



An Outcomes Evaluation for the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's Fellowship Programme

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*The beauty of life does not lie in how happy you are, but how happy others can be because of you. – Senior Prophet T.B Joshua, blessed memory.*

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is based on an outcome evaluation of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's Fellowship programme. The Fellowship programme is an extracurricular entrepreneurial education programme that aims to develop high achieving individuals in their academic, personal, and entrepreneurial spheres. Students enter the programme in the first year of their degree and graduate the programme after four years. The evaluation was purposed to determine whether the programme achieves its intended outcomes from the perspective of its participants. This evaluation used qualitative methods to interview 14 past participants of the programme. Six of these participants completed the programme successfully, eight did not complete the programme. Interviews provided insight into what works and what does not work.

The evaluation found that the Fellowship is successful in achieving most of its intended outcomes, specifically developing an entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial intention, developing a sense of community and the value of collaboration, and advancing interests in responsible entrepreneurship. A finding that is unique to the Fellowship and is an emerging point of interest in the field of entrepreneurship relates to the ability of the programme design to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial intention in participants with no express mindset or interest prior to participation. The evaluation provided insight into the challenges faced by high performing, low-socioeconomic-status South African students in the University space and in the cross-socioeconomic entrepreneurial and social spaces. The evaluation found that mentorship plays a key role in the programmatic and academic success of participants.

Primary recommendations for the refinement of the Fellowship include the removal of academic success as an outcome, the reevaluation of renewal criteria in the context of high performing, low-SES students, the establishment of specific support structures of high performing, low-SES students transitioning to university, the reduction of the theoretical entrepreneurial curriculum, the maintenance of experiential entrepreneurial learning opportunities, training its mentors to support low-SES students and identify and address barriers to success early on, to find ways of reducing the elite and competitive experience of the programme that results from cross-socioeconomic engagements.

This evaluation concludes that the Fellowship is a well-designed programme that aligns with best practice in entrepreneurship and introduces innovative methods for successfully developing high impact entrepreneurs in South Africa.

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## **List of Acronyms**

Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF)

Candidate Fellow (CF)

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)

High Outcome Attainment (HOA)

Low Outcome Attainment (LOA)

Success Case (SC)

Non-Success Case (NSC)

Theory of Change (ToC)

## **Key Definitions**

Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM): A complex concept that refers to encompasses ways of thinking and behaving that enables individuals to be entrepreneurial.

Entrepreneurial Intention (EI): The identifiable interest that an individual possesses in being entrepreneurial and the likelihood they will take entrepreneurial action.

Entrepreneurial Education (EE): A formal subject-based education focusing on mindset, knowledge, and understanding with the goal of developing an individual's entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, and broader understanding of entrepreneurship as a discipline.

Entrepreneurial Training (ET): A form of education that aims to develop an individual's entrepreneurial skills, tools, and practical application with the goal of equipping individuals with the specific abilities needed to start, manage, or grow a business.

High Impact Entrepreneurship: The creation and growth of businesses that have the potential to generate significant economic, social, or environmental value.

Success Case: According to Robert Brinkerhoff's Success Case Method, a Success Case is an example of a participant who applied what they learned from a training or program effectively and achieved notable, valuable outcomes.

Non-Success Case: According to Robert Brinkerhoff's Success Case Method a Non-Success Case refers to a participant who did not apply what they learned or did not experience meaningful improvements after the training.

Client vs Evaluand: In this dissertation, "client" refers to the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation while "evaluand" refers to a specific programme that the client offers, called The Fellowship Programme, or 'Fellowship'.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

This mini dissertation reports on an outcomes evaluation for the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's Fellowship programme. The Fellowship programme aims to develop high-impact responsible entrepreneurs who will change the economic landscape of their South African communities by generating employment. This chapter begins by introducing the client, the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation and general entrepreneurship literature to contextualise the topic. The evaluand (The Fellowship Programme) is then introduced along with its programme theory and design according to the organisation's documentation and discussions with programme staff. This is followed by a plausibility assessment of the Fellowship's underlying logic. The chapter concludes with the scope and questions that guided the evaluation.

### **The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation**

Established in 2005 by the late Allan Gray, the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF) is a testament to Mr Gray's profound belief in the transformative power of entrepreneurship and its benefit for the Southern African socio-economic landscape. AGOF is aimed at making a sustainable, long-term contribution to Southern Africa by nurturing the entrepreneurial potential in the region (AGOF, 2023; 2025). The Foundation is fostering this mission through a programme which strategically nurtures the entrepreneurial mindset and refines entrepreneurial competencies of university students, guiding individuals to become responsible entrepreneurs capable of positively shaping the future of Southern Africa (AGOF, 2023; 2025).

The Foundation envisions a thriving and prosperous Africa, where people live with dignity, hope, and strong ethical values (AGOF, 2023; 2025). To help achieve this, it tackles poverty by investing in and empowering young entrepreneurs and leaders who create meaningful jobs and drive positive changes in society. The Foundation identifies young people with high-impact potential and nurtures them over the long term. Through research, development, and support, it equips them to build sustainable businesses and lead with integrity, creating lasting positive impacts for future generations (AGOF, 2023; 2025).

## **The Case for Entrepreneurial Education**

Entrepreneurship is not just a term but is a field of research, a multi-faceted phenomenon, and a framework (Bennet, 2006; Gartner, 1985, 1988, 1990; Hill et al., 2024; Prince et al., 2021; Reynolds, 1999). The realm of entrepreneurship spans various sectors, such as business, science, and the arts (Kirzner, 2009; Ratten, 2014). It also encompasses a diverse range of forms, such as artisan entrepreneurship (Ratten, 2023), corporate entrepreneurship (Sharma and Chrisman, 1999), Digital entrepreneurship (Elia et al., 2020; Neff et al., 2024), international entrepreneurship (McDougall & Oviatt, 2000), social entrepreneurship (Mair and Marti, 2004), and responsible entrepreneurship (Vallaster et al., 2019) and more. However, to begin a journey one must at least establish a starting point. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor defines entrepreneurship as:

“Any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business” (GEM, 2024: 3).

The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship & Young Enterprise proposes the definition:

“Entrepreneurship is when you can act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social” (FFE-YE, 2011: 6).

Entrepreneurship drives economic growth, job creation, and technological advancement, contributing to societal health and wealth (Bosma et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2023). It further stands as the foremost source of new job growth in developed and developing countries alike (Valerio et al., 2014). The expansion of entrepreneurial activities is essential for economic progress, with start-ups serving as a key indicator of development (Hoda et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2020). Thus, fostering entrepreneurship is crucial for building a dynamic and resilient economy.

Beyond economic impact, entrepreneurs address social and environmental challenges. However, South Africa faces low entrepreneurial activity and high unemployment despite development efforts (Herrington & Kew, 2015; Mambolo, 2017; Nicolaidis, 2011). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor ranks South Africa 45th out of 50 countries in entrepreneurial

environment favourability (Hill et al., 2023). With youth unemployment sitting at 46% (Stats SA, 2023), promoting youth entrepreneurship is crucial for fostering economic growth and acts as an opportunity for reducing unemployment. Entrepreneurship education (EE) and Entrepreneurial Training<sup>1</sup> are recognised as a powerful tool for fostering entrepreneurial intention and action by equipping individuals with the necessary competencies for business creation (Shabbir et al., 2022). Man et al. (2002: 124) provide the most cited definition of entrepreneurial competencies as, “higher-level characteristics encompassing personality traits, skills and knowledge, and therefore can be seen as the total ability of the entrepreneur to perform a job successfully”.

Entrepreneurial education can significantly enhance entrepreneurial intention, perceived behavioural control, and the development of entrepreneurial competencies (Mahlaole & Malebana, 2021). Additionally, entrepreneurial education cultivates passion, resilience, and critical non-cognitive skills such as risk-taking, creativity, and persistence, all of which are linked to entrepreneurial success (Huber et al., 2014). Entrepreneurial education helps students understand what it means to be an entrepreneur, creating awareness of the challenges involved and fostering a realistic perception of entrepreneurship (Bakotic & Kruzic, 2010; Rae, 2010). Furthermore, entrepreneurial education promotes a trainable entrepreneurial mindset and debunks the notion of entrepreneurship as a fixed trait (Lynch & Corbett, 2023).

### **The Fellowship Programme Design**

The Fellowship is an entrepreneurial education and training programme aimed at empowering Southern African students to become responsible, high impact entrepreneurs. The four-year programme supports university students with a vision to create an ethical, prosperous African citizenry. The programme targets its activities around personal development, entrepreneurial development and academic support. A sub-programme, called the IVC (Ideation, Validation, Creation), runs concurrently with the Fellowship and is designed to support students

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<sup>1</sup> Entrepreneurship Education focuses on imparting the knowledge competencies, while entrepreneurship training focuses on building the skills and competencies. For the most part, these terms are used interchangeably in the literature, except when being distinguished for specific reasons.

at various stages of the venture creation process. It includes targeted activities for business owners.

The Fellowship is open to South African first-year university students who demonstrate academic excellence (minimum 70% in final year of high school) and entrepreneurial potential. Applicants go through a three-stage selection process. The first stage requires answering a series of essay-type questions about oneself. The second stage consists of an in-person interview with a panel of programme staff. The third stage is a selection camp where applicants are observed through a series of activities, interviews, and exercises for demonstrable evidence of entrepreneurial potential. However, the specific criteria that the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation is looking for remains undisclosed and is thus considered a subjective process.

Participants, called Candidate Fellows (CFs) must study for an appropriate degree at one of the partner institutions (Appendix L). The programme accepts students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Participants from households with an annual income exceeding R1,000,000 receive need-based funding. All other students receive the full cost of tuition, residence, textbooks and a living stipend. Participants have access to business mentorship, an online entrepreneurial curriculum, tutor support, mental health support, and funding opportunities through a sister entity (E-squared) for viable business ideas.

Candidate Fellows are reviewed for satisfactory academic and programmatic progress on an annual basis. Students earn points for completing assignments in personal and entrepreneurial development activities. Students must also maintain a 60% weighted average at university, fail no more than one half-year course, fail no full-year courses, and not extend their degree. Unsatisfactory attainment presents a cause for permanent exclusion from the programme.

The programme conducts activities through a hybrid format of online and in-person. The programme includes online learning modules, in-person workshops and conferences. It hosts an annual entrepreneurial conference known as Jamboree featuring workshops, masterclasses, pitching events, networking opportunities, and talks from successful entrepreneurs. Candidate Fellows will engage in small group learning formats for entrepreneurial sessions throughout the course, on a quarterly basis. They receive coaching from a personal development mentor (PLPO) and entrepreneurial mentors (ELO) who are part time employees with AGOF. They also receive support from younger people in their final years of the Fellowship, known as Peer Mentors, and

are further supported through industry-specific mentorship engagements with older persons operating in a similar industry (known as Industry Mentors).

The key competencies targeted by the Fellowship are the entrepreneurial mindset, academic excellence, collaborative and community values, and intention to become high-impact entrepreneurs. The Fellowship programme is designed to support students through their 4-year qualification and develop them into entrepreneurs with the intention to generate positive social change through entrepreneurial opportunities in South Africa.

### **Programme Theory**

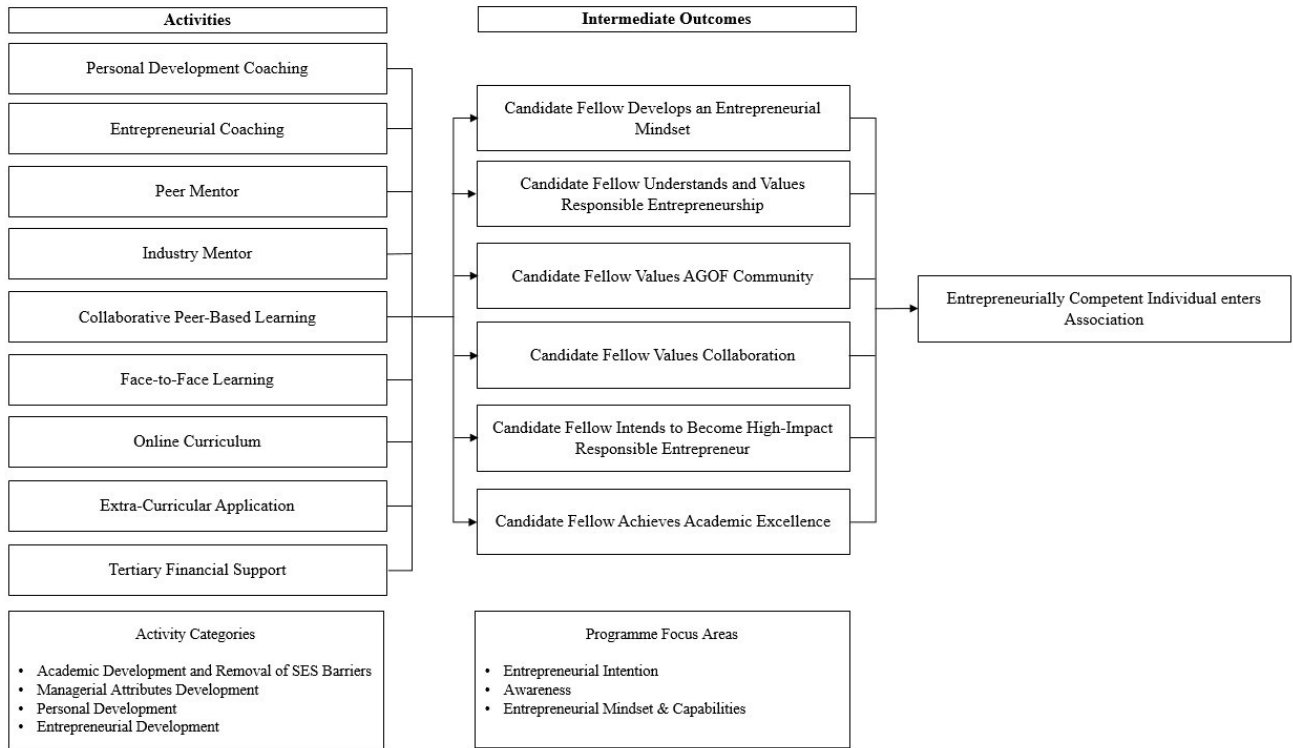
The underlying logic of the Fellowship programme does not adhere to the traditional causal pathways as explained by the generative view of causality (Gates & Dyson, 2007), which links a measure to an outcome and explains why the mechanism works. Instead, it is better explained by the causal package view (Pawson & Tilly, 1997) which claims that multiple causes can exist within a chain and in some circumstances, it is necessary for all causes to be present for an effect to occur, without any one being the single dependent cause, although this can be the case. This view asks, how do these mechanisms interact with one another to create a change? (Gates & Dyson, 2007).

The programme theory of the Fellowship does not identify isolated causal pathways in previous or current iterations (Appendix A). The Fellowship is in the process of updating the programme theory, and a brainstormed Theory of Change (ToC) was provided for the purposes of the present evaluation. This ToC was insufficient for a plausibility assessment, as it relied on activity categories instead of providing specific activities conducted. Using programme documentation, the ToC was expanded upon and can be viewed in Figure 1. Activity categories were simply split into more specific activities. The ToC reflects a flexible, non-linear approach to achieving outcomes. Rather than following a fixed causal pathway, the ToC uses conjoined arrows to show that multiple combinations of inputs can lead to the desired outcomes, depending on individual needs. For example, one participant may achieve an intended outcome from just one input, while another, more resistant to change, may require a combination of inputs to reach the same outcome. This aligns with literature, which posits that drawing connections between inputs and outputs in the entrepreneurial context is a tedious and unfruitful endeavor (Valerio et al., 2014). This conceptual framing influences the plausibility assessment by shifting focus from

testing linear causal claims to exploring whether the observed outcomes can plausibly emerge

**Figure 1**

*Expanded Programme Theory of AGOF's Fellowship Programme*



from the programme's interactive and contextual elements. It supports a more nuanced interpretation of success, accommodating diverse and evolving pathways to entrepreneurial development.

Figure 1 presents all known activities within the Fellowship programme; however, it is unclear how these activities map to specific categories. As noted earlier, the Theory of Change (ToC) adopts a generative view of causality, meaning no single activity can be directly linked to a unique outcome. The activity category box is included at the bottom of Figure 1 to align with the programme's original ToC structure (Appendix A), and the programme focus areas are shown to provide broader context, despite the lack of direct linkage to specific outcomes.

