



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY  
IYUNIVESITHI  
UNIVERSITEIT

The Development and Alumni  
Relations Department

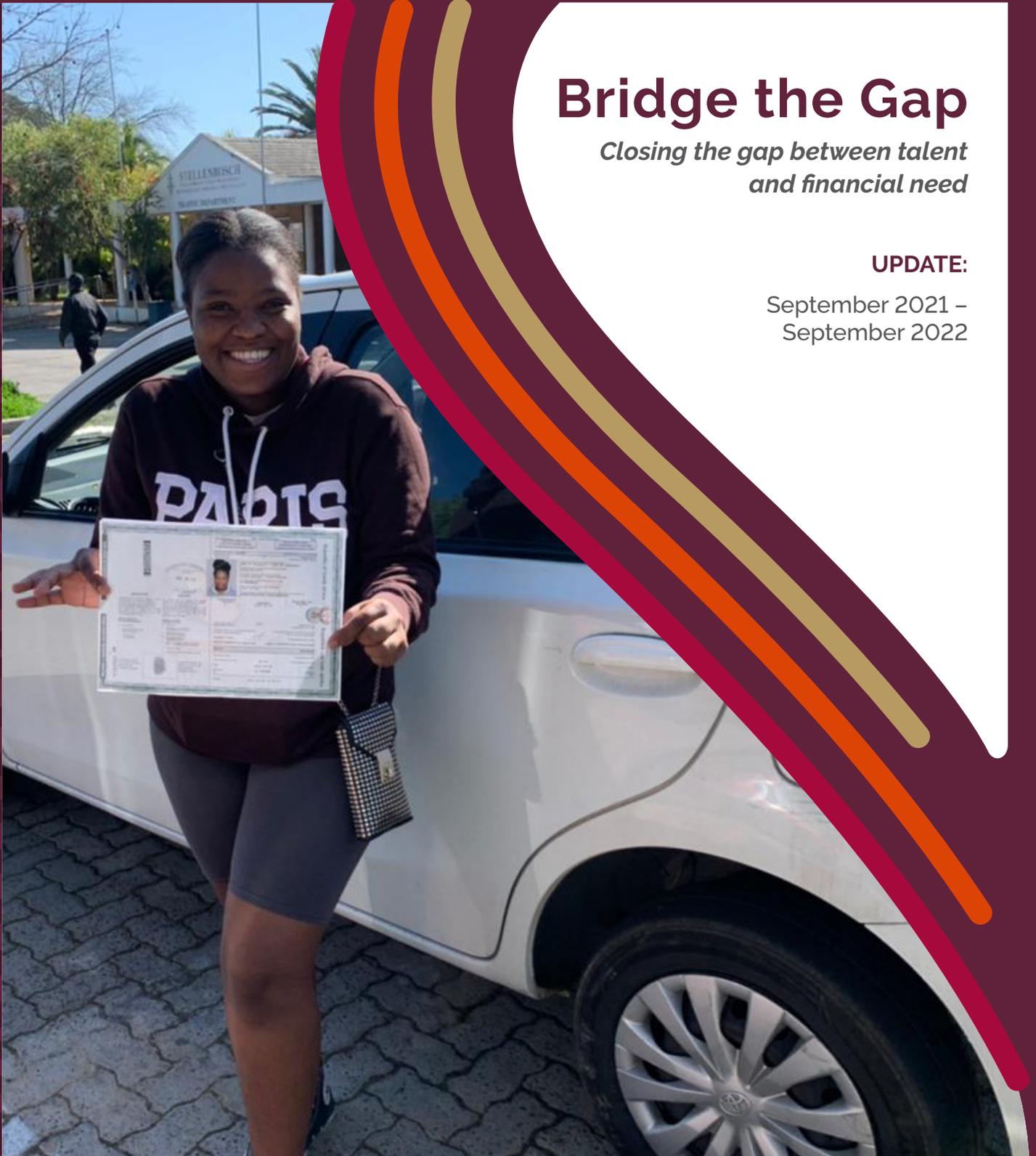
**BRIDGE  
THE GAP**  
ANNUAL FUND

# Bridge the Gap

*Closing the gap between talent  
and financial need*

**UPDATE:**

September 2021 –  
September 2022



forward together · sonke siya phambili · saam vorentoe



## A message from the Senior Director

**B**ridge the Gap (BTG) is Stellenbosch University's annual fundraising campaign that was launched in 2021. The campaign invites alumni, the student community, staff, parents, and friends of the University to support our students in overcoming the financial obstacles blocking their path to success. The aim of the campaign is to close the gap between talent and financial need and make a tangible difference in the lives of Stellenbosch University students.

