we've chosen a different way. We co-build our programmes with students, creating real opportunities for them to have ideas, take ownership, and go do the messy, generative work of bringing something to life. Coaches are partners in that process, not directors of it. They help scholars develop the skills they're asking for, in real time, toward goals they actually set. Because we want scholars to understand: you don't come to Imagine Scholar. You are an Imagine Scholar. The programme shapes you, yes, but you shape the programme too.

Don't ask what the world needs.
Ask what makes you come alive,
and go do it.
Because what the world needs
is more people who have come alive.

HOWARD THURMAN



4 AN ETHIC OF EXCELLENCE - ITERATION, FEEDBACK, & MODELS

We believe young people rise to the bar you set — so we set it high, and then we show them what high looks like. Deeply influenced by Ron Berger's *Ethic of Excellence* work, we expose scholars to models of quality work, help them develop the aesthetic eye to deconstruct it, and build a culture where drafts, feedback, and revision are just how good work gets made. Student voice and ownership don't disappear in this process — they're scaffolded by the tools and coaching that help scholars understand what they're aiming at and how to get there. The habits they build here — giving and receiving feedback, iterating toward excellence, holding themselves to a standard — travel with them into whatever room they walk into next.

WHAT WE DO

PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW

OUR CORE PROGRAMME JOURNEY is built around a highly selective recruitment process designed to identify students who are deeply committed to building a life of purpose and legacy. The journey begins with the **Explorer Programme**, a mutual discovery process where students get to know us and we get to know them, before the most dedicated are invited into **Navigator** – our flagship programme requiring 20–25 hours per week of intentional development. From there, students move into **Early Legacy**, which supports them through their university years and early career before stepping into the full **Legacy** experience, where they become active builders of an extraordinary, intentional life as part of a broader network of people driving meaningful change.

PROGRAMME	QUICK FACTS	OVERVIEW
EXPLORER Grade 8 + 9s	• 5 hrs a week • 2-3 months, 2x a year • up to 90 students served throughout the year	Youth get opportunity to explore our way of dreaming, being and growing. Our main recruitment tool into Navigator.
NAVIGATOR Grade 8 - 12s	• 20-25 hrs a week • Year round • Up to 80 students a year	Our flagship programme. An intensive journey of identity, purpose, and growth – building the skills and mindset to lead.
EARLY LEGACY University Years- Early Career	• 2 in person indabas • 2 regional meet-ups a year • 5 digital events a month • 122 alum supported	Alum receive coaching, community, and the connection they need to navigate study, work, and life with purpose.
LEGACY Prime Career - Senior Leadership	• 2 in person indabas • 2 regional meet-ups a year • 5 digital events a month • 48 alum engaged	Alum contribute to Nkomazi as donors, mentors, teachers, health workers, and active contributors to the Imagine Scholar network.

NAVIGATOR SPOTLIGHT

Navigator (formerly known as our Scholar programme) is the original heartbeat of Imagine Scholar. It's been co-built with students over the years, shaped by their voices, and always evolving. It is deliberately experimental, because *if we want to develop young people who can bend the world around them, the programme itself has to model that possibility*. Navigator is where students don't just learn about agency, they begin practising it.



"Something that has changed in me is the way I feel about myself. Before this programme, I didn't have anyone who believed in me or what I want to do with my life. Imagine Scholar taught me it's not about the person you are, but the person you want to be."

• **Bheki, grade 11 Navigator student**



"I feel like I've grown a lot through Imagine Scholar. I came here with a lot of stories that held me back and limited how I saw myself. Now I feel like I have power and the people by my side to do what I want in life. I feel powerful!"

• **Innocentia, grade 11 Navigator student**

EXPANDING OUR REACH

OUTREACH PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



Alongside our core programmes we've spent the last several years experimenting and refining an outreach model that brings the magic of Imagine Scholar directly into schools.

CHALLENGER is where it begins. We go directly into classrooms with short, 15–30 minute Magic Moment lessons – carefully crafted experiences designed to create a trip-over-truth moment that sparks an ah-ha about who a student is, what they're capable of, or where they want to go. The lesson itself is a seed, but its real purpose is to ignite enough curiosity that students want to keep going.



An Imagine Scholar Pathfinder session - after school at a local government school

That next step is **PATHFINDER** – our weekly after-school communities where students can continue exploring that ah-ha in a deeper, ongoing way. More than anywhere else in our work, Pathfinder is where we lean fully into the foundation we described earlier: building a space that is positive, deeply connected, and oriented toward growth. Students aren't just attending a programme – they're becoming part of a community where showing up feels good, peers push each other forward, and that same contagious momentum takes root.