A PLPO is a personal development programme officer, they are responsible for guiding Candidate Fellows through a journey of personal growth throughout the Fellowship. They

facilitate reflective exercises, and work with CFs to build an annual Personal Development Plan (PDP). CFs are then assessed against their own PDP as a form of accountability. An ELO is an Entrepreneurial Leadership officer. These staff are responsible for facilitating group-based sessions around entrepreneurial-topics. They facilitate the delivery and completion of entrepreneurial exercises throughout the duration of the Fellowship. A Peer Mentor is another CF who is ideally in the same university, or who is at least in their final year of the programme. CFs have to volunteer to become a Peer Mentor. This role serves a dual purpose. 1) it enables CFs to practice “giving back” to the Fellowship community by volunteering as a mentor. 2) it provides new CFs with access to insider knowledge about participating in the Fellowship and navigating university life from the perspective of a student. Industry Mentors are older persons who are full-time in the working world. They are managed by the Fellowship as volunteers who are willing to meet with CFs a few times a year to discuss industry-related topics. They are matched with CFs based on work-related interests. They are intended to provide CFs with links to persons in the industry and general advice about the world of work. Peer-Based Learning, Face-to-Face Learning, the Online Curriculum, and Extra-Curricular Application are different ways that the Fellowship engages CFs in tangent with at least one of the aforementioned role-players (PLPO, ELO, Peer Mentor, Industry Mentor). None of these methods are exclusively linked to one specific role-player. Tertiary Financial Support is where the Fellowship provides funding for tertiary studies, and a small portion for tutor support with their partner, SmartPrep. SmartPrep offers online classes, recordings, and personalised tutoring for various subjects and levels across South Africa (SmartPrep, 2025). Tutoring is thus external to the Fellowship programme.

Due to limited documentation and weak engagement from programme staff, further details around the delivery mechanisms of activities remain largely unknown. Attempts to clarify details during consultation sessions were often unsuccessful, as relevant staff were unavailable and responses were provided by non-specialists. In-depth interviews with executive and management-level staff were beyond the scope of the evaluation, so the ToC analysis remains largely surface-level. However, activity is examined through literature, and any relevant insights into how it is operationalised may be valuable for staff familiar with the programme’s internal workings.

## **Plausibility Assessment**

A plausibility assessment was conducted for the ToC of the Fellowship to assess the plausibility of the AGOF Fellowship theory. A plausibility check contrasts the programme assumptions alongside with what social science research has shown to be effective (Chen, 1990). This literature review explores empirical studies to identify activities suitable for successfully producing the intended intermediate outcomes.

The entrepreneur is a widely discussed construct in the literature that continues to lack an agreed definition (Daspit et al., 2021; Naumann, 2017). However, since 2000 (Man & Lau, 2000), the interest of some scholars has moved away from definitions, characteristics, and traits that may predict entrepreneurial success towards identifying underlying conceptual areas of entrepreneurship and its core competencies (for example, Daspit et al., 2021; Davis et al., 2016; Kuratko, 2021; Simba & Thai, 2019; Pidduck, 2023). The former focused on associating traits such as need for achievement, tolerance of ambiguity, risk propensity, and locus of control with entrepreneurial success (Morris et al., 2013: 354). In contrast, a competence-based approach pays attention to observable and measurable knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and skills that are instrumental in task performance and that can be developed (Bird 1995; Man, Lau, & Chan 2002; Morris et al., 2013: 354).

This shift denotes a change in the narrative surrounding who can be an entrepreneur, transitioning from a “born with it” towards a “teachable” hallmark. This is underpinned by findings in growth mindset theory (Dweck, 2006, 2015), which posits that abilities and ways of thinking are not fixed but are developed through effort, learning, and experience. In entrepreneurship, this means that important competencies are not purely inborn but can be cultivated through education and practice.

Thus, the concept of entrepreneurial training programmes is plausible for developing entrepreneurial competencies.

## ***Developing Entrepreneurial Mindsets***

The competency-based approach has since been used by scholars to discuss implications for designing entrepreneurial education programmes that effectively foster entrepreneurial mindsets (Bauman & Lucy, 2019; Mawson et al., 2022; Shah & Kaukab, 2022) and adopt a focus

on developing entrepreneurial competencies associated with an entrepreneurial mindset (Bacigalupo, 2016; Fernandez-Perez et al., 2019; Martinez-Martinez & Ventura, 2020).

Koning (2024: 62) posits that because it is difficult to identify all the attributes, skills and knowledge that characterise an entrepreneurial mindset, it is even more difficult to determine how to develop them in formal education and how to assess students' learning and behaviour. This was confirmed through a literature review which revealed far more information on key entrepreneurial mindset competencies, mediators, moderators, antecedents, outcomes and pedagogical approaches than specific activities for fostering the entrepreneurial mindset.

Larsen (2022) identifies opportunity recognition, proactiveness and risk-taking, and innovative thinking and problem-solving as core competencies of an entrepreneurial mindset (EM). These areas are best developed through experiential learning methods such as case studies, internships, market analysis, simulations, role-playing, and design thinking (Larsen, 2022: 244). Similarly, Matushan (2020) emphasizes action-oriented experiential learning, where problem-solving, creativity, peer evaluation, and game-based learning support decision-making, risk-taking, and innovation. Koning (2024) highlights collaborative, project-based learning and the use of communities of practice (CoPs) and role models in shaping entrepreneurial identity and fostering enduring entrepreneurial behaviors.

The core finding from the literature review is that individuals should be taught *through* entrepreneurship, not *about* entrepreneurship (Al-Atib & DeBoer, 2014; Haase & Lautenschalger, 2011; Neck & Corbett, 2018; Neck & Greene, 2010). Whether the format is teaching online (Al-Atib & DeBoer, 2014), through formal entrepreneurship courses, or voluntary sessions (Cui et al., 2021; Neck & Corbett, 2018) the most effective results are seen by teaching students how to exercise their entrepreneurial mindsets instead of teaching what an entrepreneur is (Kyndt & Baert, 2015).

Both the Fellowship's draft ToC and the expanded ToC provided in Figure 1 do not touch on the core components of what is required for developing EM. However, programme documentation and the broader theory shows that the programme's approach includes best-practice activities for developing EM, and the underlying theory is plausible.

## ***Understanding and Valuing Responsible Entrepreneurship***

Responsible entrepreneurship (REE) combines social, environmental, and ethical considerations into the entrepreneurial process, aiming to create value for both business and society (Igwe et al., 2022). It focuses on sustainable innovation and solving societal challenges without compromising resources for future generations. This denotes a shift away from the typical economic motivations for running businesses (Azmat & Samaratunge, 2009; Adomako & Nguyen, 2024a, 2024b; Kirzner, 1999;).

Responsible Entrepreneurship shares many overlaps with the field of Social Entrepreneurship; however, they differ in the sense that one is not required to run a social enterprise to be mindful of the social and ecological wellbeing of those around them. Sustainable Entrepreneurship literature echoes the same principles, it “pursues a triple bottom line approach of economic, social, and ecological goals” (Belz & Binder, 2015, 2017). A principal element of increasing responsible entrepreneurship is teaching students how to recognise social or ecological problems as potential sources of entrepreneurial as a way to benefit others outside of the organization opportunities (Fuller & Tian, 2006).

Igwe et al (2022: 12) posits that the achievement of REE rests on the successful development of learner’s self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-control. This in turn develops ethical leadership, preparing them to generate sustainable value and lead positive social and environmental change (Igwe et al., 2022: 12). For Igwe et al (2022) the focus of REE is on the application of entrepreneurial competencies in legal and funding related issues, and start-up, growth, or scale-up strategies. Other authors view responsible entrepreneurship as a way to benefit others outside of the organization, providing high quality products while maintaining fair prices, building trusted customer relationships, and giving back to local communities (Azmat & Samaratunge, 2009; Adomako & Nguyen, 2024a, 2024b)

Igwe et al (2022) advocate that curriculum reforms are essential. Entrepreneurship education must be reimagined to address current issues in social, digital, and environmental sectors. Some studies have found that positive results can be seen simply by exposing students to REE (Maistry & Ramdhani, 2010). However, pedagogical approaches benefit from reshaping to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability, incorporating activities like outdoor learning, consultancy projects, and interdisciplinary work (Igwe et al., 2022). In line with this,

the most effective methods for teaching REE emphasise experiential learning, such as internships, industry visits, and business competitions, allowing students to engage with real-world challenges. Collaborative learning, through partnerships with stakeholders like businesses and communities, further connects theory with practice.

The inclusion of REE components in the broader programme design and activities indicates that the underlying theory is plausible for achieving the intended outcome.

### ***Valuing Collaboration and Community***

Group based learning plays a significant role in shaping students' entrepreneurial mindsets (Biney, 2023; Cole, 2016; Inada, 2019) because of its impact on fostering creative and problem-solving. This is because diverse experience is found to lead to better decision-making and innovation (Inada, 2019; Suonpaa, 2013). Groups generally make superior decisions and offer more approaches to solving problems, making collaborative learning ideal for developing entrepreneurial competencies (Warhuus, 2017).

Another important aspect of entrepreneurial education is building networks through collaboration. Faltin (2013) highlights how exposure to entrepreneurial education can inspire individuals by connecting them with like-minded peers and mentors. Inspiration is a well-known mediator of entrepreneurial mindset (Cui, 2021; Nabi et al., 2017; Souitaris, Zerbinati & Al-Laham, 2007). The importance of learning within a community is also emphasized by Biney (2023), who notes that group learning traditions have long been a staple in adult education, especially in communities like Chorkor, Ghana where young adults form groups to share experiences and develop entrepreneurial mindsets. This collaborative environment not only cultivates knowledge but also nurtures self-reliance and innovation.

Social identity theory and the engagement theory of learning (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Hogg and Brewer, 2017; Koning, 2024; Mishra, 2020) underscores the role of collaboration in strengthening students' entrepreneurial identities. Through active participation in group activities, students build connections, develop confidence, and embrace risk-taking behaviors that are integral to entrepreneurship. Where students relate to others, work on projects together, and contribute meaningfully to group goals, better knowledge retention and an entrepreneurial mindset are observed (Koning, 2024).

In conclusion, fostering collaboration in entrepreneurship education prepares students to understand the value of community and teamwork in entrepreneurial success. Through group learning, networking, and emotional intelligence, students develop the competencies needed to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship and build sustainable ventures. The Fellowship's programme theory includes recommended approaches and content for achieving the intended outcome, thus is plausible in this regard.

### ***Developing Entrepreneurial Intention***

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is seen as a critical precursor to entrepreneurial behavior (Pfeifer, 2016). Linan and Chen (2009) define entrepreneurial intention as the effort an individual is willing to invest in entrepreneurial activities, influenced by three key factors: Personal Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioural Control. These factors reflect one's views of entrepreneurship, social pressures, and confidence in one's ability to succeed, respectively. Their development of the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) has provided a widely used tool to measure these elements and guide best practices for enhancing entrepreneurial intention. Souitaris, Zerbini, and Al-Laham (2007) argue that entrepreneurship education (EE) can influence entrepreneurial intention, primarily through inspiration derived from engaging with professors or external speakers (Nabi, 2016).

However, the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention is debated. Bae et al. (2014) found a small positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, but this effect disappeared when pre-education entrepreneurial intention was considered. Their findings suggest that entrepreneurship education attracts individuals already predisposed to entrepreneurship rather than cultivating new intentions. Additionally, Piperopoulos and Dimov (2015) found that theoretical entrepreneurship education courses can negatively affect entrepreneurial intention, whereas practical courses had a positive effect, particularly for those with high self-efficacy. This highlights the importance of course type in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes.

Further research supports the idea that entrepreneurial intention is influenced more by personality traits and early experiences than by EE. Studies by Wu & Wu (2008), Nabi et al. (2017), and Obschonka et al. (2010) argue that entrepreneurial intention is rooted in individual characteristics, suggesting that EE's role is to inspire those already inclined toward

entrepreneurship. Early experiences are fundamental in shaping entrepreneurial intentions, reinforcing the importance of considering these factors in educational programs. To improve EE, Linan et al. (2011) recommend a comprehensive approach. This includes boosting self-efficacy, fostering positive attitudes, and incorporating practical learning experiences such as role-playing and business games. Such programs should also emphasise entrepreneurship's broader role in the economy to encourage long-term engagement.

Overall, these findings suggest that while entrepreneurial education can inspire and support individuals already inclined toward entrepreneurship, its ability to generate entrepreneurial intentions from scratch remains limited. Programs should focus on emotional engagement, practical learning, and comprehensive support for students with entrepreneurial potential. These findings support the Fellowship's programme theory for developing entrepreneurial intention, although the impact may be limited in some cases due to prerequired intention and entrepreneurial inclinations.

### *Academic Excellence*

Performance in terms of grades at the tertiary level can be significantly predicted by performance in high school (Kuh et al., 2006; McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001), emotional quotient, personality traits (Van Rooij et al., 2018), and specific psychological traits (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012).

The literature search focused on papers which speak to ensuring or maintaining academic success in students who performed well in high school. The only factors that could pose a threat would be unexpected events or an inability to transition to university academic requirements, living arrangements, and social spheres (Van Rooij et al., 2018).

The key recommended approaches for students who may find the adjustment challenging include strong social support networks and the role of positive mentors (Mahlangu & Fraser, 2017; Mishra, 2020). A study by Rodger and Tremblay (2003) found that students who had high levels of participation in a peer-mentorship programme (attending sessions frequently and engaging well) had significantly higher final grades than the control group. Additionally, they found that the mentoring programme was especially impactful for students suffering from debilitating anxiety (Rodger & Tremblay, 2003).

The challenge for the AGOF is that they are introducing high academic achievers into their programmes, who already undergo significant personality tests, IQ testing, and EQ placement in order to make it into the programme—which means they have already accommodated some of the most significant predictors of academic success. The only space left for the AGOF to attempt to assist these high performers in maintaining their high level of performance is in ensuring that they are able to transition into the university space successfully. Literature recommends mentorship and supportive spaces as the best way to support this transition (Kuh et al., 2006; Mishra, 2020; Rodger & Tremblay, 2003; Van Rooij et al., 2018).

The AGOF programme activities include peer mentorship throughout the duration of the programme, and the activities of the Fellowship are strongly focused on creating supportive and collaborative spaces. However, the AGOF cannot go beyond their realm of influence to affect the environment students are met with at home or after the programme, which limits their ability to affect all factors leading to academic success.

The academic tutoring component of the programme, which focuses on subject-specific content, appears to offer limited value according to the literature. Given that participants are high-achieving students, their academic difficulties are unlikely to stem from a lack of intellectual ability or subject comprehension. Instead, the literature suggests that when these students do encounter challenges, they are more often the result of external shocks or psychosocial stressors rather than academic content itself. Consequently, content-focused tutoring does not address the core risks to their academic success in this context, nor is it likely to support their sustained achievement.

With its current design, the Fellowship programme does not appear to include sufficient activities to target academic development or to enhance academic success which participants are already predisposed to achieve based on high school marks. Peer mentorship and collaborative features may assist participants in transitioning to a new environment, but the plausibility of academic excellence as an outcome of current programme inputs requires deeper inquiry.

Overall, the theory underlying the Fellowship's focus areas, activities, and outcomes are plausible, and outcome attainment can be expected in almost all spheres.

## **Evaluation Scope and Approach**

The evaluand is in the process of updating and refining their programme theory and requested an outcomes evaluation of the previous programme design to determine its effectiveness from the perspective of participants. The overall intention is for identifying areas for improvement.

This outcomes evaluation took a formative, qualitative approach to exploring the experiences of participants in the Foundation's Fellowship programme. While traditional outcomes evaluations often aim to establish causal links between a programme and measurable changes (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004), the purpose here was not to attribute impact in a strict causal sense. Instead, the focus was on understanding how Candidate Fellows experienced the programme and what outcomes—both intended and unintended—they associated with their participation. This approach aligns with the Foundation's current phase of reflection and refinement, particularly as it revisits its Theory of Change and programme activities. By prioritising participant narratives and perceived value, the evaluation sought to uncover which elements of the programme were most meaningful and effective from the perspective of those directly involved. This richer, experience-led understanding is intended to inform ongoing programme development and strategic decision-making.

### ***Evaluation Questions***

The outcomes evaluation seeks to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. Do candidate fellows perceive that they attained the Fellowship's intended outcomes?
  - a. What did Candidate Fellows experience as most instrumental for achieving intended outcomes?
  - b. What did Candidate Fellows experience as barriers to achieving the intended outcomes?
2. Do candidate fellows experience any positive or negative unintended outcomes because of the Fellowship?

