

MASINYUSANE: CREATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

A case study

Organisational growth

Established in 2008, Masinyusane has provided several programmes for youth and children in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, focused mainly on literacy, career guidance, and tertiary support.

Initially the organisation easily attracted volunteers for their high school tutoring programme. As Masinyusane grew, they had to find ways of employing personnel to drive their programmes rather than rely solely on volunteers.



A learning culture

Thirteen years on, they have a thriving youth jobs programme and a majority youth and female contingent of core staff. Although staff salaries are relatively low, they have found alternative ways to motivate and develop their young and talented staff.

Over the years, Masinyusane has created a vibrant culture of learning. The staff has unlimited access to online courses and reading materials. This cost is built into the organisations' HR costs and fundraising and averages somewhere between R500-R1000 per person per annum.



An eagerness for development

This culture of advancement is supported by an active leader, Jim McKeown, who regularly asks about their learning and embeds this into each staff members' job description and performance review.

Even in the recruitment process they are not worried about the candidate's skill set but rather their attitude and alignment with the organisation's values and ethos. They are looking for young people who are "super supportive and positive around children" and who are eager to develop themselves.



Opportunity for career path progression

Staff is encouraged to follow their interests and pursue courses beyond their scope of work. This has resulted in a Data Capturer becoming a professional Photographer and allowed budding Graphic Designers to learn state-of-the-art software.

This culture is also supported by clear career paths within the organisation. Literacy coaches become computer lab managers, who become centre managers, who then take on more senior positions or get 'poached' by partner organisations and funders. Masinyusane wants to see their staff learn and grow and are proud that approximately 30% of staff move on to other jobs each year.



Demand for higher salaries

While there is always the demand for higher salaries, Jim approaches these requests with integrity and transparency. He calls together staff to contemplate how best they can spend their limited funds. He asks, "**Is it preferable to double salaries and half the number of jobs?**" In this way staff are involved in problem-solving and decision-making with the Director.

The organisation emphasises that it is not merely about how much money you get paid, but rather the exposure and experience gained at Masinyusane that is so valuable.



Creating such a culture takes years of energy and consistency and is possible for **any** organisation to create. Jim stresses that, at whatever stage of your organisations' journey "**your staff need to see you investing in them and their future**", and they in turn will invest in their own futures, their projects, the programmes, and the organisation.