Stellenbosch University (SU) is grateful for the many alumni, students, staff, and friends of our university who have contributed their time and talent to BTG and displayed exceptional generosity in support of our Bridge the Gap annual fundraising campaign.

Thanks to you we have raised **R13.5 million** for the various BTG initiatives. Through our BTG campaign you have helped us make a difference in the lives of our students. Whether you gave to the BTG fund or participated in an event – you have turned hope into impact for many of our students. It is therefore with much gratitude and enthusiasm that we share the achievements of the Campaign thus far in this campaign update.

With very best wishes and utmost appreciation,

*Karen*

**Karen Bruns**

Senior Director: Development  
and Alumni Relations

# Bridge the Gap



In 2021, we identified eight crucial areas where our students needed the most help to overcome the hurdles in their path to academic success and to have a holistic campus experience. In response to these needs, we launched our **Bridge the Gap (BTG)** campaign. BTG comprises a range of initiatives that support residential university life, student wellness resources and outreach programmes for student success.

In fundraising for these initiatives, SU will be able to create a cohesive support system for our students and as such, strike a better balance between academic excellence and a vibrant Stellenbosch University community.



#GradMe



#Zim4Zim



#Move4Food



Tygerberg Pantry Project



Action4Inclusion



Caught in the Middle



End Period Poverty



#MatiesHaveDrive

# BTG Initiatives

## #GradMe

For many students, including those who have received bursaries during their studies, their full costs at university are often left unfinanced – leaving many students with unpaid fees at graduation.

Graduating students receive an academic transcript and degree certificate however, those with outstanding fees receive an invoice and will only be issued with a degree certificate or an academic transcript once they have settled their debt. For those who have not yet secured employment, this places them on the back foot as they enter the search for employment.

Student debt at Stellenbosch University has increased significantly over the past three years and exacerbated even further due to the impact of COVID-19 and the global economic slowdown on family incomes. On average, students with debt upon graduation owe more than R30 000 each. The impact of this lingering debt hampers their capacity to contribute to a talented workforce and contribute meaningfully to our economy.

Through the generous support of our donors, we have raised R8.1 million for **#Gradme** with 165 students benefitting from these donations.

**R8.1 million raised**  
**165 student beneficiaries**

*"...I was stressed. I think I was also depressed in a way because I didn't know how I was going to raise the funds that I owed the institution and then they came along and helped me, so I'm grateful..." - Thabo Hlongwane, MEng graduate*

*"...the bursary means so much to me as it has impacted my life so greatly which enabled me to receive my transcript at the end of the year, which I can use to apply for further study. For this I am very grateful." - Sibiya Kuvunakala, BEng graduate*



## #Zim4Zim

In early 2021, the Development and Alumni Relations Division received a call for help from a Zimbabwean final year student that struggled to settle her student debt by the time of the March graduation. Due to the timing of her request and the amount that she required, we were unable to offer her assistance to settle her debt by the end of March.

This call for help led us to think about other Zimbabwean final year students in similar positions. Based on our records, we identified 187 Zimbabwean final year students in 2021 that had varying amounts of debt on their student accounts. We then engaged a few Zimbabwean students and the Zimbabwean Student Society to determine the prevalence and the reasons for this problem. This allowed us to build a clear picture of the number of students that had student debt and had no other means of support. It also highlighted other challenges our students from other parts of Africa faced during their studies.