## **Chapter Two: Methodology**

### **Evaluation Design**

The outcome evaluation of the Fellowship programme was conducted using Brinkerhoff's Success Case Method (2005). Outcome evaluations frequently aim to make causal inferences about the relationship between a programme and its observed outcomes. However, the method adopted in this study—the Success Case Method (SCM)—does not support causal claims. SCM is indeed a recognised form of outcome evaluation, but its focus is on identifying and understanding instances of success as experienced by participants, rather than establishing whether the programme directly caused those outcomes.

The evaluation was designed to explore how participants experience outcome attainment to gain insight into what worked, what fell short, what outcomes were attained, and how to enhance future outcomes (Brinkerhoff, 2003, 2005). The SCM is unique in its approach to engaging the extremes outcome achievers and non-achievers, contending that the most meaningful findings can be gathered from those who thrived and those who have been the least successful.

This methodological choice shifts the emphasis from attribution to contribution, prioritising rich, contextual insights over generalisability or statistical inference. It provides valuable understanding of how and why the programme may work in specific cases, but it cannot determine whether those outcomes would have occurred in the absence of the intervention. As such, the use of SCM necessitates a moderated interpretation of findings.

Success and Non-Success profiles were established through consultation with the evaluand staff, who indicated an interest in evaluating the outcome attainment of successful Candidate Fellows as well as those who participated in the Fellowship but did not complete it. In this evaluation, a Success Case is someone who completed the Fellowship, and a Non-Success Case is someone who did not.

### **Criteria of Success and Non-Success**

The first step of the SCM is the development of an impact model which depicts what success looks like if the intervention is working as intended. Through stakeholder engagements,

and consultation with internal programme monitoring and evaluation resources, a success profile was established with accompanying KPI's for identifying outcome attainment.

As part of an adjustment regarding the traditional SCM method, the terms “Success Case” and “Non-Success Case” are used to refer to completers and non-completers respectively. This is based on the fact that the Fellowship requires a Success Case to complete the full four-year programme. Consequentially, a Non-Success case is someone who did not complete the programme, by failing to meet the renewal criteria or by withdrawing, irrespective of the extent of outcome attainment.

The traditional Success Case Method relies on input from extreme successes and failures from a cohort who has received the full dosage of a training programme. However, in this evaluation, participants included some who had not finished the training programme (the Fellowship). This was at the request of the Client who is interested in understanding what did not work for the least successful: those who did not finish the programme.

Appendix B details the full selection process used for this evaluation. 46 respondents were ranked according to outcome KPI's created by the Fellowship. These KPIs focus on four areas: Tertiary Academic Achievement, Entrepreneurial Engagement, Professional Success, and Involvement with the AGOF Community. This assessment involved a multi-step review of programme records to determine which participants demonstrated the highest number of these key outcomes.

Originally, the interview sampling strategy aimed to sequentially invite participants, beginning with those who most clearly exemplified high or low outcome attainment, continuing until thematic saturation was reached. Due to limited response rates, this strategy was revised. All 25 individuals from the Success Case group and all 21 from the Non-Success Case group were ultimately invited to participate, still ensuring a robust and representative sample from both ends of the spectrum.

### **Data Providers and Sample**

Data was collected from past participants of the Fellowship programme between the years of 2018-2023, where 2018 is the earliest start date and 2023 is the latest graduation date. This timeframe was selected to provide sufficient opportunity for outcomes to manifest for the

most recent graduates, and to ensure no participants from an earlier evaluation of AGOF were contacted.

This evaluation used purposive sampling, which involves purposefully selecting participants who are suitable for providing data that sufficiently answer the evaluation questions (Patton, 2015). This was appropriate due to the cohort date range, SC and NSC criteria, and the qualitative nature of the inquiry. Evaluand data was used to identify candidates who met the date range criteria, yielding 297 valid participants. Of these, 272 had valid e-mail addresses and were contacted with an invitation to indicate their interest in being interviewed (see Appendix C, D, E). From this point onwards, participation is entirely anonymous. Of these, 46 participants were identified for participation and invited for an interview (Appendix I). A total of 18 interviews were scheduled, with four no-shows and 14 successful interviews (six SCs and eight NSCs). Table 1 provides key demographic information.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

Participant Number	Grouping	HS Quintile	Venture	Perceived EM & EI at Entry	Reason for Exit
1	NSC	Q4	Paused	No	Withdrew
2	NSC	Private Independent	Active	Yes	Withdrew
3	NSC	Q3 No Fee	None	No	Failed Academics
4	NSC	Private Independent	None	No	Withdrew
5	NSC	Q3 No Fee	Active	No	Failed Academics
6	NSC	Private Independent	Active	No	Withdrew
7	NSC	Former Model C	None	No	Withdrew
8	NSC	Former Model C	Active	No	Withdrew
9	SC	Former Model C	None	No	NA
10	SC	Top Performing School (Non-RSA)	Paused	No	NA

11	SC	Private Independent	None	No	NA
12	SC	Former Model C	Active	No	NA
13	SC	Former Model C	None	No	NA
14	SC	Specialised Independent	None	No	NA

## Data Analysis

A qualitative thematic analysis approach was employed to analyse the interview data, with the goal of identifying key patterns, meanings, and perspectives across participant responses. This inductive method allowed themes to emerge organically from the data and was well suited to the exploratory and evaluative nature of the study.

Interview transcripts were collaboratively transcribed by the evaluation team to ensure accuracy, consistency, and clarity. However, the coding and analysis were conducted independently. Atlas.ti software was used to facilitate the coding process. As each transcript was reviewed, codes were applied to significant segments of text that captured relevant concepts, actions, or reflections. When similar patterns appeared across interviews, the same code names were used to ensure consistency and enable thematic grouping.

Once all interviews had been coded, the full set of codes was reviewed and manually grouped into broader themes. This process was conducted outside of the software using paper-based methods, allowing for a more tactile and reflective engagement with the data. The themes were then mapped to explore their relationships to one another and to the overarching research questions.

## Data Collection Method

Interviews were booked through an online calendar management software and hosted via Microsoft Teams. Interviews were 60-90 minutes in length, and sessions were recorded and transcribed by MS Teams with the participants' consent (Appendix F). Participants were interviewed by one of three evaluators. Participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts and retract any information. Tokens of appreciation were sent to the interviewees by the evaluators. Transcripts and recordings were accessible only to the three evaluators.

Transcripts were coded and thematic analysis was conducted on an independent basis, using the Atlas.ti online software package.

Interview schedules were developed using the semi-structured interview approach with questions tailored for SCs and NSCs. Interviews were conducted using the general qualitative interview approach. The general interview guide approach is less structured than the semi-structured interview approach and has a flexible composition (Kallio et al., 2016; Turner, 2010). A limitation with this approach is that questions may be asked differently depending on the researcher, and participants may not answer questions in the same ways. However, the value of this lies in the ability to establish rapport with the participant and probe into their experiences without the pressure of ‘sticking to the script’. The responsibility of the interviewer is to keep any questions and topics aligned to the major points of enquiry, which is where the semi-structured questions play a role in guiding the trajectory of the conversations. An interviewer's guide is provided in Appendices G & H.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Prior to commencing the research, ethics clearance was obtained from the Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee (Appendix K). The study did not involve any sensitive subject matter, and no risks or harm were identified throughout the research process.

Participants were informed of the study's purpose and the measures in place to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Quantitative results from the questionnaire were reported in aggregate form (descriptive statistics, means, and general trends), with no identifiable information disclosed. While questionnaire respondents were required to provide contact details to identify potential interview participants, these were securely stored and were accessible only to the research team and supervisor. All data was safeguarded using encryption, access control, and anonymisation in data presentation. Data was stored on a secure, access-controlled cloud-based server, in accordance with the University of Cape Town's retention and disposal policies. Qualitative data were reported using pseudonyms to preserve participant anonymity.

Incentives for participation in the SCM survey and interviews were determined in consultation with the UCT Programme Evaluation group and the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF). Where offered, incentives took the form of shopping vouchers & airtime.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. All participants received an explanation of the research objectives and written consent forms detailing their rights and data protection protocols. Participants were informed of their right to omit responses, decline to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Interview participants provided consent for audio recordings to facilitate transcription. For virtual interviews, consent forms were emailed in advance and returned either with an electronic signature or confirmed verbally before the interview commenced. Interview transcripts were returned to participants for review, at which point they were given the opportunity to request redactions.

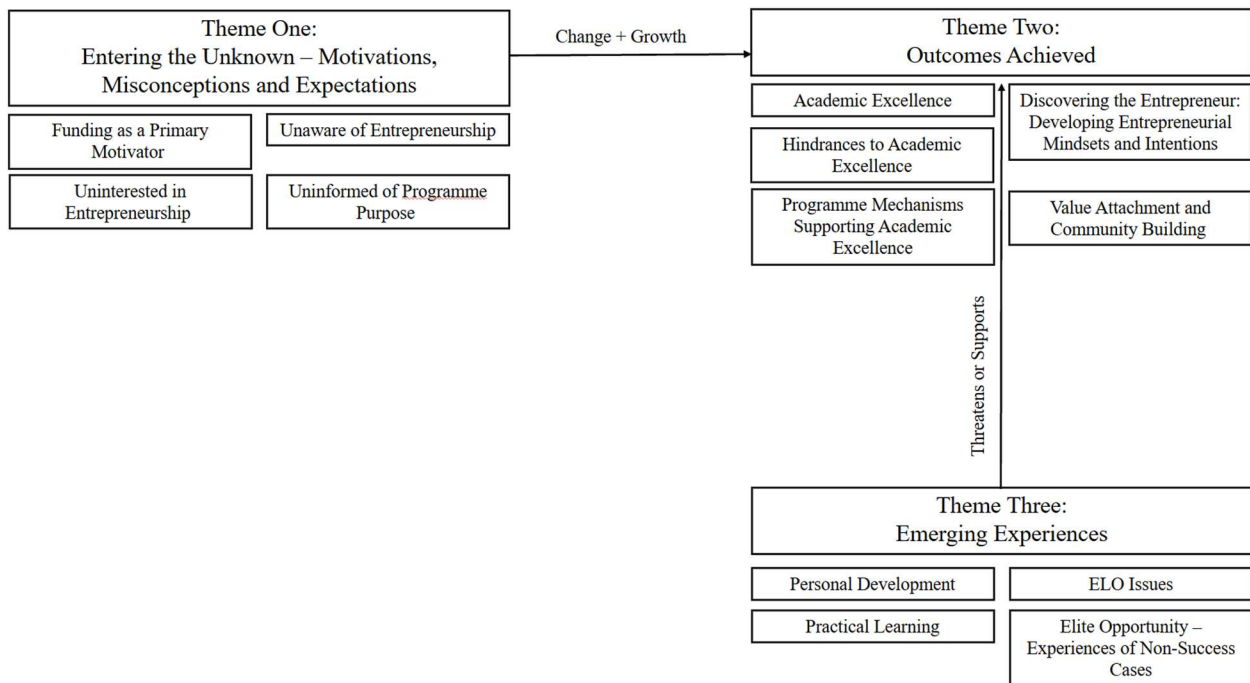
The study aimed to contribute to the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's mission to "benefit society by helping to accelerate meaningful employment creation while embodying the values and behaviours of ethical leadership" (Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, 2023). The evaluation's focus on both intended and unintended outcomes enabled critical insights into the programme's impact. While participants may not have experienced direct benefits, their contributions have helped inform recommendations that may enhance the programme's future design and improve outcomes for subsequent cohorts.

The role of the evaluators in being external to the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation was made clear to minimise any feelings of "hope for a second chance" that participants who were removed from the programme may have experienced.

## Chapter Three: Thematic Findings

This chapter presents the thematic findings of the outcome evaluation of the AGOF Fellowship programme. It provides the qualitative findings obtained from interviews with past participants. There are three main themes, each comprised of sub-themes. Figure 2 provides a theme map visualising the major themes and their relations with one another.

**Figure 2**  
*Thematic Map of Outcome Evaluation Themes and Sub-Themes*



## **Theme One: Entering the Unknown – Motivations, Misconceptions, and Expectations**

Theme one is comprised of three sub-themes: a) funding as a primary motivator; b) unaware of entrepreneurship; and c) uninformed of programme purpose.

This tells a story of participants who need funding to attend tertiary institutions, who anticipate AGOF as a sponsor instead of an entrepreneurial development foundation, who apply despite no avid interest in entrepreneurship, and who ultimately enter the programme with little understanding of its purpose and offerings.

### ***Funding as a Primary Motivator***

Findings from five participants informed this sub-theme which highlights financial support as a key motivator for applications. Interviews revealed that participants are often referred to the Fellowship by high school staff or distant family members as a funding opportunity for high performing students. Thus, the initial attraction to the Fellowship is due to the sponsorship component rather than its developmental opportunities. Quotes from interviews that demonstrate this mentality are included below:

“When I met the programme, I was really just looking for someone to help me fund a future. Didn’t even matter who it was. I really needed the support, financially.” - Participant 4  
[NSC]

“At the end of the day, I came to Allan Gray because I was looking for funding for my degree. I think mainly for people it is actually about the money.” - Participant 10 [SC]

“To be honest, I applied for it [laughter] because I needed funding for varsity” -  
Participant 14 [SC]

### ***Unaware of Entrepreneurship***

Findings from four participants informed this sub-theme which reveals that participants apply to the Fellowship without an awareness of their entrepreneurial capabilities or tendencies. While filling out the Fellowship application form, participants were surreptitiously urged to reflect on their engagement in entrepreneurial activities and demonstrations of entrepreneurial behaviours. This process of reflection caused participants to respond in different ways. One

participant began to question their suitability for placement in the Fellowship due to this unawareness:

“For me, the big thing was that I myself did not even know I was an entrepreneur or had any entrepreneurial inkling...I looked into [the Fellowship] and I thought, hmm. It’s talking a lot about entrepreneurship. I don’t know if I could call myself an entrepreneur. I don’t know if I’m the right person for this thing.” - Participant 6 [NSC]

For another participant the idea of entrepreneurship was far-fetched. They could not reconcile with the underlying expectation that one would have an entrepreneurial interest or have gained such experience at a young stage of life:

I remember some questions I couldn’t really answer because they were questions about if I’ve ever had a business, but I hadn’t. I remember thinking, why would I have...like...how would I have had a business? No one around me had ever had a business at that age or anything remotely entrepreneurial” - Participant 11 [SC]

On the other hand, the introspection caused some participants to acknowledge their attraction to self-starting and taking initiative as indicators of an entrepreneurial interest:

“Once I started filling those application forms and enlisting all my little failed ventures throughout high school I was like, oh, might be a little business minded, aren’t we?” - Participant 1 [NSC]

### ***Uninterested in Entrepreneurship***

Findings from two participants informed this sub-theme which captures another position of applicants to the programme and supports sub-theme 1.1. Two participants demonstrated applying for the Fellowship despite an explicit disinterest in pursuing entrepreneurship.

One participant described witnessing the challenges of running businesses firsthand, by observing both of their entrepreneurial parents. This participant also shared their experiences with financial hardship, noting that their parents were unable to fund their final year of schooling. These experiences firmly dissuaded the participant from pursuing entrepreneurship before they entered the Fellowship.

