

# The No Student Hungry programme



*Inspiring excellence,  
transforming lives  
through quality,  
impact, and care.*



UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA





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## Goal

The purpose of the No Student Hungry (NSH) programme at the University of the Free State (UFS) is to ensure that the most vulnerable students – with an excellent academic record but who are food insecure – are provided with healthy food options so that they can successfully complete their studies.

## Institutional context

Contributing to the UFS Strategic Plan, Strategic Goal 1 (to improve student success and well-being), the university has compiled a Food Environment Strategy to develop and implement a health-promoting food environment, where students are informed and empowered to take appropriate action regarding their food and nutrition situation. The NSH food bursary programme is one of the key components of this strategy.

## Background and rationale

The problem of inadequate food environments on university campuses has been noted globally over the past decade. As many as 59% of our students do not know where their next meal will come from (*Food Environment programme registered with the Department of Higher Education as a tertiary institution*).

Being situated in one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, a great number of our students are from economically disadvantaged homes and do not have the means to support themselves while studying.

Another factor that increases the need for food assistance is the delay in the delivery of bursary funds.

Inadequate funding for living expenses, accompanied by a lack of knowledge and skills to plan, procure, and prepare healthy meals on the available budget, contributes to the hunger situation on our campuses. Research in the United States shows that students who are food insecure are more likely to be anxious and suffer from depression.

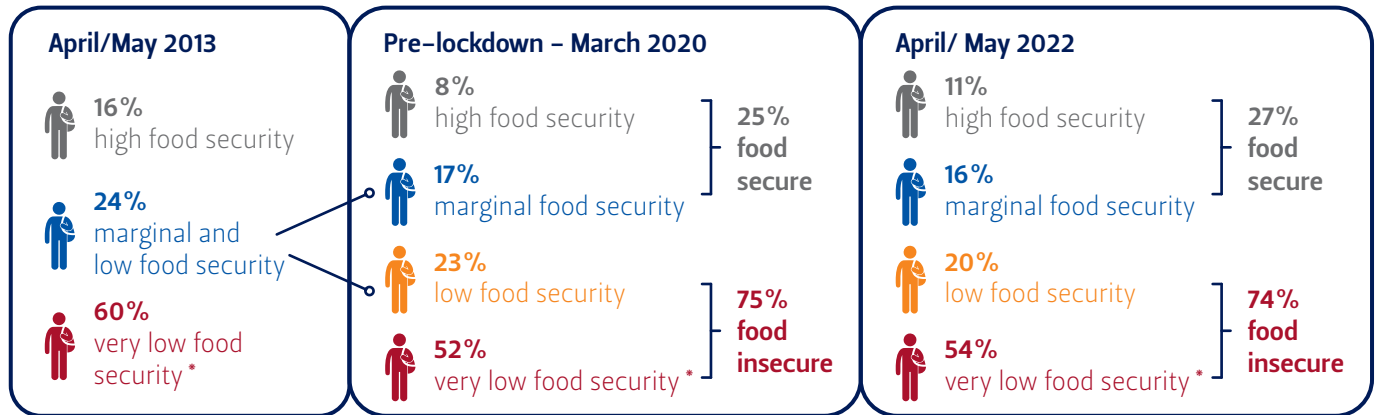
*Inadequate funding for living expenses, accompanied by a lack of knowledge and skills to plan, procure, and prepare healthy meals on the available budget, contributes to the hunger situation on our campuses.*



The inability to provide for themselves, together with the added stress caused by their financial struggles, has more than once resulted in some of our most talented students dropping out of university and taking a job to augment their meagre financial resources. The effect of students dropping out of university is felt at economic and societal level. This loss of learning could waste untold human potential and undermine decades of work to get our students to university where they can build a better tomorrow for themselves and their families.

## Institutional research

By the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics



\* The percentage of students who answered 'Yes' to the question, "Have you ever not eaten for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food during the academic term?"