**#Zim4Zim** was thus launched to provide student debt relief for financially challenged but academically deserving Zimbabwean final year students to help them settle their student debt before graduation. Zimbabwean students account for our second highest cohort of international students studying at Stellenbosch University. The continued poor economic climate in that country and the impact of COVID-19 has resulted in Zimbabwean final year students (postgraduate and undergraduate) incurring varying amounts of student debt, with 112 of the 187 having no other source or access to funding to cover the debt on their accounts by the time they graduate. The accumulated debt of these 112 students is just over R3 million.

**R21 280 raised,  
3 students supported**

*"Thank you very much for this opportunity you have given me. My family and I are more than grateful, and we don't know how to thank you for this opportunity because I surely didn't know how I was going to get the fees."*  
— Kholiwe, #Zim4Zim recipient

*"We may not have met; I hope we do someday. You have become a part of my journey. Thank you for what you have done for me, I cannot express how thankful I am. Please however, accept this card as a show of my gratitude."* — Takadiwa, #Zim4Zim recipient

## #Caught in the Middle

The term 'missing middle' was coined to define university students who do not qualify for state financial aid but whose families cannot afford to fully fund their studies either. This group – with family incomes of between R350 000 and R600 000 a year – include some of our most talented and academically gifted students. We have started tracking student household incomes since 2019. ***Over the past three years, 'missing middle' students are estimated to form around 18,1 % of all first-year newcomer students at our University. This number could be extrapolated to the entire undergraduate population group of approximately 20 000 students per year.*** This percentage is rising sharply as the economic impact of COVID-19 and the global economic slowdown is felt.

Financial support for this group of students is essential. Many of these students are being partially supported by the University with merit bursaries for academic performance but still have a shortfall to cover their studies.

Unfortunately, the University's contribution towards supporting students from this cohort is restricted by the increased financial strain placed on the University due to the progressive decline in State subsidies for universities.

Without adequate financing, there is a danger of these students dropping out of university. This risk makes them a highly vulnerable group needing urgent financial assistance. We are therefore on a major drive to solicit support from our partners to help us provide students from the 'missing middle' with a top-up bursary to cover the shortfall on their fees. The cost of a top-up bursary towards tuition or accommodation fees is R60 000.

## #Move4Food



***"Recent literature indicates that food insecurity is an emerging and alarming issue among students at institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Stellenbosch University students are not an exception. In addressing this problem, the Centre for Student Counselling and Development's social workers at Stellenbosch University (CSCD) continues with its interventions to assist students experiencing this challenge. Therefore, the #Move4Food Fund has been tremendous at making a significant contribution to the well-being of students who experience food insecurity. The #Move4Food Fund eases the burden of hungry students at both the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses. We are grateful for the generous donors who contribute to the fund."*** — Lizzie Witbooi, SU Social Worker



After an increased awareness of the need for food support amongst our student population, we launched our #Move4Food campaign in 2018. It was initially supposed to run for three years but due to a sustained need for food support from our students, we have continued with the initiative.

The purpose of #Move4Food is to provide basic support to food insecure students to ensure their continued academic success. In essence, we see #Move4Food as a social justice response that maintains the dignity of our students while promoting their academic success.

As an emergency fund #Move4Food allows our social workers to provide an assessed student with immediate help to a maximum of R1 500 per student per year. In 2021, cash allowances ranging between R500 and R900 per person was allocated based on their need after assessments were done. Some students were assisted more than once during the year. In total, we distributed **R261 250 of #Move4Food allowances in 2021 amongst 223 students** to ensure they have access to food. With the ongoing and generous support of our donors, the #Move4Food initiative has raised more than R2 million since 2018. During the period from April 2021 to the end of April 2022, we received donations to the value of **R660 812, 94.**

*"Many of us have nowhere to turn to when we are faced with hunger. It is also significant that I raise the fact that poverty is not a choice. #Move4Food's contributions are the reason that we smile and still hold our dignity as students of Stellenbosch."*



## Tygerberg Pantry Project

Students in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (based in Tygerberg, Cape Town) and the Tygerberg Student Council established the Tygerberg Pantry Project (TPP) in 2015, following an awareness of overwhelming food and toiletry insecurity among students on our Tygerberg Campus.

The Tygerberg Pantry Project provides food and toiletries for our Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences students where there is a concerning high level of food and toiletry insecurity. The project relies on students and staff donations of non-perishable food items and toiletries. Students in need can access these necessities at communal pantries located on the Tygerberg campus.