Both Challenger and Pathfinder exist because of a simple truth:
Imagine Scholar alumni came back to their community.

Having lived the experience themselves, they returned to their communities wanting to create the same opportunities for the next generation – and these outreach programmes are the vehicle through which they're doing it



PROGRAMME	QUICK FACTS	OVERVIEW
CHALLENGER Grade 8 - 12s	• Mini 'ah-ha' experiences • During school day • Year round • Imagine Scholar alumni led	In-school sessions at local government schools – bite-sized but powerful moments that plant a seed and open the door to the Pathfinder journey
PATHFINDER Grade 8 - 12s	• 2-4 hrs a week • Year round • Imagine Scholar alumni led	After-school communities built around belonging, exposing youth to activities that shape identity and inspire them to grow together



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2025 IMPACT STORY

What your support helped make possible
& ways to support Imagine Scholar in 2026



THE SHORT TERM IMPACT: 2025 NUMBERS

337

TEENS SERVED
THROUGH
WEEKLY
PROGRAMMING

2919

TEENS SERVED
IN LIGHT TOUCH
SCHOOL-BASED
PROGRAMMING

9

IMAGINE SCHOLAR LEGACIES
WORKING AT
AND LEADING
IMAGINE SCHOLAR

8

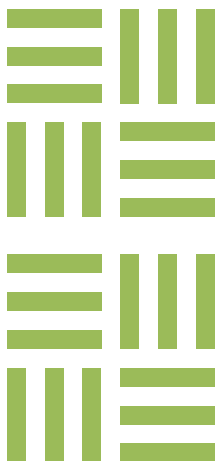
SCHOOL-BASED
PATHFINDER
PROGRAMMES
IN THE NKOMAZI

THE REAL END GOAL AND ITS RIPPLE EFFECT

THE EXTRAORDINARY 30 YEAR OLD & THEIR IMPACT

The true measure of the Imagine Scholar model is not a matric pass rate or a university acceptance. It is the extraordinary 30-year-old – rooted in where they came from, equipped with world-class skills and perspective, and actively choosing to create change.

That change takes many forms. Some scholars return to Nkomazi and build directly in their communities. Others are based in Johannesburg, Cape Town, or beyond – but they show up for the community in different ways: mentoring the next generation of scholars, funding grassroots projects, offering technical expertise, opening doors. Distance does not diminish the impact. If anything, it expands the reach of what Imagine Scholar can do. This is the ripple effect. And it is already happening.



Legacy in Action: The Numbers Behind the People

The data on the following page tells part of the story. But behind every number is a person who was once sitting in one of our sessions – who dared to reimagine what their life could look like, and who is now paying that forward. Consider what a single Imagine Scholar alumnus working in the community represents in terms of lives touched.

THE LONG TERM (LEGACY) IMPACT 2025 NUMBERS

65

YOUTH SERVED
**THROUGH ALLAN'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL CHESS
PROGRAMME**

51

CHILDREN SERVED
**THROUGH ZODWA'S
ISABEL ACADEMY
FREE PRE-SCHOOL**

370

TEENS SERVED
**THROUGH CAROL'S
SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION
PROGRAMME**

30

NEW JOBS CREATED
**THROUGH LEGACIES
& PARTNERS LIKE PACE
IN THE NKOMAZI**

THE RIPPLE EFFECT IN ACTION



Victoria Metiso, Medical Doctor

At the beginning of 2026, Victoria started working at Rob Ferreira Hospital, on the frontlines of public healthcare, caring for patients from Nkomazi who need specialist treatment. Every life she touches, every patient she advocates for, every junior colleague she mentors: that is the Imagine Scholar investment at work.



Allan Phiri, Primary School Teacher

Beyond his chess programme, Allan works with roughly 120 grade 6 and 7 students every year in his life science and mathematics classes – reshaping how young people relate to technology, problem-solving, and their own intellectual potential. The confidence he instils in a single student can redirect the entire arc of that child's life.



WHEN SCHOLARS BECOME BUILDERS

Emmanuel Sibiya, Entrepreneur

Emmanuel didn't set out to build a business. In his final year of university, he bought a second-hand fridge. A month later, a classmate asked if anyone had one to rent. That small moment of noticing a need, and acting on it, is where Mthunzi Fridge Rentals began.