2013: 24% answered yes – 7% indicated that it happens almost daily

2020: 24% answered yes – 6% indicated that it happens almost daily

2022: 39% answered yes – 13% indicated that it happens almost daily

2013: Van den Berg L, Raubenheimer J, *South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2015;28(4): 160-169

2020: UFS Food Environment Task Committee Report

2022: UFS Food Environment Task Committee Report (under review for publication)



Three institution-wide food security surveys were conducted at the University of the Free State in 2013, 2020 (before the COVID-19 lockdown), and in 2022. In the 2022 survey, 39% of students indicated that at some point during the previous three months of the academic year, they had gone without anything to eat for an entire day because they could not afford food, and 13% indicated that this is an almost daily occurrence. Data collected through the South African Survey of Student Engagement 2023 administration, an initiative involving the UFS Centre for Teaching and Learning, shows that among students who contemplated dropping out of university, 44% nationally, and 57% at the UFS, named food insecurity as a reason.

## Philosophical points of departure

Food security exists when all people – at all times – have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

The 2020 and 2022 UFS Food Security Surveys found that three quarters of students were classified as food insecure. When the 2020 data was analysed against academic performance, food insecurity was associated with lower academic performance and pass rates. The 2020 and 2022 reports also highlighted the importance of the student food environment. The food environment determines the food that students eat, and considers factors such as food access, affordability, convenience, culture and personal preferences, as well as available transport, time, skills and facilities to procure and store ingredients and fresh produce, and to prepare meals. By not paying attention to

students' food environments, vulnerable students will be pushed further along the continuum of food insecurity towards hunger, making it even more difficult for them to adequately feed themselves with what is available.

Drawing on data from institution-wide surveys, the university is now approaching the problem from a broader perspective. The entire food environment and the entire student population have been considered in the planning of a strategy to develop and implement a health-promoting food environment programme. This UFS Food Environment programme, believed to be a first in South Africa, offers students an opportunity for a healthy food environment, empowering them with knowledge and skills to take informed and responsible actions regarding their nutrition and food choices in order to promote their well-being and success. The programme also provides acute hunger relief to those students for whom their situations have become dire.

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## Establishing good health and well-being: One bite at a time

In line with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** to eradicate hunger and establish good health and well-being, the Food Environment Office in the UFS Division of Student Affairs has teamed up with academic departments to provide students with healthy food choices through a number of initiatives:

- Financial support is offered to vulnerable students through subsidised meals on campus. Students who are allowed to come to campus for class are obliged to buy a meal-of-the-day from a UFS dining hall,

ensuring that they are receiving nutritious meals at reasonable prices.

- Food parcels received as a supplementary source of nutritious meals are distributed to identified students twice a month.
- The Food Environment Office collaborates with Kovsie ACT and the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (the Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development); vegetable tunnels have been erected on both the Bloemfontein and South campuses. The fresh vegetables produced are distributed to students in the NSH programme, contributing to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

- The Food Environment Office has also partnered with the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics in the Faculty of Health Sciences, which provides information and support on budgeting, procuring and preparing healthy food, and making better meal choices on a student budget through its Eat&Succeed programme. Material for Eat&Succeed is generated by senior students under the supervision of academic staff. All materials and interventions are tailored to address the specific needs of the UFS students identified by the UFS Food Security Surveys.

