



AFRICA FOUNDATION

empowering communities • enabling conservation

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Established in 1992

Patrons: Archbishop Emeritus Desmond and Mrs Leah Tutu

COMMUNITY LEADERS EDUCATION FUND (CLEF) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Introduction to CLEF

The success of rural development programmes is largely dependent upon leadership from dynamic local champions. The experience and wisdom of these individuals is one of the greatest assets of these communities. With this in mind, Africa Foundation began the Community Leaders Education Fund (CLEF) scholarship programme in 1995. The CLEF mission is to assist young people who have displayed leadership potential to acquire education and skills that would not otherwise be available to them. We have identified “leadership development through education” as a critical component to enabling communities to realise their dreams of development.

Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of CLEF is to empower communities by building leadership and enabling individuals to realise their dreams. The specific aims are to provide access to tertiary education, reduce unemployment levels and increase household incomes.

An important component of the CLEF Programme is the Buyisela¹ Programme. Each scholarship recipient is required to conduct a project in their communities during two of their vacations, in order to share their skills, thus ensuring that the CLEF scholarships benefit both the individual and the community. The Buyisela Programme encourages scholarship recipients to use their newly acquired skills to give back to their communities. Buyisela reports must be submitted on completion of each project, with typical examples including helping in local clinics, offering career guidance at high schools, community clean-up campaigns or assisting with community agricultural projects.

The main objective of the CLEF Programme is to provide young leaders with the skills to increase their opportunities for employment by pursuing tertiary education. We focus on the tertiary level, as experience has shown that scholarships for primary and secondary students are not an issue or priority for community members. School fees for primary and secondary students in many rural communities are completely subsidised by the government, so that education is accessible to even the most disadvantaged families. The need for tertiary scholarships, however, is dire, as less than 1% of high school matriculants are able to afford a tertiary education.

In the South African economy, tertiary education can make all the difference between employment and unemployment – more so for people from rural communities where casual employment options are severely limited.

¹ Buyisela is the isiZulu term for bringing something back.

“The Mesebetsi Labour Force Survey shows that those with tertiary education have a 98% chance of being employed, whereas those with only a secondary school-level education are over represented amongst the 45% unemployed.”²

Geographical Area

The CLEF Programme offers scholarships to students living in rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and the North-West Province. Africa Foundation is currently providing assistance to 56 students studying a range of courses such as Drama, Fine Arts, Education, Geology, Law, Accounting, Physiotherapy and Engineering.

Methodology

The success of the CLEF Programme resides in the strength of the programme’s methodology. The following procedures are closely followed:

- Students are not restricted to a particular course of study or a particular institution.
- Students return to their communities twice a year during vacation time to perform invaluable community service activities (known as the Buyisela Programme).
- CLEF provides partial scholarships – this means students are required to cover the balance of their funding through government financial aid or additional scholarship schemes, thereby encouraging them to take ownership of their financial responsibilities as well as committing to their studies. We have noted that the CLEF Programme has resulted in a competitive spirit within the rural schools, with more and more students striving for better school grades, thereby increasing their chances of acceptance into tertiary education institutions.
- Due to the significant gap between rural education and urban tertiary education, **Africa Foundation provides ongoing mentorship and support to all CLEF students throughout the year.** This assistance ranges from advice in securing further financial aid to maintaining contact after they have graduated to keep track of their employment progress.
- The CLEF Programme is backed up by Career Guidance courses which are offered to Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners by independent service providers. To date more than 2500 students have received career counseling.

Reporting

Africa Foundation is committed to providing supporters and donors with detailed and regular reports on all our projects. With regard to the CLEF Programme, Africa Foundation provides an interim donor report after the mid-year examinations in July. This interim report provides details of each student’s progress, their mid-year grades and details of their first Buyisela Reports. At the end of January Africa Foundation compiles a detailed final report. This report provides details of each student’s progress throughout the year, confirmation of results, a comprehensive financial budget, details of their second Buyisela Reports and details of the new students selected from the annual interviewing process.

Application process

The CLEF Programme activities start with circulating applications in August/September of each year. Lodge staff and Africa Foundation Development Officers circulate applications through local high schools and tribal structures, as well as an option to apply online.

Africa Foundation staff screen the applications and select a limited number of candidates for interviews. An interview panel meets with the short-listed candidates prior to the start of the academic year where students are selected for the programme. The interview panel consists of Africa Foundation staff, local lodge staff, local tribal authorities, and where possible previous CLEF

² Mamphela Ramphela, *Steering by the Stars: Being Young in South Africa*. Tafelberg Publishers, 2002, page 12.

students. On an annual basis we receive well over 200 applications; however limited funding restricts the number of scholarships we can award.

Unlike many scholarship schemes, CLEF students are not compelled to work for Africa Foundation after they complete their studies. They are therefore free to enter the job market directly, in their chosen vocation.

Mentoring

Throughout the year Africa Foundation staff remain in close contact with students to monitor academic progress and assist students in addressing problems that they might encounter. As these students are from rural areas with very little external exposure, this support through active communication with the scholarship recipients and their academic institutions forms an integral part of the programme's success.

Scholarships are approved on an annual basis. While we generally provide continued support for scholarship recipients throughout their multiple years of study, we have also learned that making the awards subject to annual re-application keeps the students focused on the need to keep up their academic performance each year. This also affords us the opportunity to re-evaluate the financial needs of each student, so that we can allocate available funds most efficiently.

The community is involved in four ways:

- As part of the interview panel during candidate selection
- As participants or beneficiaries of the CLEF students' Buyisela community activities
- As younger community members having known role models of academic success
- As eventual recipients of some portion of the CLEF graduates' income stream – either through local spending or through family support

CLEF achievements from 1996 - 2011 include:

- The funding of more than 260 students
- Over R3.5 million spent on actual scholarships
- Students have attended 33 different academic institutions.
- The development of a successful programme management process
- A successful screening and selection process for selecting students
- The establishment of strong relationships with community members who are actively involved in the selection process, ensuring that our young leaders are indeed leaders
- The extension of the programme to include artisan and hospitality courses