

# Transforming lives: Masia Maths and Science Academy shines, yet some stars await funding

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In the heart of Masia village, the Masia Maths and Science Academy, administered by the SAME Foundation and supported by the Distell Development Trust, stands as a testament to triumph against all odds. As the 2023 matric results unfold, the spotlight falls on extraordinary achievements, particularly those of Ntwalo Ngobeni, the beacon of academic excellence.



Under the theme of "Success despite Challenges", the Masia Maths and Science Academy has been a catalyst for change since its inception in 2019. Focused on cultivating interest and confidence in mathematics among primary school learners, the academy witnessed a surge in high school students opting for pure maths, shaping the trajectory of their post-matric academic choices.

At the forefront of this success story is Ntwalo Ngobeni, the overall top achiever, currently enrolled to study actuarial science at Wits University. His remarkable results are nothing short of awe-inspiring, with a perfect score of 100% in mathematics, an outstanding achievement of 95% in physical sciences, and exceptional results in accounting. Lwazi Mankahla, CEO of the Distell Development Trust, reflects, "Ntwalo's achievements showcase the incredible impact of dedicated academic support and the academy's unwavering focus on STEM subjects. Yet, even in the face of such outstanding success, we find ourselves addressing a critical issue – the 'Missing Middle'."

Despite Ntwalo's brilliance, he faces financial hurdles as the family's income surpasses the NSFAS threshold. His story is echoed by Phathutshedzo Mutamba, another top performer, waiting for financial assistance to settle university fees. These students represent the "Missing Middle", caught between financial barriers and the assumption that undergraduate programmes are covered by NSFAS.

The Masia Maths and Science Academy urges South Africans and potential funders to rally behind these exceptional students, ensuring their academic journey continues unhindered.



*Before renovations*

### **Meet the top five students:**

- Ntwalo Ngobeni (17): The epitome of excellence, Ntwalo is the overall top achiever, studying actuarial science at Wits University.
  - Mathematics: 100%
  - Physical Sciences: 95%
- Phathutshedzo Mutamba (18): Pursuing computer science at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, he awaits financial assistance to settle university fees.
  - Mathematics: Level 7
  - Average: Over 80%

Akim Baloyi (19): Studying BSc in actuarial science at Northwest University with NSFAS approval.

- Mathematics: 80%
- Mhluri Bilankulu (18): Studying mechanical engineering at the University of Johannesburg, approved for NSFAS.
  - Mathematics: 76%
- Mpho Tshishonga (18): Studying metallurgy and materials engineering at Wits University with NSFAS support.
  - Mathematics: 85%

### **Key achievements include:**

- A substantial increase in high school learners taking maths as a subject, with one school experiencing a jump from 29 to 77 learners.
- 25% of students achieving a 60% or higher mark in maths, laying the foundation for pursuing STEM-related degrees.
- The top five students of the class of 2023, profiling exceptional individuals who overcame challenges and emerged as stars of the academy.



Let us come together to ensure that the brilliance of students like Ntwalo Ngobeni and Phathutshedzo Mutamba does not face financial roadblocks. Support their academic journey by contributing to their university fees. Encourage other corporations and foundations to co-fund the Masia Maths and Science Academy, replicating its success across the country. Recognise the funding gap for students like Ntwalo and Phathutshedzo, and join the call for collaboration between government and private entities.

#### **About Distell Development Trust:**

The Distell Development Trust, operating as a broad-based ownership scheme, aims to improve socio-economic equality and employment levels in communities through strategic investments. With a vision of holistic empowerment, the trust partners with beneficiary organisations like the Masia Maths and Science Academy to uplift black youth, women, and communities in rural and peri-urban areas.

#### **About Masia Maths and Science Academy:**

Situated in Masia Village, Limpopo, the Masia Maths and Science Academy, administered by the SAME Foundation, is a beacon of hope for rural learners. With a mission to stimulate passion for STEM subjects, the academy provides academic support, infrastructure, and a pathway for underprivileged students to excel in mathematics and physical sciences.

#### **About SAME Foundation:**

The SAME Foundation is dedicated to supporting community initiatives that uplift and empower. As the implementing partner for the Masia Maths and Science Academy, SAME Foundation plays a crucial role in realising the vision of socio-economic transformation through education.

**#MasiaAcademySuccess #FundTheFuture #STEMforAll #DistellDevelopmentTrust #SAMEFoundation**

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