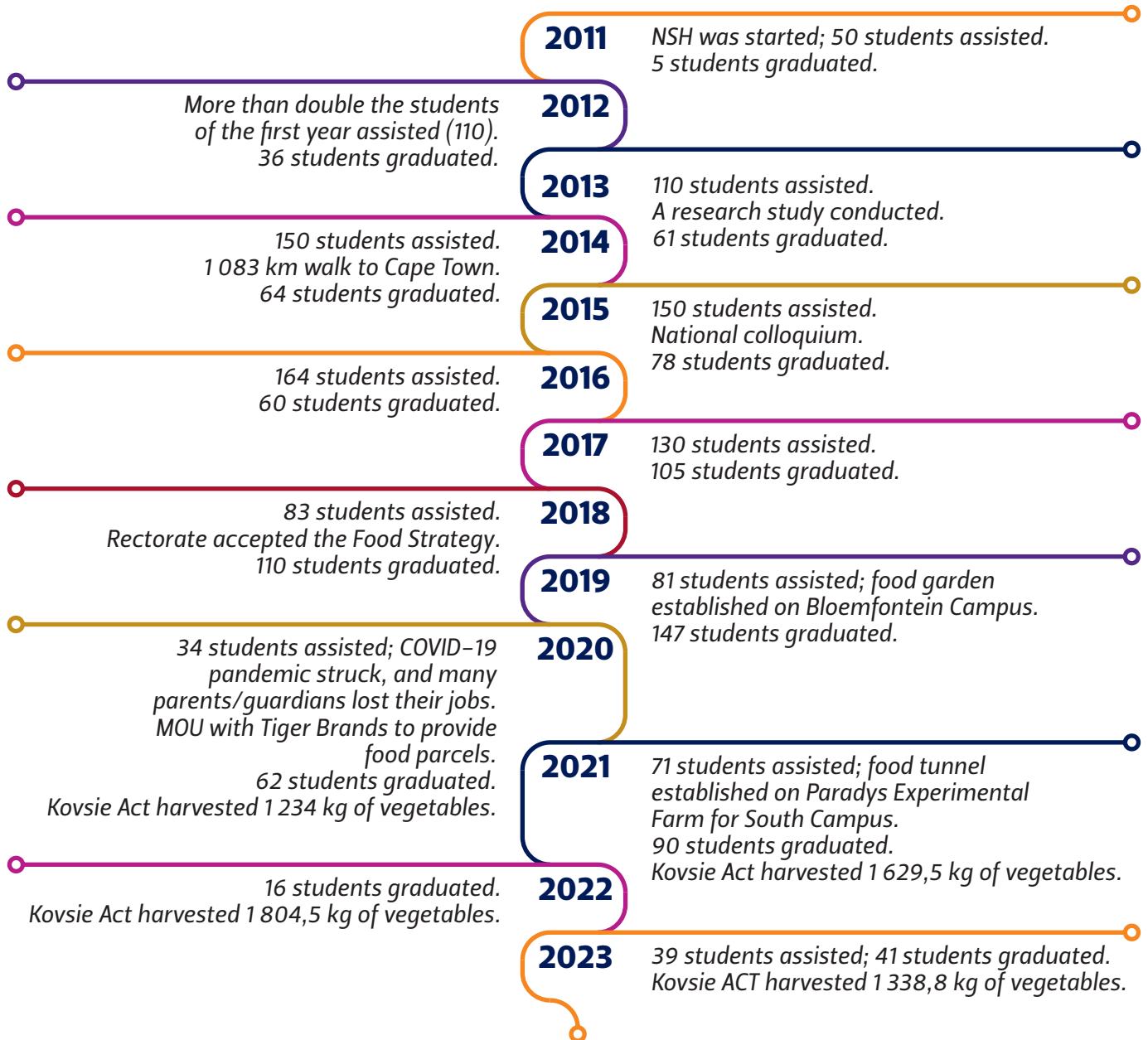
With the significant change in the student profile over the past decade, the university has reconfigured the NSH programme from a data-driven perspective – the most vulnerable students are identified to receive support. The criteria for admitting students to the NSH programme have also changed. Now, students are only selected if they are currently enrolled, a first-generation student, and whose annual family income is below R200 000. Moreover, these students from households where a parent or guardian is unemployed, must have a successful study record and not receive any other bursary allowance. Individual circumstances will, however, be considered.

The programme is supporting 110 students. This number is expected to increase in 2024, with an estimated growth of 200 students on all three UFS campuses.





## More than a decade of NSH impact



## Leadership and administration

The NSH programme is one of the key components of the UFS Food Environment Strategy and receives support from the Institutional Advancement Office as well as the Division of Student Affairs.

## Information

Read more about the NSH programme on the web ([www.ufs.ac.za/nsh](http://www.ufs.ac.za/nsh)).