A small initial investment allowed him to purchase 10 fridges, renting them to fellow students who needed affordable, reliable refrigeration in on-campus accommodation. An Imagine Scholar micro-business grant helped him reinvest and grow. By 2025 he had 20 fridges. By end of 2026, he expects to reach 40, *with monthly **rental income that has more than tripled** since he started.*

What makes Emmanuel's story powerful isn't just the numbers. It's the instinct behind them: he saw something students needed, built a simple system to meet that need, and is now thinking about how to scale it to other universities entirely.

That is exactly the kind of person Imagine Scholar invests in – someone who, given a small amount of belief and capital, builds something real.



A PARTNERSHIP BEGINS:

PACE CAR RENTAL & IMAGINE SCHOLAR

PACE represents a truly unique corporate partnership, one built on a genuine win-win. Imagine Scholar invests deeply in developing the real-world professional skills that matter most: character, diligence, self-efficacy, and gratitude. PACE recognised the value of that investment and jumped in with both feet, already **HIRING 13 IMAGINE SCHOLARS** onto their staff and launching the pilot phase of a rural campus designed to bring true professional roles in HR, finance, and operations to the Nkomazi region of Mpumalanga. For PACE it means access to high-level vetted talent at lower cost. For the region it plants the seeds of genuine rural economic development **through job creation**.

This partnership is only just beginning. We see it as a blueprint for how corporates can engage rural communities in a way that creates real, lasting value on both sides.

"Pace Car Rental is proud to be associated with Imagine Scholar – it closely aligns with our values, rooted in Mandela's belief that education is the most powerful weapon to change the world. Through Imagine Scholar we've helped graduates start businesses, find their first jobs, and have experiences that will shape their lives. They don't just use contributions wisely – they amplify them, and we appreciate that." - Grenville Salmon, Founder of PACE



WANT TO BE A PART OF THE

RIPPLE

EFFECT

IN 2026?

BECOME A STUDENT SPONSOR

A COMPOUNDING INVESTMENT

Mbali knows firsthand what it feels like to sit in a classroom and not be able to see the board – the frustration, the embarrassment, the quiet way vision problems can close doors. That lived experience hasn't made her bitter. It's made her a builder.

As an Imagine Scholar, she launched an eye health campaign on campus, testing students' vision and connecting them with care. Now she has her sights set on the local primary school. She is working toward becoming an ophthalmologist or optometrist— not just as a career, but as a calling.



Her commitment to community doesn't stop there. Alongside two fellow Scholars, she co-founded a girls' group at her government school, creating a safe space for young women to speak openly about the challenges they face.

Mbali is already changing lives – and she's just getting started. Becoming her monthly sponsor means investing in a young woman who turns personal pain into community power.

Invest in **MBALI**

by sponsoring her
or another student's Imagine
Scholar experience. Become a
monthly impact investor [here](#).

IMPACT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

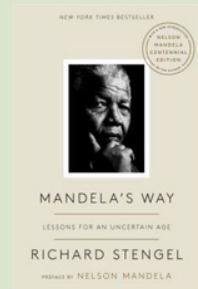
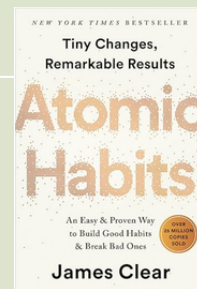
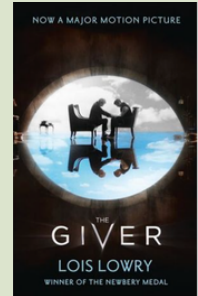
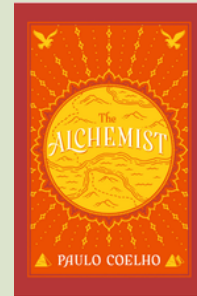
2026 ONCE OFF CAMPAIGNS

PASS IT DOWN - THE IMAGINE LIBRARY REVAMP **\$1,155**

Some books don't just teach you, they change the way you see yourself and what's possible for your life. Our alumni carry those books with them. The ones that cracked something open. The ones they wish they'd found sooner.

We're building a living library curated by alumni, for the next generation. Each book comes with a personal recommendation, turning our shelves into something more than a resource: a conversation across generations, a wall of proof that others have gone before and found their way.

Your contribution puts something transformative into the hands of a young person who's ready for it. **Make a pledge [here](#).**



TEXTBOOKS FOR OUR PATHFINDER STUDENTS **\$2,420**



In many of the government schools we work in, 50 to 80 learners share a single classroom. Desks are shared. Teachers sometimes don't come to class. Textbooks are scarce. Yet despite all of it, these young people are hungry to grow.