When cash donations are received, funds are used to purchase monthly groceries that are enough to supply all the residences on campus. The goods are purchased by the Faculty's finance division from approved retailers. Each residence committee must manage the pantry in their respective residence to ensure that there are sufficient supplies for everyone.

*"On behalf of the Tygerberg Pantry Project, we would like to thank the Bridge the Gap team for being eager enough to assist us in our challenges and to ensure that we meet the desired end goal, which is to alleviate food insecurity on our campus." - Anazo Mfenyana, Acting Chairperson Tygerberg Student Representative Council.*



## #Action4Inclusion

The **#Action4Inclusion** initiative aims to ensure the registration of all students by clearing their student debt. Not all students receiving financial assistance are sufficiently funded for their studies, and they often experience a shortfall in their fees. This results in an accumulation of debt throughout the year. As a result, many students that are academically eligible to continue in their study programmes in the next academic year are unable to register for the successive year until they have cleared their debt.

Driven by Prof Thuli Madonsela, the Stellenbosch University Law Trust Chair in Social Justice, **#Action4Inclusion** brings together academia, business, and civil society to assist students from diverse backgrounds in clearing their student debt so that they can register and continue with their studies.

The initiative also engages in fundraising for future student fees to avoid accumulation of debt. Numerous fundraising events have been held over the past year in aid of **#Action4Inclusion**, including Social Justice walks, mountain hikes and live events such as a comedy night. These activities have unlocked meaningful ways to reach out to communities and connect with people who support our goals.

## #Action4Inclusion Achievements

- The Thuli Madonsela (ThuMa) Foundation, in collaboration with Anglo Ashanti, donated an amount of R114 804,88 to assist 9 undergraduate students.
- In 2022, in partnership with the Student Debt Working Group and SU's Development and Alumni Relations Division, a total of 23 students were assisted with registration and/or accessing their academic records upon graduation.
- Prof Thuli Madonsela donated R344 150,00 in her personal capacity in 2022.
- During 2022, donations to the value of R171 316,97 have been received.
- To date, a total of 97 students have been assisted through the project, in collaboration with our partners.



*"It is only with the support and collaboration of government, civil society, big business, academia, and every ordinary South African and global citizen, that we will be able to make the ideal of social justice a lived reality for everyone in South Africa. Looking at the wonderful support for the #Action4Inclusion campaign, I am confident that social justice can become a reality in our country." – Thuli Madonsela, SU Law Trust Chair in Social Justice*

## #End Period Poverty

Period poverty is a prevalent issue in South Africa where many women cannot afford feminine hygiene products. Although the South African government, on evidence presented by Stellenbosch University's Law Clinic, zero-rated VAT on feminine hygiene products to make them more accessible and affordable in 2019, there are still many students who simply cannot afford them.

Their inability to access these products, detrimentally impacts their education, physical health, and mental health. It is also a matter of dignity — not having access to feminine hygiene products means that affected students are not able to participate meaningfully in daily life and are often torn between purchasing food or menstrual supplies. Furthermore, their powerlessness to manage their period, results in students missing classes or avoiding study groups which, in turn, negatively affects their academic performance.

To tackle this issue on our campus, we are working towards raising enough funds to purchase sanitary pad vending machines. The machines will be placed in key areas around campus for students to access.

Since launching the initiative, we have raised **R225 477, 06** — enough to purchase two vending machines. The initial rollout of the vending machine initiative is scheduled for the last quarter of 2022 and will see one vending machine being placed at each of the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses.

## #MatiesHaveDrive

Having a valid driving licence is often a requirement for many careers. Unfortunately, the cost of driving lessons can be a financial burden for many students, especially those receiving financial aid and who don't have extra funds to cover the cost of lessons. This means that many students end up leaving the university adequately qualified but with a major disadvantage when applying for work in their respective fields.

In efforts to help these students, senior student leadership structures came together to raise funds to help students pay for their driving lessons. The student-led initiative was launched in 2020 and in 2021, it was incorporated under the Bridge the Gap campaign. The **#MatiesHaveDrive** initiative has two components: the **#MHD learner's license school** and the **#MHD driving license school**.

