



The Story of the No Student Hungry (NSH) Programme University of the Free State

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.”

- Former South African President, Nelson Mandela

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|--|----|
| Goal | 3 |
| Institutional context | 3 |
| Background and rationale | 4 |
| National research | 5 |
| Philosophical context | 5 |
| A human project – one bite at a time | 6 |
| Six years: The NSH impact | 7 |
| Leadership and administration | 7 |
| Indicative budget | 8 |
| Support is needed | 9 |
| Strides towards sustainability | 9 |
| Contact details | 10 |
| The success of the programme speaks for itself | 11 |



Goal

The goal of the No Student Hungry (NSH) Programme of the University of the Free State is to ensure that poor students with strong academic records are adequately nourished and, in so doing, keep them at the university and increase their chances of academic completion and success.

Institutional context

The Mission of the University of the Free State rests on two pillars:
The Academic Project (academic excellence)
The Human Project (human embrace)
The NSH Programme works within the framework of the Human Project of the university in order to enhance the work of the Academic Project.



Background and rationale

The University of the Free State (UFS) has a proud record of transformation. Not only is it renowned for its candid acknowledgement of the human and development challenges faced by an institution in transition, but it has transformed its once exclusively white student body to one that is now 65% black and 60% female.

Located in one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, many students of the university come from rural and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and do not have the means to support themselves adequately while studying.

Preliminary research findings indicate that a majority of our students are not always sure where their next meal will come from, while many simply go hungry for days on end. The impact of these uncertainties on a student's motivation and concentration is devastating.

Many students eventually drop out of higher education to seek incomes for themselves and their families. As a direct result of hunger, therefore, talented young people are being forced out of further and higher education, with huge losses in human potential for the country. The personal, familial, institutional and societal costs of such losses in human potential are incalculable.

Preliminary research findings indicate that 59% of our students are severely food insecure and go through periods of hunger. We consider this to be a crisis.

National Research

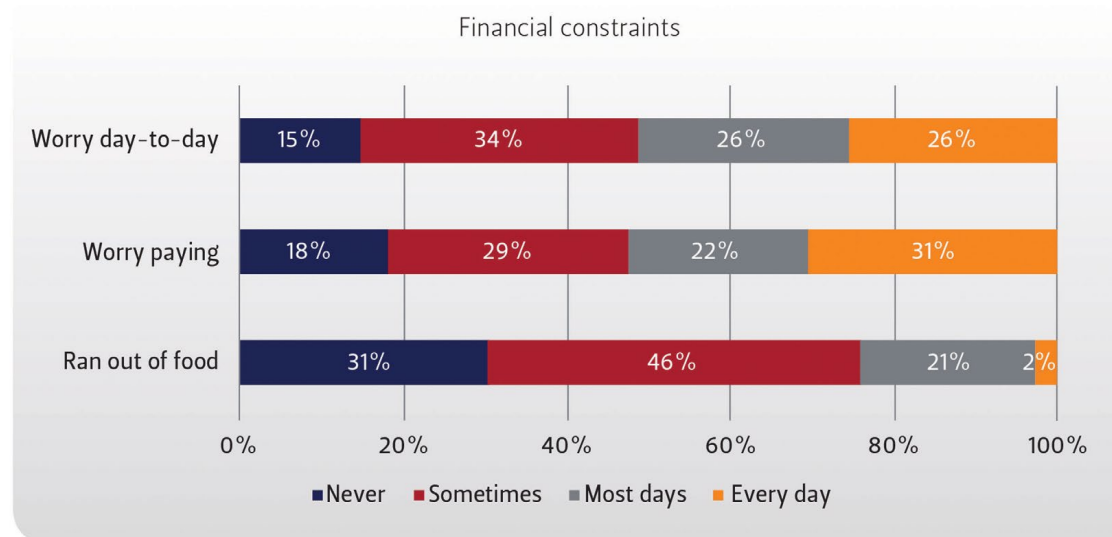


Figure 3: All students' reported financial constraints.

The South African Survey of Student Engagement Annual Report of 2016 revealed that only 31% of students never ran out of food. This reflects the dire situation which the other 69% have to face, while trying to pursue a degree.