Our Pathfinder Programme exists for the curious, the kind-hearted, and the ones who quietly believe their life could be more – and we help them begin to see themselves and their futures differently. But a student can only grow independently if they have something to learn from.

A one-time gift buys a shared set of textbooks for a Pathfinder school community – giving students something rare: agency over their own learning. **Make a pledge to this campaign [here](#).**

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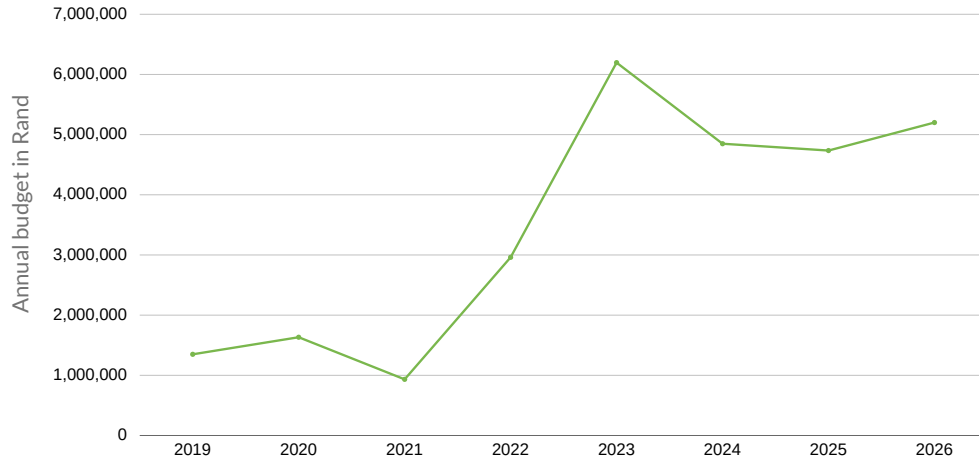
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FINANCIALS & PARTNERS

What your support helped make possible



BUDGET HISTORY

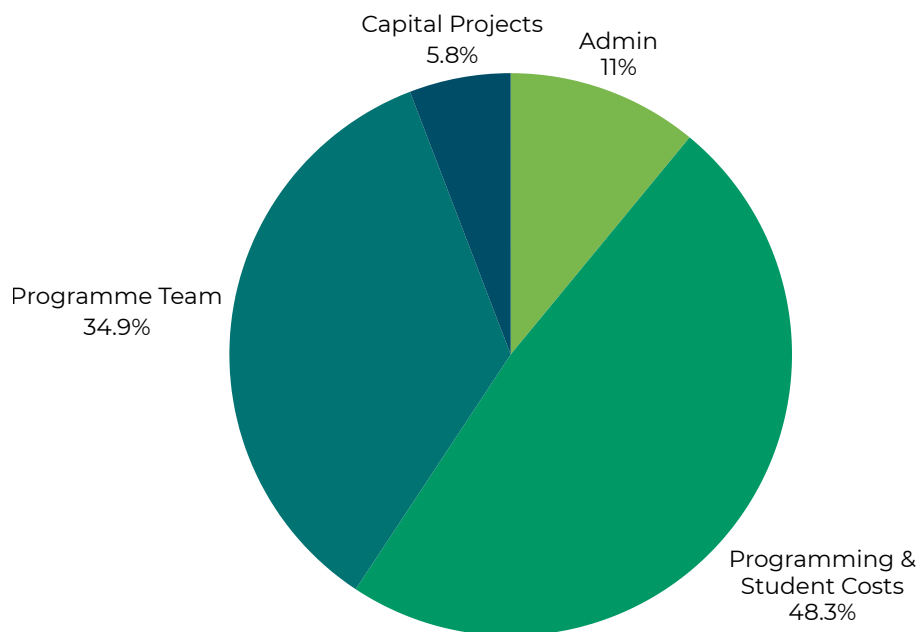


Financial Year: April-March (e.g. April 2025 to March 2026, listed as "2026")

*2023 & 2024 includes our capital campaign for the new education centre

*2021 budget decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

BUDGET BREAKDOWN



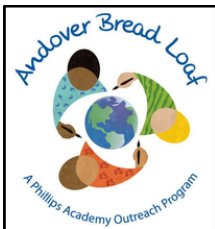
*For comparison - In US school budgets, staff salaries make up approximately 80 % of the expenditure budget

THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR PARTNERS



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— SCHOOL —

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in loving memory of Dan Wieden

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CONTACT DETAILS

We thank you for your continued support in bringing the Imagine Scholar mission to life

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