The initiative is run by student volunteers who oversee all aspects of **#MatiesHaveDrive** including, the selection of beneficiaries. The selection is done using a two-step process. Students who apply for funding submit a motivation letter, which is evaluated by a panel based on a rubric. Shortlisted candidates are then interviewed based on the number of places available.

We hope that through **#MatiesHaveDrive**, our students are better equipped to capitalise on the degrees they worked so hard to get, and not be limited by the lack of a driving licence.

**#MatiesHaveDrive** covers the cost of the learner's license test fee, 10 driving lessons per student and the booking fee for the license test. To date, we have provided 20 students with the opportunity to commence with the process of obtaining their driving license.

*"It has been an amazing experience to work with our students and provide them with the opportunity to obtain their driving license. #MHD does not only increases their likelihood of getting a job, but it also provides our students with a sense of independence and confidence to tackle life after university."*

- Althea Carsten, **#MatiesHaveDrive** Chairperson



More than R60 000 raised,  
20 student beneficiaries



*"I am a third-year social work student and having a license is one of the basic requirements my field of work requires. My department emphasizes the importance of being a licensed driver from first year and so being able to acquire it with the help of a very compassionate and patient driving instructor meant the world to me. I really do appreciate opportunities like these that equip us with lifelong skills that also separate us in the job-hunting market, making us more eligible to find employment in today's economic climate. Thank you #MHD for taking a chance on me." - Hellen Mmile, Undergraduate student in Social Work*



*"I always had struggled to budget for my lessons. Fortunately, I got the opportunity from the program to do 10 paid driving lessons. Today, I have an official driving permit. Thank you very much #MHD, I will forever be grateful for this opportunity." - Ntombele Mkwanazi, Undergraduate student in Agricultural Science*

*"Being part of the #MHD initiative allowed me to pursue my driver's license, which as a young adult will go a long way in affording me work opportunities that otherwise would not have been possible. This initiative has boosted my confidence on the road and in the job market! I can now pursue job opportunities that have been closed off to me in the past." - Tlotlang Gasekoma, #MatiesHaveDrive beneficiary*

*"Being the first in my family to attend University, I would not let financial burdens prevent me from achieving my goals. As a future teacher, I believe that transportation is essential. Thus I believe that being part of the #MHD initiative will allow me to fulfil a vital part of my life and the students I will assist next year." - Kiara Johnson, #MatiesHaveDrive beneficiary*

	Cost per student	Beneficiaries	Total
#MHD learners license (& driving lessons)	R 3 422	14	R 47 908
#MHD driving license initiative	R 3 320	6	R 19 920
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>R 67 828</b>

# Our fundraising activities

## Giving day

In 2021, we hosted our 48-hour Giving Day from 7 to 8 October 2021 to raise funds in aid of BTG and to create awareness of BTG and its various initiatives. Due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time, the event took on a hybrid format and included activities such as a spinathon, a movie marathon, athletics, and table tennis. This year, we will once again host a Giving Day on campus from 6 to 7 October 2022. Staff, students, and alumni will have the opportunity to raise funds for BTG by donating via the Giving Day platform and participating in the various activities planned for the day. Our target for Giving Day is R2 million!

## Staff Giving Day

Our inaugural Staff Giving Day took place on 12 May 2022. Fifty-six SU staff attended the paid event where we introduced them to BTG and rallied them to support the various BTG initiatives. The event raised R5 935 for BTG from ticket sales and donations.

## Peer-to-peer fundraising

Peer-to-Peer activities are also an important fundraising stream for BTG. In March 2022, we had a team enter the Cape Town Cycle Tour comprising of 32 cyclists who came out in support of BTG, including SU Vice-Chancellor and Rector Prof Wim de Villiers. The event raised R44 350. In addition, SU staff members Robert van Staden and Francois Swart, participated in the Absa Cape Epic, and alumna Petro Mostert and her riding partner Vibeke Moore, tackled the joberg2C adventure and raised R59 500 in support of #Move4Food.