Philosophical context

The Human Project at the UFS is intended to create empathetic and supportive learning environments which enable and encourage students to build bridges across the fault-lines of race, ethnicity, class, religion and national status.

When especially disadvantaged students sense that they are cared for, not only regarding their intellectual development, but also in terms of their more basic human needs, there is a greater capacity among them for participation in matters of reconciliation and restoration.

Even though the NSH satisfies an immediate physical need – hunger among students – it is important to recognise the broader context of human development and academic success within which the programme works.

A human project – one bite at a time

The NSH Programme was started in 2011. It is the first part of a broader approach to the problem of hunger on our campuses. The NSH Programme emerged as a flagship programme funded by donations from outside the university. A food bursary is allocated to successful student applicants on the basis of academic excellence and the commitment to public duty.

The bursary offers students a small daily allowance of R37 per day and provides for students with an average of 60% and above. It discourages entitlement thinking and builds a strong sense of responsibility on the part of those who benefit from the food bursary.

In addition, the NSH Programme offers food directly to many more students as a result of direct donations from large supermarkets and through its various partnerships, both on and off the UFS campuses.

We aim to expand the project annually in line with growing support in order to alleviate hunger among students. In so doing, it significantly enhances impoverished students' chances of completing their degree.

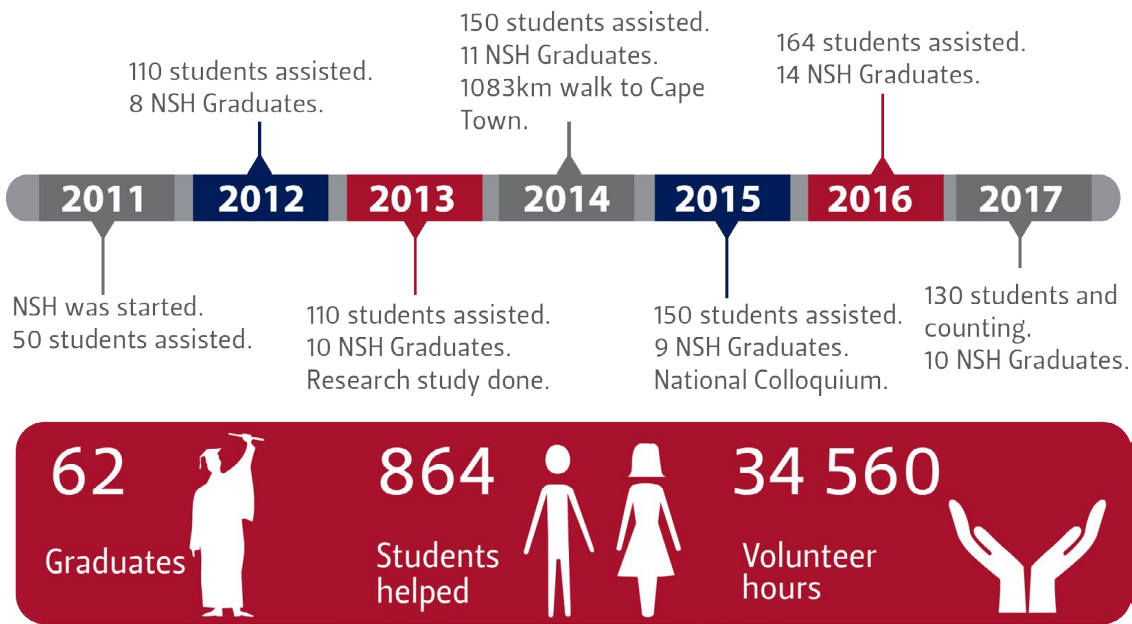
The NSH team meets with students on a regular basis to offer training, motivation and opportunities for personal growth and career development. This includes Student Wellness Workshops which they can attend throughout the year.

The raising of funds is a continuous process involving awareness campaigns, seeking of partnerships with companies and institutions, and support from the general public, staff and individuals.

A food bursary is allocated to students on the basis of academic excellence and the commitment to public duty.