Another participant expressed their total disinterest in engaging in entrepreneurship prior to the Fellowship, including while applying:

“[Applying to the Fellowship] didn’t really come from a, ‘Oh, it’s like my lifelong dream to be an entrepreneur’. It was sort of just- I got told about it and applied. When I was in university, and high school, I was completely uninterested in, like, I don’t like the word entrepreneurship. I feel like it’s got, a bit of a dirty connotation these days. I was very uninterested in starting my own business.” - Participant 12 [SC]

### ***Uninformed of Programme Purpose***

Findings from six participants informed this sub-theme which observes that participants often lacked awareness and understanding of the entrepreneurial focus and expectations of the programme. Many applied primarily for financial support to fund their studies, with little information about the Fellowships broader goals relating to entrepreneurial development. Several participants expressed surprise or unpreparedness when they started the programme and were confronted with the entrepreneurial focus and especially the submission requirements:

“I wasn’t aware of the expectations. I thought that because I’m studying a course that is based on business development, I thought that would be good enough. I didn’t think that the entrepreneurial aspect of [the programme] would mean there is also entrepreneurial development for me individually outside of the course that I’m studying. I was not aware of that.” - Participant 3 [NSC]

Some of the participants noticed the entrepreneurial focus of questions on the application forms and recalled the continuation of the entrepreneurial theme into the interview and selection camp stages, yet these instances were still insufficient for thoroughly communicating programme expectations. One participant shared:

“I just thought maybe they wanted to see the way we think, the way we see the world...but I didn’t know that once you’re in there’s that much emphasis on entrepreneurship” - Participant 1 [NSC]

Participants also mentioned surprise at the prescribed workload of the Fellowship programme and the strictness of the marking schemes. In the context of applying for the

programme with no entrepreneurial interest and motivated by financial need, the unanticipated workload with a satisfactory progress requirement caught some participants off guard:

“When I came in and I was getting assignments, I wasn’t prepared for it really. I didn’t know what it meant.” - Participant 11 [SC]

## **Theme Two: Outcomes Achieved**

Despite the condition of participants upon applying to and entering the Fellowship, the programme achieved most of its intended outcomes. Interestingly, the outcomes were achieved by both SCs and NSCs. Namely Academic Success, Development of an Entrepreneurial Mindset and Entrepreneurial Intention; and Valuing of Community. The outcomes Valuing Collaboration and Responsible Entrepreneurship were achieved to a lesser extent and were observed as components of entrepreneurial mindsets and intentions, rather than independent outcomes. There were no indications of intentions to become a high impact entrepreneurs. This may be due to the cohort graduation dates which may not provide ample opportunity for the intention and inspiration to grow into High Impact goals, or it may be reflective of the small sample size (n = 14). Nonetheless, for a more insightful discussion, the intended outcome has been simplified to “CF’s Developed Entrepreneurial Intention”.

### ***Academic Excellence***

Findings from fourteen participants informed this sub-theme. Of the evaluation sample (n = 14), eight participants were permanently excluded from the programme and six had completed the programme. In evaluating academic success, it was defined according to the academic renewal criteria. Using programme-supplied renewal data and interview findings, academic success outcomes and key factors that contributed to attainment or failure were identified.

**Success Cases Summary.** All six success cases graduated with a weighted academic average of >60%. However, four SCs encountered years in which their weighted average fell below the 60% renewal requirement, and other academic renewal criteria were also violated. One SC consistently failed to achieve 60%, and another SC was unable to graduate their postgraduate qualification. Only two SCs met the academic requirements entirely and achieved academic success throughout their degree years. This information is summarised in Table 2 below. This

suggests that there may be inconsistencies in how the renewal criteria are applied. The factors influencing this phenomenon are explored further in this section.

**Table 2**

*Depersonalised Success Case Academic Results Summary*

Count of SC Participants	Yearly Performance	Overall % at Completion
4	Did not meet all academic renewal criteria.	60%+
2	Met all academic renewal criteria.	70%+

**Non-Success Cases Summary.** For Non-Success Cases, two NSCs were excluded from the programme due to academic performance; five NSCs failed to achieve academic success because they chose to withdraw from their degree programme; and one NSC did not achieve academic success because they transferred to a non-supported institution after failing to meet their degree-requirements, but did not fail the Fellowship renewal requirements. The latter case is nuanced because the Fellowship offered conditional renewal, and the participant would likely had they remained in a partnered institution. As such, their status was categorised as academically unsuccessful due to withdrawal.

In summary, two NSCs were academically unsuccessful and six NSCs chose to withdraw for various reasons. This information is summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Non-Success Case Academic Results – Academic Exclusion*

Participant Number	Yearly Performance	Overall % at Exit
3	<20% in one year	46%
5	<40% in one year	45%

Notes:

1. Participants obtained a low mark in one year of the degree ranging from second year to third year. This has been disassociated from participant numbers to enhance anonymity.
2. Percentages have been rounded to the next highest tenth place
3. Both participants met academic requirements in first year

## ***Programme Mechanisms Supporting Academic Success***

Across the interviews a theme emerged around the significant role of PLPO advocacy and support in achieving academic success.

**PLPO Advocacy.** This topic in the sub-theme highlights the role of PLPOs in advocating the renewal or graduation for Candidate Fellows in violation of renewal criteria. The academic failures overlooked for renewal are detailed in Table 4. Four SCs had years where they did not achieve academic success but were renewed. These overlooked discrepancies are summarised in Table 5. These four participants directly credit their renewal to their PLPOs advocacy:

“My PLPO did assess my situation after my final year, and she actually advocated for me to graduate. The Fellowship was wanting to say “oh, you did not complete your [postgraduate] degree and so you cannot graduate”. So, my PLPO became an advocate and so, your PLPO is your friend” – Participant 14 [SC]

In two of these cases, challenges were due to health-related issues, while the other two stemmed from personal circumstances:

“I had other things that were going on, like other personal stuff, that was majorly impacting everything and especially my grades. I did keep my PLPO in contact with that. I was at risk of not making it through the programme, but then, I think, because of the fact that throughout the year, I would tell my PLPO all the things that I was going through and the specific problems I was facing- they ended up being really accommodating and renewing me.” – Participant 11 [SC]

**Table 4**

### *Non-Success Case Reasons for Exit – Academic Withdrawal*

Count of NSC Participants	Yearly Performance	Reason for Exit
3	Met renewal requirements until year of exit	Realised alternative interests
2	Did not meet renewal requirements in the one year of participation	Severe disinterest in the degree

**Table 5***Overlooked Academic Discrepancies Overview*

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Participant	Performance
9	<40% in one year
11	<60% for 3 consecutive years
13	<55% in one year; extension of degree
14	<55% in one year; failed multiple full-year courses and multiple half-year courses; did not complete academic year

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## Notes:

1. Participants obtained a low mark in one year of the degree ranging from first year to final year. This has been disassociated from participant numbers to enhance anonymity.
2. Percentages have been rounded to the next highest tenth place

**PLPO Support.** Findings from seven participants informed this sub-theme topic. The role of the PLPO in supporting academic success was a small but important theme that emerged largely from those SCs (n = 4) who faced the threat of exclusion. PLPOs were found to assist in four primary areas in the academic journey.

**Extension Negotiations:** One participant spoke extensively around the inappropriateness of the Fellowship programme expectations in conjunction with the workload of a BSc qualification. In this context, their PLPO played a role in negotiating an internal programme extension, despite the rejection of the request by another programme officer. This assisted them while experiencing multiple concurrent deadlines:

“My PLPO actually helped me get an extension on an assessment when I was drowning in workload. Even though my ELO originally said no to that extension” – Participant 13 [SC]

**Tutoring and Academic Support:** PLPOs were observed as a gateway for accessing tutoring services and peer-based academic support. They acted as a key source of information regarding tutoring services and how to access them. Beyond providing information, the PLPO was also found negotiating additional funds for students who had exhausted their allocated tutoring budget:

“Even [more than] assistance for marks, even they offer tutoring services and when you max out on your budget, and you tell your PLPO “I’m maxed out on my budget for the workshops” then they’re like “I’ll make room.”” – Participant 11 [SC]

PLPOs further support academic success by fostering relationships between students in similar degrees or fields, enabling access to relevant advice and guidance in a peer setting. Participants mentioned that having someone who has “*done this before you and can guide you*” is a major component of achieving success, which supports the peer-based learning approach.

***Continuing Studies:*** In a unique case, the PLPO played a critical role in motivating a student to return to their studies and complete their degree after facing a significant shock which threatened their academic success. This differs from the PLPO advocacy sub-theme because in this case, the PLPO encouraged the participant to return to university- guiding them towards a more suitable degree choice, and dispelling fear of judgement:

“without the support of my PLPO, I think I might not have wanted to come back to school because of how I felt like a failure and stuff. That’s what makes the Fellowship different from other bursaries. Just having a mentor, and having that type of relationship, it helped me come back to school”. – Participant 9 [SC]

### ***Hinderances to Academic Success***

This sub-theme is informed by findings from seven participants. Hailing from a high-quality educational background (fee paying Q4+) and studying a degree appropriately aligned to one’s interests were strongly associated with academic success. Specifically, a low-quality (no-fee Q3) educational background was associated with exclusion due to academic non-success, and studying a misaligned degree was associated with non-success due to withdrawal.

**High School Education.** Findings from five participants informed this sub-theme topic.

“I think I was not prepared at all, going from my high school to university” – Participant 3 [NSC]

NSCs who failed to achieve academic renewal criteria cited inability to transition to university standards, whereas SCs cited finding the university standards similar to high school and voluntarily acknowledged that they managed the workload better due to their high school

preparations. Further exploration revealed that SCs hailed from fee paying Q4+ and private schools, NSCs who withdrew hailed from fee paying Q4+, and NSCs who did not meet the standards hailed from Q3 no-fee schools (DBE, 2024).

One of the NSC participants recounted how their transition from a smaller, rural area introduced encounters with unfamiliar accents communicating the coursework, and how their personal and time management skills were exceeded by the requirements of a highly academic tertiary institution:

“First year was also challenging because now I had the challenge of accent. Coming from rural areas, now getting Indian lecturers and stuff like that. So, I kind of struggle with the accent and to hear some of the words when they pronounce...you know, that post-matric to tertiary transformation, adjusting and stuff like that...things got bit challenging for me there...I couldn't manage my work properly, an overwhelming workload” – Participant 5 [NSC]

This experience contrasts with the following quote from another NSC who withdrew from their degree due to malalignment of interests:

“I came from a high school where the workload and the pressure that they trained us under was a lot...so, I think mentally I've already been through it in high school, so I could manage the multiple tasks all at one time. But there are children that come from different backgrounds, who don't necessarily have the same advantage that I've had just from having been in my high school in terms of managing the tasks and grappling with the workload.” – Participant 4 [NSC]

**Degree Alignment and Purpose in Higher Education.** Five participants informed this sub-theme topic. Findings showed that NSCs who withdrew (n = 5) from their degree demonstrated low intrinsic motivation due to degree misalignment or disillusionment with higher education, while SCs, conversely, displayed deep interest in their field and had aspirations aligning with their subjects. The experiences of NSCs who withdrew occur in two clear groups: a) unclear purpose or motivation for pursuing higher education and b) misalignment between interests and chosen degree. Participants experiencing the former group cited studying due to familial pressure, the funding opportunity, or simply because it felt like the natural next step after high school. As one participant shared:

“My mother is a doctor, and my father is a lawyer and my parents have always, you know, preached the gospel of education...it was never a question of **if** I’m going to university, it was just a question of which **one** and with **who**, you know?” – Participant 6 [NSC]

Experiences of the latter were linked to selecting degrees based on external impressions of subject choices, not knowing how to choose a degree based on their interests, not knowing how to see the content of the course before registering, or simply not knowing what options are available to them for higher education. One experience is demonstrated below:

“I felt like, wow, I have these good marks, so I might as well apply for something that's, you know, difficult or something that's seen as, like, as a STEM major. So, I went in just with that, with no passion, with nothing backing me other than just you know, ok, I guess I should do it...but I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do.” – Participant 9 [SC]<sup>2</sup>

However, these two types of experiences were not mutually exclusive, as one participant explained that they studied before they were ready and with low confidence in their selected degree:

“The fact that I was awarded this scholarship, it definitely propelled me into studying straight after school, which I wasn't necessarily planning to do. So, then I said, okay, I'm going to go study next year; and there wasn't any real consideration as to what I should actually study.”  
– Participant 2 [NSC]

### ***Discovering the Entrepreneur: Developing Entrepreneurial Mindsets and Intentions***

13 Participants informed this sub-theme. All participants demonstrated development of their entrepreneurial mindset, and most developed entrepreneurial intention (see Table 6 for numbers by group). Across the NSC and SC groups, participants spoke about how their biggest takeaway from the Fellowship is a newfound interest in and awareness of entrepreneurship:

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<sup>2</sup> Despite being a Success Case, Participant 9 failed their first-degree choice (STEM) and returned to university after changing their subject to something that interested them, thereafter, achieving academic success. This was the most powerful quote on the topic of selecting degrees for the wrong reasons.

“I definitely think the most rewarding thing is developing this entrepreneurial mindset...I’m really grateful that they helped me develop that while I was in varsity” – Participant 10 [SC]

As presented in sub-theme 1.4, participants spoke about how they entered the programme with little to no understanding of what entrepreneurship is, and little to no knowledge of their own entrepreneurial inclinations; yet they left the programme with either a venture, a desire to start a venture, or at least an understanding of how to initiate a venture if the opportunity appears. Interestingly, participants who were in the Fellowship for as short as one year displayed significant evidence of entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial intention development. One participant, who exited after just one year, exhibits this mindset growth in the following quote:

“I am running my own business, and I have to think back to when I was [considering applying] and how I [didn’t] see myself as an entrepreneur, where the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation was such a farfetched idea for me, to now where I am running my own business, and I **know** it’s because of the teachings I’ve gotten from Allan Gray” – Participant 6 [NSC]

**Table 6**

*Count and Percentage of Responses for Mindset and Intention Development by Success Category*

	Yes	No	Unclear
<b>Mindset Developed</b>			
Non-success cases	7 (87.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Success cases	6 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	13 (92.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.14%)
<b>Intention Developed</b>			
Non-success cases	7 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Success cases	4 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)
Total	11 (78.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (23.4%)

Some participants did not develop their entrepreneurial intention until years after they finished the programme. One participant maintained that they had no interest in running a business before, during, or immediately after the programme. It was only after gaining some work experience and identifying an opportunity for a venture that they felt the urge to pursue venture initiation. They attribute this growth to the Fellowship with the following quote:

“Without Allan Gray, I don’t know if I would be doing my business now. I always had the opinion I wasn’t going to be a super entrepreneurial oke, but that being said when the opportunity came around I didn’t even blink. It was always something that I had at the back of my mind because of the programme” – Participant 12 [SC]

Participant interviews did not provide any indication of intentions to become high-impact entrepreneurs. However, a few cases discussed their understanding and valuing of responsible entrepreneurship (RE) (see Table 7). The only participants who mentioned RE were those who currently or previously engaged in responsible ventures, otherwise the topic was not voluntarily brought up.

Understanding and valuing RE manifested quickly after the first introduction to the topic. Participants displayed RE values in discussing their venture purpose, founding values, and scaling strategies. One NSC participant shared their experience at the selection camp, where competing students were introduced to the concept of socially responsible entrepreneurship. For this individual, a commitment to RE was immediately triggered, which they followed through on. This participant went on to establish a successful social-development organisation which merged with an international partner:

“I go to the camp, and I learned about this whole aspect about how entrepreneurs tend to neglect the bottom of the pyramid, which is the informal sector...I remember a lightbulb in my head just went off. I was like, whatever it is that I do, it has to be in service of the people, if I choose to pursue this entrepreneurial journey. It has to be a net good for society” – Participant 8 [NSC]

**Table 7**

*Understanding and Valuing Responsible Entrepreneurship by Success Category*

	Yes	No	No Evidence
NSC	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (87.5%)
SC	3 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (50.0%)
Total	4 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (71.4%)

## Programme Components Supporting Outcome Attainment

*Inspiring, Empowering, Supportive Programme.* 10 participants described similar experiences encouraging development of an entrepreneurial mindset, valuing socially responsible entrepreneurship, and intention to pursue entrepreneurship. Discussions often centered around the inspiration that participants gained from the Fellowship, the empowerment they received, and the supportive nature of the programme. Inspiration was often spoken about in relation to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, while empowerment and support were spoken about in relation to venture initiation and entrepreneurial intention.

Interviews highlighted the value of entrepreneurial talks, inspirational stories and motivational experiences. These provided encouragement, practical insight, and a glimpse into the entrepreneurial journey; making entrepreneurship feel practical and attainable. Hearing success stories helped participants see what was possible and ignited their motivation to pursue entrepreneurship. One participant demonstrates how exposure framed their understanding of entrepreneurship as a journey, and failure as a steppingstone:

“With Jamborees, by bringing entrepreneurs to us to engage with them and hear how they also started small...I think when you think of entrepreneurship, you think of big people who have done big things and when you look at yourself, you’re like...well, I’m not an entrepreneur because I don’t have some huge operation or some groundbreaking innovation. But when you have an opportunity to sit down and engage with those people, you realise they actually had a journey, it started somewhere small...it started as an idea, hell, maybe it didn’t work the first time and then once they reworked it, it had a few more kinks, and they had to work those out and then they got to where they are now” – Participant 6 [NSC]

Most participants spoke about the benefits of immersive, experiential and interactive learning experiences. Engagements such as DigiJam<sup>3</sup>, Jamborees, Venture Challenges<sup>4</sup>, Entrepreneurial Lectures, and Practical Workshops were specifically favoured by participants because they created an engaging environment where inspiration was imparted.