## Indicative budget

There are minimal costs associated with the NSH programme. The estimated annual indicative budget (ZAR) is based on a daily budget of R50 per student for 200 on-campus days per year:

<i>1 student</i>	<i>10 students</i>	<i>100 students</i>	<i>1 000 students</i>	<i>10 000 students</i>
<i>R10 000</i>	<i>R100 000</i>	<i>R1 000 000</i>	<i>R10 000 000</i>	<i>R100 000 000</i>

## Support needed

The NSH programme requires annual funding, and our capacity to reach the thousands of students studying on empty stomachs depends on recurrent funding on an annual basis. Bona fide donations are tax deductible, and Section 18A certificates are issued in this regard. Both businesses and individuals receive Section 18A certificates for their donations.

## Strides towards sustainability

For the NSH programme to be sustainable, the following actions will be pursued:

- Securing multi-year funding system (three years) from donors
- Continuing to involve UFS staff members, 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
- Locating a broader spectrum of donors, beyond those providing financial support
- Identifying NSH ambassadors nationally and internationally





## Our supporters

- Absa Bank Ltd (UFS Student Bureau)
- The Ackerman Foundation
- Actuarial Society of South Africa
- Adcock Ingram Healthcare (Pty) Ltd
- African Infrastructure Investment Managers
- Allan Gray
- Archbishop TC Makgoba Development Trust
- BlackBark Productions
- Bowman Gilfillan
- Canon Collins Educational and Legal Assistance Trust
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- Capitalworks Investment Partners (Pty) Ltd
- Carin Thirion
- Cell C (Pty) Ltd
- Central Applications Office NP
- Coca-Cola Fortune (Pty) Ltd
- Community Chest of the Western Cape
- Coronation Asset Management
- Deloitte & Touche Finance Company (Pty) Ltd
- Denel Group
- Drs Kritzinger, Spershott and Joubert
- E'tsho Civils (Pty) Ltd
- Empact Group (Pty) Ltd (Compass Group Southern Africa)
- Exxaro Chairman's Fund
- Famous Faces
- FARMOVS (Pty) Ltd
- FS SA Neurodevelopmental Therapy Association
- Gift of the Givers
- Industrial Development Corporation
- International Pre-University College
- Investec Bank Ltd
- IQbusiness (Pty) Ltd
- Prof Jonathan Jansen
- Lorenzo and Stella Chiappini Trust
- Master Builders SA
- Moshal Scholarship programme
- MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet
- Nature and Business Alliance Africa (Pty) Ltd

- Nedbank Bloemfontein
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc (Bloemfontein)
- Public Servants Association (PSA) – Free State
- RB Hagart Trust
- Roche Products (Pty) Ltd
- Rootstock Investment Management
- Sanlam Investment Management (Pty) Ltd
- Kloppers
- Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of SA
- South African Graduate Employers Association
- South African Property Owners Association
- Southern African Venture Capital and Private Equity Association
- Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd
- Sue Celken Family Trust
- The Carl and Emily Fuchs Foundation
- The Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation
- The Stella and Paul Loewenstein Charitable Trust
- Tiger Brands Ltd
- Vodacom (Pty) Ltd
- Volkswagen of South Africa (Pty) Ltd
- Wartenweiler Trust c/o Nedbank Private Wealth
- Witherow Trust
- Yad Mordechai Charitable Trust
- UFS staff and students

## Banking details

### ABSA

SWIFT Code: **ABSAZAJJ** Account holder: **UFS**  
 Branch code: **632005** Account no: **1570850721**

Ref: **NSH and Surname / Company name**

Please provide your transaction details so that we can keep in touch and ensure that you receive your Section 18A certificate:

**E:** visagiea@ufs.ac.za | **E:** KlaasDN@ufs.ac.za

## The success of the programme

Testimonies of some of our NSH programme food beneficiaries.