The bursary offers students a small daily allowance of R37 per day and provides for students with an average achievement of 60% and above.

Six years: the NSH impact



Leadership and administration

The NSH Programme is a Lead Flagship Project and receives support from the Institutional Advancement Office as well as Student Affairs.

Information

www.ufs.ac.za (Giving/notsudenthungry)

Indicative budget

The costs of the NSH Programme are modest. Based on a daily budget per student of R37 for 185 on-campus days per annum, the estimated annual indicative budget (ZAR) is as follows:

| | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 student | 10 students | 100 students | 1 000 students | 10 000 students |
| 6 845 | 68 450 | 684 500 | 6 845 000 | 68 450 000 |



Support is needed

The NSH Programme requires annual funding and our capacity to reach the thousands of students studying on empty stomachs depends on recurrent funds on a year-to-year basis. Bona Fide donations are tax deductible and 18 A certificates are issued in this regard. Both businesses and individuals receive 18A certificates for their donations.

Strides towards sustainability

In order for the NSH Programme to be sustainable, the following actions will be pursued:

- Securing multi-year funding system (3 years) from donors;
- Involving UFS staff members by encouraging them to make long-term debit order commitments;
- Encouraging graduates of the NSH Programme to contribute to the programme once they are employed;
- Finding a larger pool of donors;
- Finding more varied donors, beyond financial donations;
- Identifying NSH ambassadors nationally and internationally;
- Expanding support for the NSH Programme beyond the borders of South Africa.

Contact us

Institutional Advancement Office:
Vicky Simpson | 051 401 7197 | email: simpsonvz@ufs.ac.za

Our supporters

ABSA Student Bureau Bloemfontein
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Rolene Strauss – Miss World 2015
Standard Bank Gauteng
The Moshal Scholarship Program
The Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of SA
Wartenweiler Trust
Witherow Trust
UFS staff and students

Banking details

SWIFT Code: ABSAZAJJ

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ABSA | Account nr: 1570850721 |
| Account holder: UFS | Ref: NSH and Surname Company name |
| Branch code: 632005 | |

Please provide your transaction details so that we can keep in touch and ensure that you receive your 18 A Certificate:
E: simpsonvz@ufs.ac.za

The success of the programme speaks for itself

Testimonies of some of the NSH Programme food bursary recipients.

Melatia

Melatia is a remarkable young student who started on the NSH Programme in March 2012. Her mother lost her job as a teacher and could no longer afford to send enough money for accommodation and food. She took 16 modules in 2012 instead of the usual 12 to finish early and save on fees. “It is hard to cope with my workload without proper nutrition,” says Melatia. “Now that I have a food bursary, I can afford to have a proper meal every day. It has given me new hope.”

The results are clear; she received distinctions in 14 out of the 16 modules at the end of 2012. She continues to do well, with an average of 80% in the first semester of 2013. In just two and a half years’ time, she will have successfully completed her degree by the end of this year. She is well on her way to becoming a Chartered Accountant.

Moses

“I am a second-year B.luris Financial Planning Law student and have been on the programme almost a year. My guardian is a pensioner living on very limited means, so the financial strain was great. Knowing that he isn’t as worried about me now, humbles me. The programme has meant that I can get through the day and gain the unlimited freedom that comes with education.”



Sam-maree

“I have much more confidence and energy, and I’ve started doing better academically. I volunteered for the HIV/AIDS programme as peer mentor, and I’m enjoying that almost as much as the meals.”

Melanie

“I am a second-year Geography and Environmental Management student, as well as a single mother – so studying and looking after my little boy is very demanding. Being on the No Student Hungry Programme has helped me a lot in terms of getting a balanced meal every day. It is one less worry for me. I dream of completing my studies so that I can be independent and provide my son with the life he deserves.”

Thabiso

“Before I got the food bursary it was hard to stay in class. I could not concentrate because I had no food, so I used to go home. Thanks to NSH, I now attend all my classes and am doing well in my academics.

One day I’ll gladly pay it back and support the NSH Programme. I would not have been here if it wasn’t for the generosity of the programme.”



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