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<sup>3</sup> DigiJam is the digital Jamboree format used during COVID-19

<sup>4</sup> Venture Challenges are an experiential hypothetical learning activity which requires participants to ideate and validate a business idea, do real-world market research, and pitch the idea, and present a final report of the journey.

“It was inspirational to be exposed to that sort of atmosphere... and that’s the most thing that I found valuable... the inspiration you got. They would bring guest speakers, maybe prominent entrepreneurs, CEOs or anyone with an entrepreneurial background that might inspire inspiration in us...overall it was just inspirational seeing examples” – Participant 14 [SC]

In relation to empowerment, participants spoke about the benefits of activities which encourage active participation and real-world application of entrepreneurial principles. These experiences were more impactful for enhancing entrepreneurial competencies than single, isolated events. These experiences fostered creativity, problem-solving, and engagement with entrepreneurial thinking. Participants spoke about how the Fellowship takes the lofty idea of entrepreneurship and transforms it into something implementable and practical, which helps participants feel empowered to initiate ventures:

“They did very well in cultivating entrepreneurial spirits and changing that into real businesses...I think Allan Gray really does take you from inception to creation very well, in a very systematic manner, that you also feel empowered” – Participant 9 [SC]

In relation to support, participants spoke about the financial incentives and mentorship components. These features created an enabling environment where participants felt supported to explore their interests and flex their entrepreneurial muscles. Access to financial support and prize money allowed creativity. Participants appreciated the peer-learning aspect as it enabled shared growth. This helped with building entrepreneurial competencies and deepening understanding by learning from others’ experiences.

### ***Value Attachment and Community Building***

10 interviews revealed that participants found a strong sense of community and built lasting networks during their time in the Fellowship, with many of these connections continuing to provide support beyond their candidacy. Participants also felt that the Fellowship effectively fostered community-building through group-based experiences such as Jamboree and ELO Sessions. An emotional connection to the Fellowship and AGOF more broadly often stemmed from deep gratitude for the tangible impact on their lives; with phrases such as, “*the programme has done so much for me*”. Participants described a familial feeling toward AGOF, even if they

were permanently excluded before completion. This information is summarised in Table 8 below.

**Table 8**

*Values AGOF Community Outcome Attainment*

	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	No Evidence (n, %)
Success Cases	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)
Non-Success Cases	4 (50%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)
Total	7 (50%)	4 (21.4%)	3 (28.6%)

### **Programme Components Supporting Outcome Attainment**

***Networking & Community Building Opportunities.*** 8 participants credited events and activities that join Candidate Fellows together as the most influential in creating communities and building networks. DigiJam, Jamboree and collaborative entrepreneurial activities provided a platform for CFs to connect with one another. Some participants reported meeting their closest friends at the selection camp, and others spoke highly of pitching competitions hosted at Jamboree. The following quote highlights the valuable role played by events such as Jamboree, not only for building relationships but for creating an impactful and personal experience for candidates:

“Not having a Jamboree last year was a disappointing experience...every single time you go to Jamboree it’s exciting and the food is great, and you get to meet more Fellows and get to know them, like that’s probably the main place where I would meet people and get to learn about their businesses, what they’re studying, and network. Those were a great place to network because you randomly get put into a room with another candidate fellow, and you also have to speak to them, so you end up getting to know the community quite well. But without that, I feel like you definitely learn less. It would have been nice to network a bit, meet more of the community and get to know more...” – Participant 13 [SC]

***Supporting Achievement of Life Goals.*** The Fellowship became valuable because of its role in assisting candidates to achieve goals which may have otherwise been unattainable. This applies to provision of funds for tertiary education, provision of funds

for venture creation, provision of funds for unique opportunities and experiences, provision of experienced mentorship, and provision of an inspiring and hopeful environment. Participants used phrases along the lines of, 'I wouldn't be where I am or who I am without the Fellowship'. For one participant, this achievement of a life goal constituted flying in an aeroplane for the first time. For another, it was the Fellowship encouraging their return to university after encountering a shock that threatened their academic success. For another, it was their mentor's encouragement to pursue their passion as a venture. It was these types of personal experiences which created affect toward the Fellowship.

*Programme Affiliation* 4 participants valued their affiliation with AGOF due to the prestigious public image of the organisation. A few participants noted that being connected to a well-regarded institution positively influences how they are perceived by others, providing an element of 'credibility'. Some emphasised that listing the Foundation on their CV may provide a competitive edge in applications, as it signaled excellence. Others highlighted the network the Foundation provides, allowing them to connect with previous and current CFs across the country simply by affiliation. Some pointed out that this network leads to job opportunities, with affiliation to the AGOF name being used as an inlet.

### **Theme Three: Emerging Experiences**

This theme is comprised of meaningful themes which may only be supported by a few cases. These sub-themes warrant attention and mentions due to their potential impact on future revisions of the programme theory.

#### ***Personal Development***

4 participants informed the development of this sub-theme. The Fellowship was found to foster personal development, particularly by cultivating resilience and perseverance among participants. These qualities are strengthened through exposure to motivational talks, programme teachings, and structured activities. Some participants credited these experiences with helping them navigate academic challenges more effectively.

“Life requires you to really have a strong mind. Otherwise, if life throws challenges at you, you are gonna just give up like that. So, with the Foundation, it taught me to be persistent, taught me to hold on. Throughout the filling of the long application form, the interview panel, the selection camp- it really taught me that if I put my mind onto something I can really achieve it, even if the odds are not on my favour. It taught me to fight for what I want. It taught me not to give up.” – Participant 5 [NSC]

“I feel like being in this programme has pushed me to be anti-fragile in a sense; so, when things happen, not to let things put me down. I very much was that person in high school. When I feel very anxious and very stressed I just shut down and just ignore everything else. But now, I don’t just give up... I think my mindset would have been completely different if I hadn’t been part of this programme”. – Participant 11 [SC]

Beyond resilience, the programme was also found to encourage self-awareness, prompting participants to reflect on their goals, strengths, and weaknesses. An unexpected outcome of this introspection is that some participants choose to withdraw from university to pursue their discovered passions. While this necessitates leaving the programme if their new path falls outside the limits of supported tertiary institutions, it is ultimately a positive shift, as these participants report greater fulfillment in following careers that align with their true interests.

### ***ELO Issues***

Participants expressed mixed experiences of the ELO component, highlighting inconsistencies in engagement and accessibility. Reports emerged of participants struggling to get in touch with their ELO, missing formal introductions to both the ELO and the ELO structure, content, and expectations for. Unawareness of submission requirements was mentioned and likely linked to sub-theme 1.4. Additionally, ELOs were reported to be mixed in their availability for students. One student reported that their ELO had very few and strict time slots for ELO sessions, with no flexibility for academic requirements and commitments. This forced them to miss ELO sessions. This is strongly contrasted by another participant who commended the ease of booking a slot with their ELO. A broader perception within the programme also emerged – that Candidate Fellows know some participants are fortunate to have a lenient ELO who gives good marks, while others face stricter grading, having to suffer with lower E-points.

## ***Practical Learning***

**Theoretical Entrepreneurial Education.** Three participants felt that the theoretical aspects of entrepreneurial education were unnecessary and had little impact. One participant highlighted that for those pursuing demanding degrees, the programme's workload could become burdensome. Activities that required writing and submission were seen as time-consuming, and when combined with theoretical components, they were not enjoyable. One participant noted that theoretical activities were easy to pass over by skimming through the materials and repeatedly attempting tasks until achieving the correct answers. This type of "*parrot-fashioning*" caused a longing for more opportunities for critical engagement and the development of practical, applicable entrepreneurial competencies.

**Balancing Inspiration and Practicality.** Three participants noted an over-reliance on inspirational experiences and motivational stories about entrepreneurship. While these narratives were valuable, they felt the Fellowship lacked teaching practical skills to support the development of desirable traits, such as time management, marketing skills, sales skills, e-commerce knowledge, and legal knowledge for starting a company. Some expressed a desire for more applicable, useful skills that could benefit both their entrepreneurial, academic, and general life.

## ***Elite Opportunity – Experiences of Non-Success Cases***

**Competitive and Intense Environment.** 4 participants informed the development of this sub-theme.

“It's competitive. I think they are very low-key, but it's very competitive” – Participant 1[NSC]

For these four participants in particular, the Fellowship was experienced as an elite opportunity and an overwhelming challenge. These participants hailed from under-resourced backgrounds, either rural or township locations. They described the selection camp as “brutal”, pushing them to their limits. These participants spoke about crying and breaking down during the camp, indicating the emotional intensity they experienced. Participants also spoke about feeling out of place among peers from prestigious schools. There was a common trend of comparison to

peers, specifically from higher resource backgrounds, that extended throughout their tenure in the Fellowship:

“Another thing with the Fellowship is it's a lot of kids from private schools. And I went to a public school in the Township. Not even like a public school in a multi-racial area. In the Township. So sometimes they'd write about an experience, and I'm listening to them and I'm Googling half of these terms and I'm like, oh, that's what that is; and it does something to you...-  
Participant 1 [NSC]

Some participants also struggled with self-doubt, expecting feelings of rejection because of their background. The selection camp was a place where these feelings of inadequacy were experienced intensely:

“My English was shaky...there you see people coming from private schools and they start being intimidating...I called home like “I can't do this anymore, it's overwhelming.” Everyone around here, you can see they are smart, and they know what they're doing... I don't want to lie; the selection camp was brutal. It was brutal.” – Participant 5 [NSC]

Even after being selected, these feelings of self-doubt developed into imposter syndrome, amplified by the competitive nature of the programme. Participants felt pressure to prove they belonged, even when struggling, which had implications for their engagement with community-based and relational aspects of the programme. The weight of expectations simply made interactions daunting:

“I didn't feel like I belonged, I didn't feel like I was good enough, I didn't feel like I was excellent enough. I was struggling to stay in this prestigious scholarship, so I didn't feel like I could relate to anyone, because I was struggling” – Participant 3 [NSC]

One participant explained that this competitive element caused them to opt out of participating in entrepreneurial activities with other Candidate Fellows. They noticed that instead of CF's prioritising the creation of a valuable business idea, it was about whose idea is the best and ensuring their idea wins the competition:

“It’s not a matter of presenting ‘a reason why my idea is good’. No, it becomes a matter of ‘reasons why my idea is better than yours’. They’re trying to get [their] idea to be the one that wins. So, it becomes scary, and that’s why I decided to opt out.” – Participant 1 [NSC]

**Fear and Avoidance.** 4 participants informed the development of this sub-theme. Tied to the competitive and intense nature of the Fellowship, some participants exhibited a sense of fear and avoidance that influenced how they interact with the programme. Feelings of intimidation and shame interfered with their ability to raise their academic, social, and entrepreneurial challenges. They avoided any form of vulnerability, fearing judgement from their peers and mentors. Their constant comparison of themselves to high-performing peers reinforced these feelings of inadequacy.

For one participant, their feelings of shame around struggling with the workload lead them to withdraw from university without informing their PLPO. It was common for these participants to have challenges connecting to their PLPOs for these very same reasons. One participant describes this phenomenon:

“Even if I wasn’t doing that good, I would try to sugarcoat it because I still wanted [my PLPO] to think I deserved to be on the scholarship...I wasn’t always transparent with her because I felt like I needed to impress her” – Participant 3 [NSC]

For another, they felt that their idea for a socially responsible venture was not impressive enough to present during ELO sessions or for the IVC. They hid their venture, working on it on the side without any integration into the Fellowship. They recount:

It was just a really strong sense of, like, intimidation that I really felt. Because the people that I did know that were within the program, they were all like high achievers. They were all like really, really intelligent people. They were people who had business ideas and were at a point where they had, like, a business plan...” – Participant 8 [NSC]

**Financial Challenges Post-Exclusion.** 2 participants informed the findings for this sub-theme.

Exclusion from the programme brought severe financial strain for some participants, leading to emotional distress and uncertainty about their future. One described the experience as overwhelming, explaining that emotional stress had already contributed to their poor academic

performance, which ultimately led to both financial and academic exclusion at university after being dismissed from the Fellowship:

“Now I'm stressed. I'm depressed. I'm confused. Things went from North to South very quickly.” – Participant 5 [NSC]

Losing funding meant scrambling for alternatives, but options were limited. Without the programme's financial support, one participant faced food insecurity and struggled with accommodation. Exclusion not only disrupted their education but also left them in financial hardship:

“I had to find other ways of funding...but I'm currently not funded. There was a time whereby I would get money from a university food thing for unfortunate students, if you can't buy yourself food then they can give you a voucher. It's been hard not being on Allan Gray with regards to tuition, residence and food” – Participant 3 [NSC]

## **Chapter Four: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the major topics that emerged from analysing key themes across the interviews. Rather than addressing each theme in isolation, the discussion pulls together recurring ideas and shared patterns to explore broader insights about the programme and its outcomes. These topics provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing participant experiences and offer a critical lens through which to interpret the findings in relation to the evaluation's objectives and relevant literature.

### **University Preparedness and a Strong PLPO Relationship are Important for Success in the Fellowship**

Candidate Fellows who did not meet the academic criteria but had attended well-resourced high schools were often renewed through PLPO advocacy, as their struggles were linked to personal or health challenges. These students generally recovered their grades after overcoming these difficulties.

Students from high quality high-schools who achieved high marks are more likely to succeed at university (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2021; Kuh et al., 2006; Schneider & Preckel, 2017; McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001; Steedle & Way, 2024; Visser & van Zyl, 2013; Zyl-Schalekamp & Mthombeni, 2015). Private high-schools and high-fee schools in South Africa are strongly related with an easier transition to university and higher academic performance (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2021; Zyl-Schalekamp & Mthombeni, 2015). Considering the validity and strength of these predictive factors, there are very few factors that can interfere with the academic success of a prepared student, other than unanticipated shocks (Van Rooij et al., 2018).

This was the case with four of the six Success Cases in this evaluation. Participants from private and high-fee schools demonstrated the ability to meet the academic renewal requirements, for the most part. Where there was no demonstration of evidence, yet a renewal took place, there was a significant shock that caused academic failure in the first place. The programme factors contributing most significantly to success in the academic sphere are a strong relationship with the PLPO. This relationship played two major roles. Firstly, it enabled PLPO's to advocate on behalf of the student for their renewal. Secondly, it supported the academic progression of students in ways that suited their needs. The PLPO could act as a motivator, a

supported, someone to guide their decisions and development, a source of tutoring funds, a provider of timely mental-health wellness interventions, and helped manage heavy workloads.

Mentorship programmes are shown to have measurable impacts on the performance of university students (Menon, 2024; Roy et al., 2025; Snowden et al., 2012). Mentoring that encompasses holistic development, emotional and psychological well-being can foster both cognitive and emotional growth, which trigger behaviours necessary for academic success (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Gross, 2022). The advocacy from the PLPO that enabled renewal contributed to academic success by preventing students from withdrawing from university due to a loss of financial aid. Students with financial need whose funding is withdrawn are more likely to drop out or complete their degrees at a slower rate (Mabuza, 2020; Salazar-Fernandez et al., 2024). This is pertinent in the context of students applying to the Fellowship primarily for a source of funding.

However, the pre-university preparedness of participants may play a large role in their ability to meet renewal requirements in the first place, and their ability to recover from shocks. SCs, and to some extent NSCs from high-resourced high-schools who were academically successful before their withdrawal, perceived no major differences between the expectations of their high school and university. The ability of students to manage university workload stress is a significant predictor of academic completion (Ajjawi, 2019; Naylor et al., 2018). Turner et al. (2002) explore precursors and consequences to feelings of shame and failure in the academic context (Neff, 2005). They find that for a student to overcome these emotions and obtain their academic goals, they must first be in possession of sufficient study strategies, self-monitoring strategies, metacognitive strategies, and self-regulation.

The conclusion is thus that PLPO advocacy and university preparedness, which may be predicted by the quality of high-school education, are the most critical factors for academic success in the Fellowship.

## **Academic Challenges and Causes of Dismissal - The Role of Educational Background and Support**

Participants who were dismissed for failing to meet academic renewal criteria displayed a steady decline in grades or did not meet the threshold in the first place. These participants cited a lack of university-preparedness as the primary contributing factor.