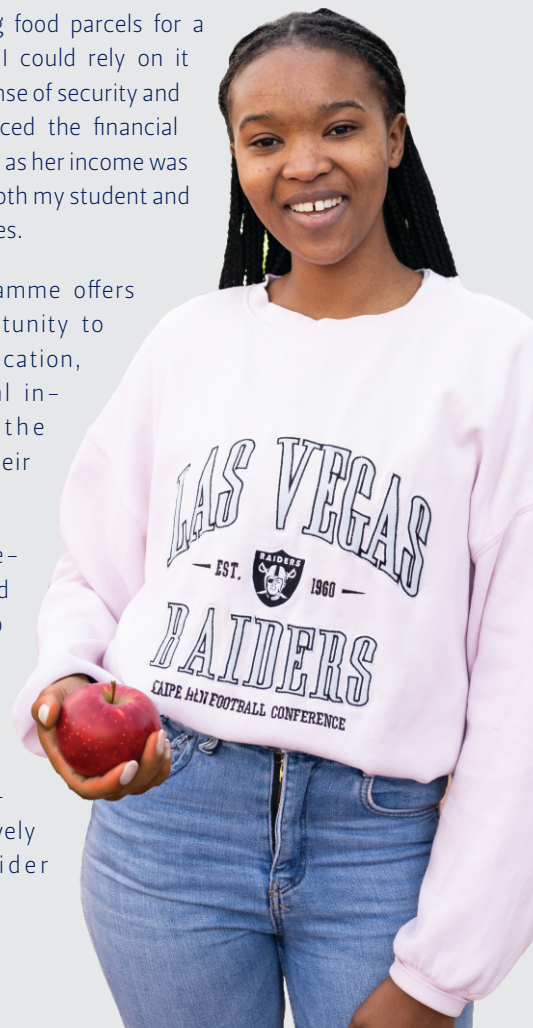
### Karabo Nong

The Food Environment programme helped me to concentrate on my studies without worrying about where my next meal would come from. Without the programme, I would have dropped out of school since I didn't have any other source of funding.

I have been receiving food parcels for a while. Knowing that I could rely on it provided me with a sense of security and stability. It also reduced the financial burden on my mother, as her income was not enough to cover both my student and our household expenses.

I believe the programme offers students the opportunity to complete their education, leading to financial independence and the chance to uplift their family background.

Donations from generous donors and sponsors not only help students such as me to access nutritious food and toiletries but also extend beyond the school environment – positively impacting the wider community.





## Percent Maswanganyi

Never be afraid to ask for help. There are people out there who are determined to see you succeed.

At one stage I faced numerous challenges to get by academically and buy food. The support provided by the programme contributed to my academic success, enabling me to complete my honours degree in record time. Before receiving assistance, I always wondered where my next meal would come from.

Once I received food assistance, my concentration improved, and I could redirect my energy towards my studies. The help from the programme lightened my load, allowing me to spend more time studying in the library, writing assignments, and seizing various opportunities for personal growth.

The assistance I received was the best thing that ever happened to me.

To potential donors and sponsors of the Food Environment programme, your efforts are not in vain; it is life-changing in ways that are incomprehensible. Without your assistance, many students – including myself – may face the possibility of dropping out of university. Your efforts create immense value in students' lives, and I am forever grateful for your generosity.



## Velelambeu Nevhutalu

The Food Environment Programme has been incredibly valuable to me, as it ensured that I didn't go to bed on an empty stomach and allowed me to feel like any other student.

It has greatly supported my studies by preventing me from falling behind due to lack of food or energy. The food parcels I received made a significant impact on my daily life by providing me with the essential nourishment that I relied upon.

Since receiving support from the programme, I have noticed positive changes in my academic performance and ability to focus on my studies. Before I received food from the Food Environment Programme, I would miss classes due to low energy levels. However, since receiving the food parcels, I have not missed any classes, and my academic work has improved as well.

I am immensely grateful for the help I received from the Food Environment Office.

To all those who has contributed to this programme and made it possible for people like me to benefit from it, please don't stop helping. Your acts of kindness, even on a small scale, make a tremendous difference in someone else's life.







## Contact us

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Please scan the QR code  
and follow the instructions.