Upcoming peer-to-peer events which staff and alumni can support include the Cape Town Marathon on 15 and 16 October and the Ride Joburg cycle race on 20 November 2022.

#Move4  
**MATIES**

## Maties X Veldskoen

SU is collaborating with Veldskoen Shoes, a local shoe company, which also produces the flip-flop brand, Plakkie. The collaboration, **Maties X Veldskoen**, involves the sale of hand-crafted leather shoes, incorporating SU's signature maroon colour and the SU logo as well as a Matie branded flip-flop. Five percent of the total sales of the shoes will go towards BTG. Shoes can be purchased online at <https://www.veldskoen.com/collections/the-matie>



We hosted a movie marathon on Saturday, 30 July from 09h00 to 23h00 at Pulp Cinema in the Neelsie Student Centre to raise money for BTG. The event attracted 190 movie-goers and R9500 was raised in aid of BTG.

## Faculty Trolley Challenge

We launched our Faculty Trolley Challenge on 22 August 2022. The Faculty Trolley Challenge calls on all SU faculties to collect non-perishable food items, feminine hygiene products, toiletries, and funds for students in need. The Challenge will run until 7 October 2022 and part of the challenge is for faculties to outnumber one another's donations. The first Faculty Trolley Challenge took place in 2021 but it occurred on a much smaller scale with the Dean of Engineering, Wikus van Niekerk and the Dean of Agrisciences, Danie Brink participating in the drive to raise funds for the Tygerberg Pantry Project, one of BTG's initiatives. This year we have eight of our ten faculties involved in efforts to collect in-kind contributions for BTG's Tygerberg Pantry Project, #Move4Food and the End Period Poverty initiative.

# How you've helped us Bridge the Gap!

## R13.5 million

raised

### 3

outstanding fees covered for **3** Zimbabwean students

### 165

outstanding fees covered for **165** graduating students in 2021

### 223

students assisted with access to food in 2021

### 2

vending machines will be available in our efforts to #EndPeriodPoverty

### 20

students given the opportunity to attain a driving licence

### 97

students assisted with registration fees via #Action4Inclusion

# Thank you!

Thank you for believing in Stellenbosch University's mission and our important role in shaping tomorrow's leaders and engaging thoughtfully and purposefully with our community and the world.

The impact of the BTG campaign is already being felt. We can see the difference that having a driving license or being able to graduate with peace of mind — and your degree certificate in hand — has made to our students!

It's an exciting time for SU as we look toward the next phase of BTG and what a difference it will make to our student community. You can continue to play a key part in this and help us help our Maties reach their full potential at university and thereafter.

## Supporting our campaign

Should you wish to contribute to Bridge the Gap, you may support the Annual Fund on the whole or any of the individual initiatives under the campaign. Donations to the Annual Fund go into a central fund that is overseen and administered by an Annual Fund Committee, which comprises of student leaders, SU fundraising and alumni engagement staff and our student affairs colleagues. These donations directly fund students' needs, allowing us to provide the best educational experience for all our students and enabling them to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

### **In supporting this campaign, you will:**

- Help to remove the real financial barriers that our students are facing daily, including those from middle-income families.
- Help us deliver sought-after graduates who can make a positive difference in society, not just in South Africa, but globally.
- Support a talented and economically diverse student body that results in a more dynamic community for us all.
- Ensure that our students have every opportunity to pursue fulfilling lives and careers without the burden of significant debt.
- Gain tax benefits. If you're based in South Africa, you may request a Section 18A tax certificate for all donations over R500. Donors based in Europe are eligible for tax benefits in most European countries, including those in Transnational Giving Europe (TGE) partner network. UK donors may give via the Stellenbosch University UK Trust, and we encourage our donors to complete a GiftAid declaration which increases the value of your charitable donations by 25%, because the charity can reclaim the basic rate of tax on your gift – at no extra cost to you.



## CONNECT WITH US:

[www.matiesalumni.com](http://www.matiesalumni.com)  
[www.matiesconnect.com](http://www.matiesconnect.com)

Follow the #BridgetheGap campaign on social media via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

 Bridge the Gap (SU)

 @bridgethegapsu

 @bridgethegap\_su



**MATIES**  
ALUMNI