Notably, the only two participants dismissed for academic threshold reasons hailed from quintile 3, no-fee paying schools located in semi-rural to rural areas of South Africa (DBE, 2024). The most common method of defining low-resource or low-quality schools in the South African education system is by fees (Dieltiens & Motala, 2014; Maistry & Africa, 2020; Sapuli, 2015). These students proposed that they might have met the renewal requirements with extra support, particularly in managing their workload and overcoming transition challenges, such as language barriers, social integration, engaging with lecturers, timetable complexities. The shared view of these participants was that the academic requirements were harder than they anticipated, based on their high achievements in high school. Other students argued that the requirements were inconsiderate of the variable difficulty of degree types with relation to workload and marking strictness (Rodriguez-Hernandez & Kyndt, 2020; Tomkin, 2022).

As discussed, prior academic achievement and high-school quality significantly predict university performance. The Fellowship accounts for this in its entrance criteria but may lack sufficient support for students from underserved high schools during the duration of their studies. Students from underserved high schools or low-SES backgrounds may experience unique challenges which may not be entirely compensated for by excellent prior academic achievement (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2021; Ndimbira-Rosner, 2024). Students from these backgrounds struggle with the increased academic rigor, heavier workloads, and a lack of prior exposure to self-directed learning (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). The high school context also significantly impacts the academic achievement of tertiary students, regardless of high performance in secondary school. Factors such as resource availability, exposure to violence, lack of extra-curricular enrichment, and the overall school environment can override the influence of high academic performance (Wolniak & Engberg, 2010). Gaps in academic preparation, lower base-knowledge of broad topics, limited access to support systems, anxiety and stress are among the challenges faced by these students (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2021; Ndimbira-Rosner, 2024).

Systemic disadvantages in pre-university education may thus impact high-achieving students from under-resourced schools disproportionately more than their peers.

In the South African context, where the medium of instruction is often home languages or English mixed with code-switching (Ajani & Gamede, 2020), language competence is a unique challenge faced by students who move from rural to urban areas for higher education (Mphasha et al., 2012). The adaptation to academic English discourse in both reading and speaking comprehension often poses a significant challenge. Language competence is thus regarded as one of the seven most critical competencies for students to succeed in university in South Africa (Walker, 2006 as cited in Wilson-Strydom, 2012).

At university, students are expected to self-regulate independent learning (van Rooij, 2018). The type of learning then extends past surface learning, which is concerned with reproducing the learning material, into deep learning, which is concerned with understanding the learning material and creating connections with other knowledge or previous experiences (van Rooij, 2018). These types of learning strategies, metacognitive functions, and concrete processing (Vermunt, 2005 in van Rooij, 2018) may not be incorporated into the curriculum by teachers in Q4 schools in South Africa (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2021). Many under-resourced schools focus on attendance rather than active student engagement, and meeting admission criteria rather than developing learning competencies, which improperly prepares students for the participatory and critical thinking demands of university education (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2021; Conley, 2005, 2008; Hoffman et al., 2008; Wilson-Strydom, 2012).

This is reflected in the students' experiences, as they reported experiencing high levels of anxiety over their marks and severe stress related to university, increased academic demands, and insufficient support structures. These feelings were compounded by the financial hardship students faced after exclusion. Research shows that financial insecurity among university students correlates with decreased enrolment, persistence, and degree completion, particularly for low-income students who struggle to meet the financial demands of higher education (Mabuza, 2020; Ndimbira-Rosner, 2024; Salazar-Fernandez et al., 2024). The exclusion of these students highlights the importance of timely intervention and support systems in helping them succeed.

In conclusion, the experiences of students from low-resourced high schools supports the core finding that university preparedness is critical for success in the academic component of the Fellowship.

### **The Role of Motivation and Informed Decision-Making in University Persistence**

Four out of the five participants who dropped out of university entered with an unclear motivation and purpose for pursuing higher education. They acknowledged that before enrolling, they knew their degree did not align with their deep interests but viewed university as the natural next step after high school. They cited unawareness of how to critically select a degree or establish a career trajectory or simply opted to study due to familial pressures.

This misalignment was experienced as a contributor to their disengagement and eventual dropout. This is consistent with findings from Zembrodt (2021) that students who do not see value in their degree are less likely to persist until graduation. Students with a clear sense of purpose and alignment between their studies and interest are more likely to persist (Van Rooij, 2018). Students who feel engaged and satisfied with their program tend to persist and are more likely to complete their degree, as intrinsic motivation strengthens their connection to the subject matter (Suhre et al., 2007; Tinto, 2022).

Research by Aina et al. (2022) supports this by suggesting that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who may not be intrinsically motivated by their studies, are more likely to drop out if they feel their degree does not align with their personal goals (Behr et al., 2020; Bennet, 2003). This intrinsic motivation, derived from a genuine interest in one's studies, is crucial for long-term academic success and retention (Roberts, 2009; Whelan & McGuiness, 2020)

Students left their degrees at different points; some at the end of their first year, while others attempted a different major or degree after 12-months before ultimately exiting after another 12 months. For three of these four participants, they later pursued a path that they were truly passionate about. This finding suggests that a lack of intrinsic motivation, rather than purely academic or financial challenges, played a role in their dropout decisions. Bennett (2003) highlighted that students who pursue degrees based on external pressures, such as family

interests or financial incentives, instead of intrinsically motivated reasons such as alignment with personal interests, are more likely to drop out of their courses.

### **Discovered Entrepreneurs - How Exposure and Experience Foster an Entrepreneurial Mindset**

Most participants entered the programme with no prior interest in or awareness of entrepreneurship, as they primarily joined for funding purposes. Unlike most Entrepreneurship Education and Training (EET) programmes, which operate on an application basis and attract students with an existing entrepreneurial interest, the Fellowship introduced entrepreneurship to participants unexpectedly. Despite this, most perceived that they developed an entrepreneurial mindset and, in many cases, entrepreneurial intention. The key contributing factors to this transformation were inspiration and empowerment (Souitaris, Zerbinati & Al-Laham; 2007; Takashiro & Clarke, 2020), gained predominantly through experiential learning activities and frequent engagement with success stories. Experiential learning deepened engagement and provided practical takeaways, fostering a sense of empowerment. Exposure to success stories and a motivational environment inspired participants, helping them overcome mental and cultural barriers to entrepreneurship.

Existing literature supports the role of experiential learning and success stories in fostering entrepreneurial intention (Kyndt, 2015; Mawson, 2022; Secundo, 2016). Entrepreneurial mindsets have been conceptualized in many ways (for example, Larsen, 2022; Lynch & Corbett, 2021; Mathisen, 2013). Three of these core conceptualisations are opportunity recognition, proactiveness, and risk taking. Authors have recommended catering instructions to develop each of these core areas, which are predominantly action oriented. Examples include fieldwork and internships for practicing business opportunity identification; simulations and problem-solving exercises for practicing quick decision making and risk assessment; and design thinking and group projects for practicing innovative solution development and taking-initiative (Larsen, 2022).

There were some students, however, who felt that the programme over-relied on inspirational content and could have benefited from incorporating more workshops and activities targeting practical skill development and knowledge acquisition. Similar findings were encountered in the evaluation of an EET programme that focused on entrepreneurial mindset

shaping and development to be inclusive and collaborative. Some students found it difficult to engage with this type of content, strongly believing that the focus of EETs should be on marketing, legal and financial startup skills (Warhuus et al., 2017).

Previous studies have found that the impact of EET on entrepreneurial intentions is significant until pre-EET is controlled for (Bae et al., 2014; Piperopolos & Dimov, 2015). Ultimately, this study uniquely highlights that such an environment can effectively engage students who have no initial interest in entrepreneurship, suggesting that even non-self-selected groups can develop an entrepreneurial mindset under the right conditions.

### **The Evolving Entrepreneurial Journey**

Participants develop their entrepreneurial mindsets and interests at different rates, with some only realising the value of entrepreneurship after leaving the programme. The reason some participants do not engage in the IVC is that they are not yet running a business at the time. This is likely influenced by their initial entry into the programme—since most participants join without an interest in entrepreneurship, they may be slower to take entrepreneurial action. Additionally, the intense demands of university and programme submissions left some participants feeling as though they did not have the capacity to start a venture until after graduation. This results in some participants missing out on key learning opportunities, and they often felt they lacked essential skills when they later started a business.

These conditions suggest that integrating IVC content more broadly into the general programme structure—rather than limiting it to those actively running businesses—could better equip all participants with essential entrepreneurial skills before they graduate. Kyndt & Baert (2015) found that self-proclaimed entrepreneurial intention is a significant predictor of entrepreneurship 3-5 years later, suggesting that some participants who develop their intention in the Fellowship are reasonably expected to start entrepreneurship in the medium-term.

As previously discussed, experiential learning has been found to be one of the most effective methods for teaching entrepreneurial content, feedback from students suggested that the passive, lecture-style methods currently used to teach these concepts were less impactful. Silveyra et al., (2021), Sanchez (2013), Kuratko (2021) and many others recognize that

knowledge of core business skills is an essential competency for increasing entrepreneurial intention and success.

### **The Value of Community and Networking - Empowering Collaboration and Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

Most participants value AGOF for its strong sense of community, networking opportunities, support in achieving personal goals, and the prestige of affiliation with the programme, which they perceive as contributing to career and entrepreneurial opportunities.

This community-oriented environment enabled participants to form lasting partnerships with peers, which sometimes led to collaborative projects or ventures. One participant shared that they engaged in a partnership to start a venture for one of the competitions hosted by the Fellowship, which provided invaluable lessons in entrepreneurial collaboration. Others formed close friendships with fellow Candidate Fellows who shared similar entrepreneurial ambitions and continue to discuss starting a joint venture in the future. Another Candidate Fellow benefitted from their Fellowship network to support their entrepreneurial journey overseas. These experiences underline the importance of community as not only a support system but a resource for venture creation.

Warhuus et al (2017) highlight that students, when encouraged to collaborate, reshape their identities and learn that entrepreneurship does not have to be a solo endeavour. This was found to relieve pressure off of entrepreneurs, and occurrence noted by Candidate Fellows who stated that the programme showed them they don't have to do the entrepreneurial journey alone, which encouraged them to see a way forward in entrepreneurship. Koning (2024) finds the formation of social identity within collaborative communities may help students internalise new entrepreneurial values and behaviours, contributing to the sustainability of their entrepreneurial identity. In line with social-network learning theory (Wasim et al., 2024), the evaluation findings suggest that participants develop their entrepreneurial mindsets more effectively in collaborative and community driven settings within the Fellowship, citing learning from one another's experiences as a great way to gain exposure to different ways of thinking. This is because entrepreneurial learning is inherently social, requiring teamwork, shared leadership and collective efficacy (Suonpaa, 2013).

Research has emphasized the important role of collaborative-learning approaches in developing entrepreneurial competencies. AGOF's emphasis on group-based activities and shared experiences was perceived by participants as fostering these competencies, which are integral to developing entrepreneurial intention and success. For example, the partnerships formed during the programme are a direct reflection of how entrepreneurial ecosystems contribute to the creation and growth of new ventures.

Participants appreciation of the networking opportunities also aligns with literature which suggests an important role played by stakeholder networks in fostering entrepreneurship (Secundo et al., 2016). Thus, the role played by industry mentors was positively reviewed by the few participants who benefitted from it due to challenges with mismatched mentors and mentees (Tudor, 2018).

### **Cross-Socioeconomic Interactions - The Challenge of Exclusion and Insecurity in a Diverse Fellowship**

Despite the generally effective establishment of networks and a Fellowship community, participants specifically from "*the township*" and "*rural*" backgrounds reported experiencing a sense of exclusion at various stages of the programme; a challenge not mentioned by students from more affluent schools.

These participants often felt inadequate and insecure when comparing themselves to peers from higher SES backgrounds or "*the private schools*", which significantly impacted their engagement. Some avoided collaborating with others due to a perceived culture of competition and demeaning behavior. Others hesitated to share their entrepreneurial ideas, fearing embarrassment compared to the perceived 'grandness' of their "*highly intellectual*" peers. A few participants refrained from communicating with their PLPO about plans to drop out, fearing shame and judgment.

Similar experiences are documented by MacInnis et al. (2019) who find that students from cross-socioeconomic class engagements can exacerbate exclusionary feelings among lower-SES students through self-comparison. that students from underprivileged backgrounds often struggle with self-comparison, leading to reduced engagement with peers, mentors, and academic support structures. Ndofirepi & Maringe (2020) discuss how rural students often feel

socially excluded in academic settings, leading to what they term “mute spaces” where students withdraw from interactions with peers and faculty.

Participants spoke about comparing themselves to peers and seeing themselves as the inferior, in social, academic, and entrepreneurial contexts. The Fellowship was spoken about as an elite, competitive space. These experiences may be isolated among students from low-SES backgrounds and supported by the theory of cultural capital (Addison & Griffin, 2022). This highlights how certain environments privilege middle-class cultural capital, making students feel socially and culturally incompetent (Hewertson & Tissa, 2022). This contributes to self-comparison, imposter syndrome, and disengagement from academic structures (Pakozdy et al., 2024). An example is provided by one student who expressed that what they learn in university puts them at a disadvantage back home, and what they learn at home puts them at a disadvantage at university. Similar experiences are documented by Ndofirepi & Maringe (2020).

Students who experience these feelings of not belonging are at a heightened risk for anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms- all of which have negative consequences for overall health and wellbeing, as well as academic performance- which is significant in the context of a programme with SAPs (Addison & Stephens Griffin, 2022; MacInnis et al., 2019; Pakozdy et al., 2024). Furthermore, research highlights how feelings of exclusion can negatively affect the establishment of peer and mentor relationships (Ndofirepi & Maringe, 2020). Students refrain from seeking mentorship and peer collaboration due to fears of being judged as inadequate (Addison & Griffon, 2022). The same authors stress that these environments can lead to intersectional barriers that affect the abilities of students from diverse backgrounds to succeed in university. The resulting failure, or dropping it, reinforces these feelings of not belonging.

## **Discussion and Evaluation Questions**

This outcomes evaluation sought to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. Do candidate fellows perceive that they attained the Fellowship's intended outcomes?
  - a. What did Candidate Fellows experience as most instrumental for achieving intended outcomes?

- b. What did Candidate Fellows experience as barriers to achieving the intended outcomes?
2. Do candidate fellows experience any positive or negative unintended outcomes because of the Fellowship?

***1. Do Candidate Fellows perceive that they attained the Fellowship's intended outcomes?***

**Entrepreneurial Mindset.** Most participants perceived that they developed and entrepreneurial mindset (n = 13). This outcome was achieved across SC and NSC groups. Exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities and practical experiences of entrepreneurship, i.e learning through entrepreneurship, were found to be most instrumental in developing an entrepreneurial mindset. As a barrier to achievement, some participants felt that the programme over-relied on inspirational content and could have benefited from incorporating more workshops and activities targeting practical skill development and knowledge acquisition.

**Entrepreneurial Intention.** Most participants perceived that they developed entrepreneurial intention (n = 11). This outcome was achieved across SC and NSC groups. The most effective experiences for developing entrepreneurial intention were those that made entrepreneurship feel achievable and gave participants the skills and confidence to see themselves as entrepreneurs. The accessibility of the IVC programme is experienced as a potential barrier to achievement by some participants. Most participants enter the programme with no entrepreneurial intention, so they do not join the IVC out of a lack of interest. Further, they do not progress through the IVC unless running a business. This is not feasible for many students due to academic pressures and is influenced by the underdeveloped entrepreneurial intentions.

**Academic Success.** Most participants did not achieve academic success according to the Fellowship's definition. Of the six participants who completed the Fellowship (SCs), only two achieved academic success. The other four severely violated the academic renewal criteria (which are aligned with the definition of academic success), but their shortfalls were overlooked by the programme, and they were allowed to remain in the programme until completion. Interestingly, the programme components most impactful on academic performance was a positive relationship with one's PLPO. This relationship opened doors for renewal despite academic underperformance, access to further funds for tutor support, and access to academic

support networks. However, the role of the PLPO and tutor support pales in comparison to the role played by pre-university preparedness, which is not creditable to the Fellowship. Participants experienced their high school background, their personal ability to handle university requirements such as motivation, self-discipline, effective study habits and time management, and language compatibility as major barriers to outcome achievement. The workload pressure of the Fellowship coupled with degree expectations was also experienced as a barrier.

**Valuing Community and Collaboration.** Half of the participants perceived that they valued the Fellowship community. Two participants perceived that they value collaboration. Three of the 14 actively perceived that they did not value the Fellowship community. The networking and social elements of the Fellowship, as well as the relationship between participants and their PLPO were perceived as the most significant mechanisms for developing a sense of community. Collaboration was rarely mentioned, except in a negative way. Participants from under-resourced or low-SES backgrounds experienced feelings of exclusion and inadequacy when comparing themselves to peers. This acted as a barrier for valuing the community. These same participants experienced an inability to relate to their PLPO which had consequences for their academic performance and feelings of inclusion in the Fellowship.

## ***2. Do Candidate Fellows Experience any positive or negative unintended outcomes because of the Fellowship?***

Candidate fellows who were excluded from the Fellowship experienced the most negative outcomes. These outcomes include financial insecurity, food insecurity, incomplete degrees, grounds for affirming feelings insecurity and inadequacy, resentment towards AGOF and resentment towards the idea of entrepreneurship. These are significant concepts which need to be considered by the programme in refining selection and recruitment criteria to ensure that participants who are unable to complete the programme are not uprooted from their communities, placed into a world of hope and inspiration, only to be ripped out of it due to possibly inconsistently applied renewal criteria.

A second unintended outcome with negative implications for the Fellowship from a financial perspective is the decision of Candidate Fellows to withdraw from their degree and the Fellowship to pursue their entrepreneurial interests. These persons are a success in terms of outcomes but present a source of declining return on investment for AGOF.

## **Recommendations**

### **General Recommendations**

The Fellowship appears to attract a large number of participants who are uninformed about the programme activities and expectations. This has consequences for their preparedness, academic success, and involvement in the programme. The Fellowship should consider reviewing communication and marketing channels to ensure that at every stage of the application and onboarding process, participants are fully aware of the programmatic expectations.

### **Recommendations for Academic Excellence**

Students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, even those with high marks, often require additional support as they transition to university. A one-size-fits-all academic standard for renewal may not be inclusive of the varying challenges associated with degree types or educational backgrounds. Further, meeting the 70% entry requirement has been shown to be an incomplete way of assessing student readiness for success at university. To support success, students may benefit from personal career guidance before registering for courses or enrolling at university in addition to more structured, thorough support in navigating university life. This is especially important in the context of motivation and informed decision making exerting such influence over the persistence of students in a degree until graduation.

Permitting and encouraging extended degree programmes could provide the necessary time and resources needed for these students to thrive. Workshops advising students on how to manage their time, how to improve their study methods, and other important learning strategies may reduce the number of low-SES students who are left with incomplete degrees and financial, mental, and emotional burdens.

Research confirms that drop-out rates cannot be reduced through academic development if other contributing factors are not addressed (Apumayta et al., 2024; Conley, 2005; Hammond et al., 2007; Shannon & Bylsma, 2005). The most relevant strategy in the context of the evaluation findings is pre-tertiary vocational guidance. This is strongly recommended for averting the mismatch of student aspirations and degree choice (Apumayta et al., 2024; Conley, 2005; Hammond et al., 2007; Shannon & Bylsma, 2005).

## **Recommendations for Entrepreneurial Mindsets and Entrepreneurial Intentions**

The Fellowship might consider hosting Jamborees annually and increasing the availability of workshops and skill-building opportunities for entrepreneurs at all stages of the journey. Exposure to entrepreneurs and their motivational stories should be maintained, with the addition of more skills-based activities accessible to all participants. The use of the online entrepreneurial curriculum should not be increased as parrot-fashioned and non-interactive activities were found to be less effective for inspiring entrepreneurial action and developing competencies and knowledge.

There may be a benefit to introducing entrepreneurial skills development earlier in the programme structure and making them accessible to all participants, regardless of whether they are actively running a business. This could be achieved by offering interactive workshops or integrating core business skills training into the general programme framework. By doing so, the programme would better equip students to succeed in entrepreneurship, regardless of when they decide to start a business.

## **Recommendations for Valuing Community and Collaboration**

The Fellowship should return to an annual schedule for hosting the Jamboree and other in-person events as the Jamboree specifically provides an excellent opportunity for networking, community building, and collaboration between CFs. These events increase awareness of the Foundation's overall mission and enhances affect for the AGOF community and entrepreneurial realm. The Fellowship should also work towards cultivating a more inclusive and less competitive environment to prevent students from withdrawing into a "mute space" where they feel unable to engage fully (Ndofirepi, 2015). Further research is needed to identify innovative practices for increasing inclusion in diverse socio-economic spaces.

## ***Mentorship Components***

In light of the variability in the abilities of PLPO's to connect with their mentees, identify their challenges, and recommend appropriate interventions at the right time, there may be a need for more stringent requirements for becoming a PLPO. This need is amplified when the role of the PLPO in the academic and programmatic success of students is considered.

The Fellowship should also consider refining its mentorship model by allowing students greater agency in mentor selection, as Moeketsi (2018) suggests this may enhance effectiveness of relationship building. This is of specific importance in light of the role played by the PLPO in renewing students who fail renewal criteria due to external circumstances. Additionally, mentors should receive training on the challenges faced by low-SES students to foster a more supportive and open relational space where challenges can be expressed in vulnerability without fear of judgement.

### **Conclusion**

This study evaluated the outcomes attainment of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's Fellowship Programme according to the programme design between 2018-2023. Outcome attainment was evaluated based on participants' perceptions. The evaluation revealed that participants perceived that they developed an entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial intentions which they did not perceive as possessing prior to the Fellowship. Participants predominantly associated outcome attainment in entrepreneurial mindset development, entrepreneurial interest development, and the establishment of community and collaboration values with interactive, experiential, and in-person activities. The most frequently cited examples in the annual Jamboree, DigiJam (COVID-19 variation of Jamboree), Venture Challenges, Competency Workshops, Entrepreneurial Lectures, and Pitch Competitions. All of these activities require participants to practice entrepreneurial competencies and to interact with other people, such as peers, entrepreneurs, judges, and potential clients. The evaluation shows that 12 – 36 months is an insufficient amount of time for most participants to 1) start a venture and 2) become high-impact entrepreneurs.

The evaluation also highlighted that a significant portion of programme attrition is attributable to academic challenges. These challenges can be overcome by ensuring participants are studying a degree aligned to their interests with sufficient intrinsic motivation for pursuing higher education. On the other hand, ensuring that participants from low-resource schools in rural or low-SES areas are afforded ample support, over and above their peers, to facilitate the transition to university and the completion of their degree.

The evaluation also highlighted the challenges faced by participants from rural or low-SES areas when placed in a competitive environment with peers from high-SES backgrounds and schools. Many participants experienced negative feelings and attitudes in this environment, which may impact their academic performance, and have consequences for their performance and renewal in the Fellowship.

## **Limitations**

The attainment of an outcome was recognised if an individual clearly described or demonstrated meeting the definition of the outcome, according to literature and internal AGOF outcome indicators. This should be noted as a potential limitation of some evaluation findings, as outcome attainment was measured on voluntary presentation of information as opposed to a quantitative score from a verified evaluation metric. This has specific implications for entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial intentions.

There is a slight deviation from the traditional SCM method which is intended to evaluate how recipients of a training programme make use of their training (Brinkerhoff, 2003, 2005). In this evaluation, participants were selected who did not complete the programme. These participants did spend at least one year in the Fellowship.

The sample size ( $n = 14$ ) was determined based on available participants instead of a saturation-based approach for qualitative interviews (Hennink & Keiser, 2022; Malterud et al., 2016; Marshall et al., 2015). Additional interviews from participants with low-resource educational backgrounds who were exited for failing the renewal criteria would have been especially beneficial as the current count of participants with this background is two ( $n = 2$ ). Interviews from participants running full-time businesses would have been insightful, as participants in this sample were running part-time operations ( $n = 5$ ).

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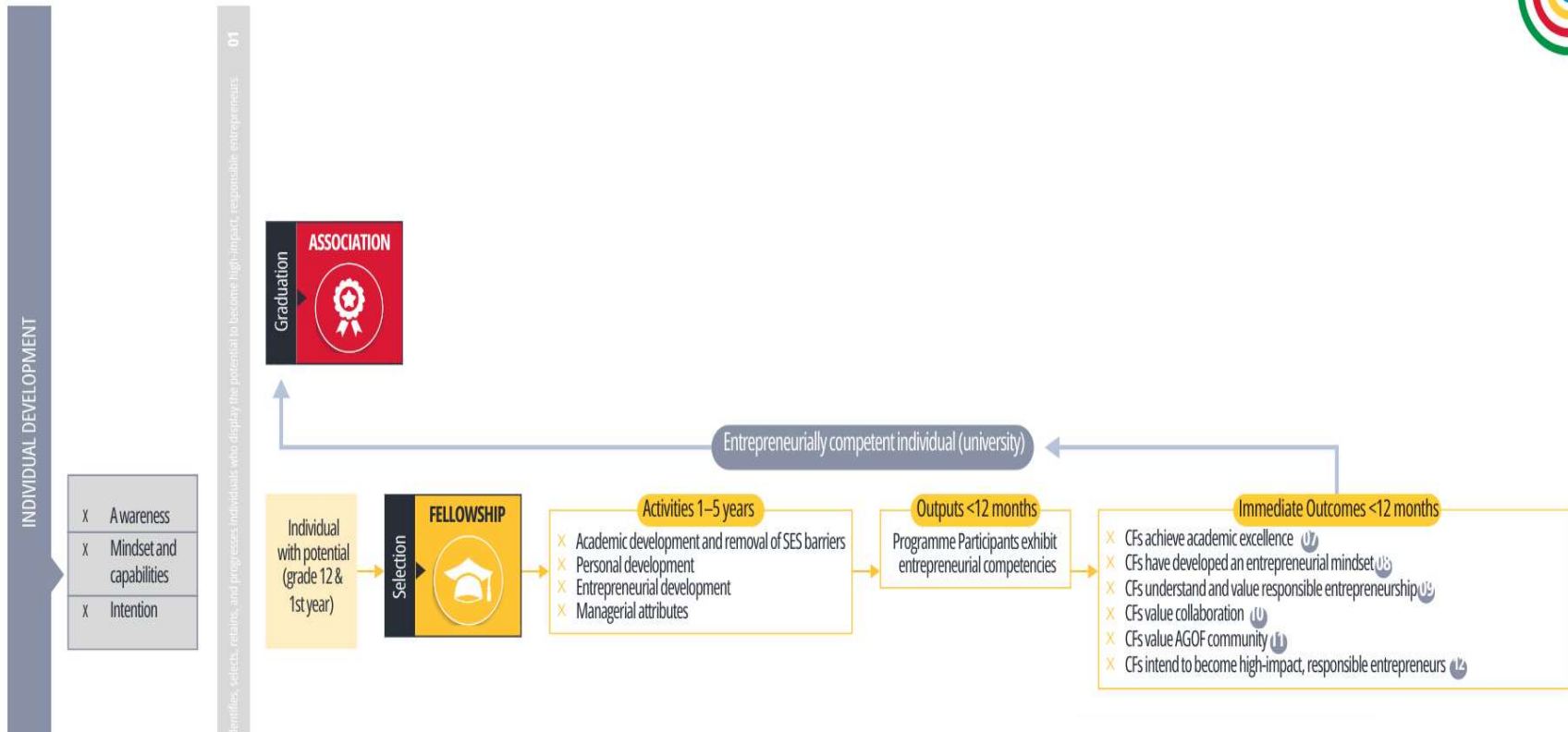
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## Appendix A – Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Working Draft Theory of Change



## Appendix B – Success and Non-Success Outcome Indicators and Data Sources

**Table B**

*Data Sources for Participant Outcome Indicators*

Outcome Indicator	Success Factor	Data Source
Participant engages in entrepreneurial activities	Entrepreneurial Development	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Expresses intention to become an entrepreneur	Entrepreneurial Development	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Grade and university progression	Academic Excellence	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant achieves a quality pass (60%+)	Academic Excellence	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant is employed	Economic Contribution	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant pursues further education	Academic Excellence	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant leads community initiatives	Values Community & Collaboration	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant is an entrepreneur	Entrepreneurial Development Economic Contribution	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant runs a business that generates employment	Entrepreneurial Development Economic Contribution	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant progresses through stages of the IVC	Entrepreneurial Development	1. AGOF Fellowship data
Participant is involved in AGOF community post-graduation	Values Community & Collaboration	1. AGOF Association data (SCs only) 2. Online sources
Participant promotes AGOF or publicly promotes their involvement with AGOF	Values Community & Collaboration	1. Online sources

## **Appendix C – Mass e-mail Invitation sent to 272 Valid E-mail Addresses**

The Fellowship Evaluation Team is inviting you to indicate your willingness to participate in a **compensated** online interview. Here, you would engage with one interviewer from a small team of Master's (Programme Evaluation) students at the University of Cape Town, currently conducting an evaluation of the AGOF Fellowship programme.

Your insights, perspectives and experiences as a past programme participant would be an invaluable contribution to the evaluation.

As a token of appreciation, you will receive a **R350 Pick n Pay voucher and 1 gigabyte (1GB) of data** for the interview session.

For more information, and to accept or decline this invitation please click the **link below**.

<https://forms.gle/Nvp1y7SHXcgLhaYQ7>

Please note that completing the form is **not** an immediate agreement to the interview, but rather an indication of whom we may (or may not) contact with a formal interview request.

The formal interview request will be accompanied by an informed consent form clarifying all confidentiality measures that are in place to protect your responses and identity.

Should you have any questions regarding the evaluation, please feel free to submit them via the same form linked above, or, direct your queries to [fellowshipevaluation@uct.ac.za](mailto:fellowshipevaluation@uct.ac.za)

Warm Regards,

Andrew Swingler, Carlynn Pokpas, Cayla Cooksey (The Fellowship Evaluation Team).

[fellowshipevaluation@uct.ac.za](mailto:fellowshipevaluation@uct.ac.za)

Please note, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation contacted you regarding our research. Due to an unforeseen error, some slight misinformation was

disseminated. This e-mail contains the correct information, so it may look a bit different to what you received before.

## Appendix D – Indication of Interest Form

### Indication of Interest

You have been selected to participate in a compensated online interview with an evaluation team of Master's in Programme Evaluation students from the University of Cape Town (UCT) regarding your experiences as a past participant in the AGOF Fellowship Programme.

Our records indicate that you have participated in the Fellowship Programme in the years 2018-2023, which is a timeframe of particular importance for this evaluation.

We kindly request that you indicate your willingness to participate in an online interview by using this brief form to submit your response.

**Please note:** If you indicate that you would like to participate, your name will be added to a list of interested participants. We will contact you with a follow-up email to confirm your decision and to provide further information. Your name or identity will remain strictly confidential and accessible only to the UCT evaluation team.

- *As a token of appreciation for participating in an interview, you will receive a R350 Pick n Pay Voucher and 1GB of data for the interview.*
- *Completing this form is **not** an immediate agreement to the interview, but rather an indication of whom we may (or may not) contact with a formal interview request.*
- *The interview request will also be accompanied by an informed consent form clarifying all confidentiality measures that will be in place to protect your responses and identity.*
- *Online interviews will be conducted as one-on-one sessions.*

---

\* Indicates required question

1. Did you participate in the Fellowship Programme in the years 2018-2023? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes    *Skip to question 4*
- No    *Skip to question 2*

Thank you! You have confirmed that you were **not** a Candidate Fellow in the years 2018-2023.

Please provide us with the following information so that we do not contact you with any follow-up emails.

2. Please provide your name and surname. \*

---

3. Please provide the email address at which we can reach you. \*

---

#### Questions for past-Candidate Fellows

4. Did you complete the Fellowship Programme? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes, I am now an Associate
- No, I exited the programme
- No, I am still a Candidate Fellow
- No, I am still a Candidate Fellow in post-programme, but I am also an Associate
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you consider participating in a compensated interview regarding your experience in the Fellowship Programme? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes    *Skip to question 9*
- No    *Skip to question 11*
- I need more information first    *Skip to question 6*

No problem! Thank you for indicating that you need more information first

Please provide us with the following information so that we can contact you with a follow-up email.

6. What would you like more clarity on? \*

---

---

---

---

---

7. Please provide your name and surname. \*

---

8. Please provide the email address at which we can reach you. \*

---

Thank you! We appreciate your interest in participating.

Please provide us with the following information so that we can contact you with a follow-up email.

9. Please provide your name and surname. \*

---

10. Please provide the email address at which we can reach you. \*

---

No problem! We appreciate you taking the time to decline this invitation.

Please provide us with the following information so that we do not contact you with any follow-up emails.

11. Please provide your name and surname. \*

---

12. Please provide your email address so that we can remove it from our list. \*

---

---

## **Appendix E – Invitation to Interview E-mail**

This email confirms that we have received your completed indication of interest form and want to offer you a formal interview request.

We would like to thank you for your patience in waiting for our communication. We have been blown away by the indications of interest and are excited to have the opportunity to continue hosting interview sessions.

This email contains an informed consent form located at the following link for you to read through and complete with your signature:

<https://forms.gle/6SAbhtgsm5PqNei86>

And the following documents simply for your information:

Confirmation of ethical approval from the University of Cape Town for this research to take place.

Fellowship Evaluation Interview Details

Once you have read these documents, signed the consent form and returned it to us, please use the following link to book your preferred interview slot:

<https://calendly.com/fellowshipevaluation/online-interview>

Please select the time and date that suits you best for an interview.

The interview will be conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The link for this meeting will be sent to you automatically once you book your interview slot.

If you have questions about the documents attached here or encounter any issues during the booking process, please contact us at this email address, and we will respond promptly.

Thank you kindly for your patience thus far and willingness to assist with the evaluation of the AGOF Fellowship programme.

Kind regards,

The Fellowship Evaluation Team

## Appendix F – Informed Consent Online Form

# Informed Consent Form

This is the informed consent form to be signed by those interested in participating in an online interview for the Evaluation of the AGOF Fellowship Programme.

Please ensure that you read the content carefully and fill out all required sections.

*\* Indicates required question*

---

1. Email \*

---

## **Research Information**

Our names are Andrew Swingler, Carlynn Pokpas, and Cayla Cooksey. We are Master's in Programme Evaluation students from the University of Cape Town. We are currently conducting an evaluation of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF) Fellowship programme with the aim of providing recommendations for the programme's improvement. You recently indicated that you are willing to participate in an interview around the topic of your experiences in the programme.

We would like to collect some more information about your experiences and are requesting an interview with you of approximately 60-90 minutes in duration. The interview will take place online via Microsoft Teams.

The Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee has approved this research.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your participation at any point with no consequences. You can also decline to answer any questions during the interview.

Interview transcripts can be sent to you upon request, and you may ask us to remove any statements made, up to 48 hours after you receive the transcript. To enable the transcription, we will record the interview.

Interview results will be presented based on collective themes that emerge during our interviews with an expected 19 other past-Fellowship programme participants. Quotes from your interview might be used to illustrate certain points. However, no personally identifiable information will be disclosed. A fake name will be used, and your participation in this research will not be disclosed to the AGOF. Please note, your name was one of 293 potential participants, whose names the AGOF has been made aware of. However, no one besides the three primary evaluators (Andrew, Carlynn, and Cayla) are aware of who has agreed to interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us or our supervisor.

### **Supervisor Details:**

Carren Duffy: [carren.duffy@uct.ac.za](mailto:carren.duffy@uct.ac.za)

### **Researcher Details:**

Andrew Swingler: [andswn004@myuct.ac.za](mailto:andswn004@myuct.ac.za)

Cayla Cooksey: [ckscay001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:ckscay001@myuct.ac.za)

Carlynn Pokpas: [pkpcar001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:pkpcar001@myuct.ac.za)

2. Informed Consent \*

*Tick all that apply.*

I, the undersigned, have understood the information above and agree to participate in the interview.

3. Full Name \*

Please insert your full legal name

---

4. Signature \*

Please insert your full legal name to act as a digital signature

---

5. Date \*

Date of signing

---

*Example: 7 January 2019*

**Further Options**

6. Would you like to receive a copy of your transcript for review? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

7. Would you like to receive a copy of the final report? \*

This will likely be available by October 2025.

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

8. Please provide the cellphone number where you would like to receive the data \*

This number won't be used to contact you and will be deleted at the conclusion of the evaluation

---

## **Appendix G – Interviewers Guide for Success and Non-Success Case Interviews**

### **Introduction**

- Greet the participant (introduce yourself)
  - Briefly reintroduce the study purpose
  - Explain participant anonymity and confidentiality
  - Request consent to record the interview
  - Offer opportunity for any questions before the interview commences.
1. Can you give me a brief introduction of yourself?
  2. Could you please explain the Fellowship Programme to me like I was someone who has just heard about it, and I am thinking of applying? What could I expect from the programme – what would you want me to know?
  3. How did you find out about the programme, and why did you choose it?
  4. How did you find that **transition** from high school, to not only university, but university *with* the Fellowship programme.
  5. What was your university experience like, while being a Candidate Fellow?

### **Question 6 for non-success case participants only:**

6. I understand that you exited the Fellowship programme before completion, could you please give me some context around what led to your exit?
7. On the topic of your time in the programme:
  - a. Can you tell me about some disappointing experiences you had, as a Candidate Fellow?
  - b. Can you tell me about some positive experiences you had, as a Candidate Fellow?

### **Programme Activities Focused Enquiry**

8. Can you tell me about the curriculum you were given during the programme's duration?
9. Which of the Fellowship workshops, getaways, conferences, or social events did you attend?

- a. What did you find most valuable about them?
- b. What did you find least valuable about them?

10. The programme offers sessions with a leadership officer, and an entrepreneurship officer. Can you tell me more about these experiences?

Potential follow up questions:

- i. What did you think about it at the time?
- ii. Do you see those sessions differently now? Do you wish you used them differently?
- iii. How would you feel about having access to something like that again, now?

### **Outcomes Focused Enquiry**

***Come back to specifics – what about the programme has contributed to their life in any way?***

11. Can you describe your professional journey since completing the Fellowship? Specifically, have you been working, pursuing further studies, or starting your own venture? Please tell me more about your current role, industry, or any entrepreneurial activities you are involved in.

Probing Follow up Questions:

- i. If working: What is your current role and industry?
- ii. If studying: What are you studying, and how does it align with your professional goals?
- iii. If running a business: Can you tell me about your venture, its sector, and its current status?
- iv. If doing something else: What led you to this path, and how do you see it connected to your experience in the Fellowship?

12. From your perspective, what role did the Fellowship play in getting you to where you are now? Can you give some specifics? *Probe about their work, entrepreneurial,*

*academic life (depending on the individual's personal context, shared in previous question).*

13. If you didn't have a business, or an interest in running a business or entrepreneurial venture, do you think the programme is still useful?

**Question 14 for success case participants only:**

14. What do you think are the major factors that enabled you to complete the programme?

**Question 15 for non-success case participants only:**

15. What do you think are the major factors that led to your exiting the programme?

16. What do you wish the programme did better?

17. What do you think the programme did best?

**Thank You and Closing**

- Confirm contact details and mobile network provider for the sending of voucher and data.
- Remind the participant they will be forward the transcript in the event they wish to withdraw any content and the period for doing so (48 hours after receiving the transcript)
- Confirm whether participant would like to be sent a copy of the final dissertations and offer an approximate time frame for sending

# Appendix H – Fellowship Programme Academic Calculator

## Fellowship Programme Academic Calculator



### What is the Academic Calculator?

The Academic Calculator is a tool designed by the Fellowship to assist Candidate Fellows in calculating their weighted average. The Academic Calculator is a valuable monitoring tool to detect whether a Candidate Fellow's academic grades are on track to meet the Fellowship's weighted average requirement of 60% for Renewal.

### What is the Fellowship Renewal Criteria?

The Fellowship Renewal Criteria is stated in your MoA which you sign each year when onboarded onto the Fellowship. Here is a recap on the academic requirements for Renewal:

- 60% weighted average,
- a pass in all full year courses,
- a maximum of 1 fail in a half year course meeting the before-mentioned stated criteria,
- no extension of degree

### FAQ

#### What does weighted average mean?

It means that in calculating a Candidate Fellow's academic average, full year courses are weighted at 100%, while half courses are weighted 50% and quarter year courses are weighted at 25%. The academic criteria is outlined in Schedule D of the MoA.

## Calculating your weighted average

### Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Academic Calculator

Name & Surname		Degree Name	Year Group			
Number	Course name	Course code	Full, Half or Quarter Course	Foundation Required Percentage	Actual Achieved Score	Foundation Annual Actual Weighted Average
1			1	60		0
2			0,5	60		0
3			0,25	60		0
4			0,5	60		0
5			0,5	60		0
6			1	60		0

Averages	Actual Average
	0

### Steps to follow in completing the Academic Calculator

You will use your Mid-Year June exam results to complete the Academic Calculator. On the Academic Calculator capture the following:

- You will capture your course / module in the **Course Name column**, and you can add the course code under the **Course Code Column**.
- You will then proceed to the **Full, Half or Quarter course column** to indicate if the course / module you have listed is a 1 (full year) module, 0.5 (half year) module or 0.25 (term) module.
- You will then proceed to the **Actual Achieved Score column** and capture the final % you have achieved for each course that you listed.
- Once you have captured all your final %, you will see the **weighted average % you have achieved under the Actual average box**.
- Once you have calculated your weighted average, reach out to your Programme Officer to discuss your weighted average and if needed, any interventions that might be required.

### Please note:

*In the event you do not have your Full Year course mark available on your mid-year transcript, you can use your progress mark or course average.*



## Appendix I – Invitation to Interview Letter

*This document outlines some information for you before you decide to book an interview slot. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Fellowship Evaluation team, and we will reply promptly.*

### Interview Session

1. The interview is an online interview, which will be conducted using Microsoft Teams.
2. The interview will be a one-on-one session with either Andrew, Carlynn or Cayla.
3. We will record the interview and use the transcript function
  - a. This is necessary for our research so that we can refer back to your interview and capture your story correctly
    - i. The recording and transcript are stored in a folder that is only accessible to the Fellowship Evaluation Team. All responses will be depersonalised- so that no one reading our evaluation report will know which information came from who, or who was even interviewed in the first place!
4. We kindly request that you have your video camera activated, and we will too, so that we can engage more personally
5. In order to keep our bookings in order, you will be booking a 2-hour slot, however the interview is only expected to take between 60-90minutes.
6. The interview is a *semi-structured* interview, which means that we have some topics lined up which we would love to hear you talk about, but there is no strict list of questions to follow or any sort of “right and wrong” answers.

### Compensation

As a way to thank you more practically for your time and effort, we would like to offer you:

1. 1GB of data that will be valid for 30 days. This is for any data or Wi-Fi costs you used to participate in the interview.
2. A R350 Digital Pick ‘n Pay voucher for use in any Pick ‘n Pay retail outlet
  - a. Please see here for more information on the voucher: [Digital Grocery Vouchers | PnP](#)

As such, in order for us to send the data and voucher to you, we will need to collect your cellphone number. We kindly request that you include your cellphone number in your next e-mail response. Please note that the voucher and data will only be sent to you once the interview has concluded.

*N.B! This must be the cellphone number where you want to receive the data and where you want to receive the SMS code for your Pick ‘n Pay voucher.*

***Thank you!***

## Appendix J – Informed Consent Letter

### Interview Informed Consent Form



*Dear Stakeholder*

Our names are Andrew Swingler, Carlynn Pokpas, and Cayla Cooksey. We are Master's in Programme Evaluation students from the University of Cape Town. We are currently conducting an evaluation of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF) Fellowship programme with the aim of providing recommendations for the programme's improvement. You recently indicated that you are willing to participate in an interview around the topic of your experiences in the programme.

We would like to collect some more information about your experiences and are requesting an interview with you of approximately 60-90 minutes in duration. The interview will take place online via Microsoft Teams.

The Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee has approved this research.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your participation at any point with no consequences. You can also decline to answer any questions during the interview.

Interview transcripts can be sent to you upon request, and you may ask us to remove any statements made, up to 48 hours after the interview. To enable the transcription, we will record the interview.

Interview results will be presented based on collective themes that emerge during our interviews with an expected 19 other past-Fellowship programme participants. Quotes from your interview might be used to illustrate certain points. However, no personally identifiable information will be disclosed. A fake name will be used, and your participation in this research will not be disclosed to the AGOF. Please note, your name was one of 297 potential participants, whose names the AGOF has been made aware of. However, no one besides the three primary evaluators (Andrew, Carlynn, and Cayla) are aware of who has agreed to interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us or our supervisor.

**Supervisor Details:**

Carren Duffy: [carren.duffy@uct.ac.za](mailto:carren.duffy@uct.ac.za)

**Researcher Details:**

Andrew Swingler: [andswn004@myuct.ac.za](mailto:andswn004@myuct.ac.za)

Cayla Cooksey: [ckscay001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:ckscay001@myuct.ac.za)

Carlynn Pokpas: [pkpcar001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:pkpcar001@myuct.ac.za)

**Informed Consent:**

I, the undersigned, have understood the information above and agree to participate in the interview.

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*indicate with an X or ✓*

**Would you like to review your transcript?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to receive the final research report?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K – Ethics Approval from University of Cape Town



2024/01/16

COM/00549/2023

RE: Research Ethics Committee Project Approval Letter

Dear Andrew Swingler,

Your application for ethics review of your project titled

Evaluating Programme Logic and Outcomes: Unpacking Programme Design and Outcomes in a Leading Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programme.

has been reviewed and evaluated by the  
Commerce Research Ethics Committee.

You may proceed with your research project titled:

Evaluating Programme Logic and Outcomes: Unpacking Programme Design and Outcomes in a Leading Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programme.

Please note that should:

- (i) any serious or adverse effects to participants occur and/or,
- (ii) aspect(s) of your current project change and/or
- (iii) any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project occur then you should immediately report this to the approving REC. You may be required to submit an amendment to this application, in order to determine whether the changed aspects increase the ethical risks of your project.

Based on the information supplied your application has been successful and is approved.

Please note the following additional conditions associated with this approval:

- (i)

Regards,

Commerce Research Ethics Committee.

## **Appendix L – Fellowship Entrance Requirements**

To enter the Fellowship, participants must be intending to study towards a Commerce, Science, Engineering, Law, Humanities, Arts & Health Science (Excluding Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry) degree at one of the following partner institutions:

1. University of Witwatersrand
2. University of Johannesburg
3. University of Cape Town
4. Nelson Mandela University
5. Rhodes University
6. University of Western Cape
7. Stellenbosch University
8. University of Pretoria
9. University of Free State
10. University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
11. TSiBA

## **Appendix M – Detailed Narrative of SCM Participant Selection**

Evaluand data was used to identify candidates who met the date range criteria, yielding 297 valid participants (172 SC; 125 NSCs). Of these, 272 had valid e-mail addresses and were contacted with an invitation to indicate their interest in being interviewed. 78 responses were received.

These profiles were checked again for adherence to selection criteria, which prohibited the inclusion of any A-typical cases to enhance the generalisability of the findings for the programme (examples include participants who took a leave of absence from university; or who exited and re-joined the programme later). This yielded 46 eligible participants. These 46 participants (25 SC, 21 NSC) were independently evaluated according to the Success Profile criteria (Appendix B) and independently ranked according to perceived LOA to HOA which informed interview priority. A deliberation process took place between three evaluators to compare rankings and reach a final prioritised list.

The final list was intended to be weighed in favour of more SCs (Brinkerhoff, 2005) with 13 SCs and 7 NSCs planned for. A deliberation process then took place between three evaluators to compare rankings and reach a final prioritised list. The final list consisted of 12 SCs and 9 NSCs who were invited for interviews (Appendix E & F). From this, 10 sessions were booked and 9 participants showed up for the interviews.

Due to low interview numbers, invitations were eventually extended to all 46 participants, indicating a deviation from the SCM method. From 10 additional invitations, 1 interview was booked but the participant was a no-show and did not respond to any attempts to rebook. This forced what may be interpreted as an abandonment of the SCM method, whereby invitations were extended to the remaining 15 valid cases. From this, 7 participants booked sessions, and 5 participants showed up. A total number of 18 interviews were booked by participants, with a total of 4 no-shows and 14 successfully attended interviews (6 SCs and 8 NSCs).

Participants received an e-mail reminder to confirm their booking and had the option to reschedule until 24 hours before the interview. Participants received an automated e-mail

reminder 24 hours before the interview. Participants had to book a minimum of 48 hours in advance. Participants were only able to book a date 3 weeks into the future to accommodate changing work schedules of the evaluators.

Participants were provided with information about the evaluation, the interview, and an informed consent first invitation. Participants were asked to give verbal consent to the recording and transcription of the interview once they joined the meeting. Interviews were held online. Some participants could not receive the full 1GB-30-day bundle of data due to limitations with network offerings. These participants received a 500MB 14-day bundle of data immediately after the interview, and another 500MB 14-day bundle of data precisely 14 days after the first bundle was sent. Participants received their PnP Vouchers at their e-mail address and were given access to a digital voucher for use with their mobile device. These vouchers are valid in South Africa for 3-years from the date of the interview.

## Appendix N – Visual Chart of SCM Selection Process

