



THE MAMELODI INITIATIVE

Learn. Grow. Dream. Achieve.

2025

Summer Jam Report

Thato Mafokoane (Program) and Uyanda Ngobeni (Operations and Finance)
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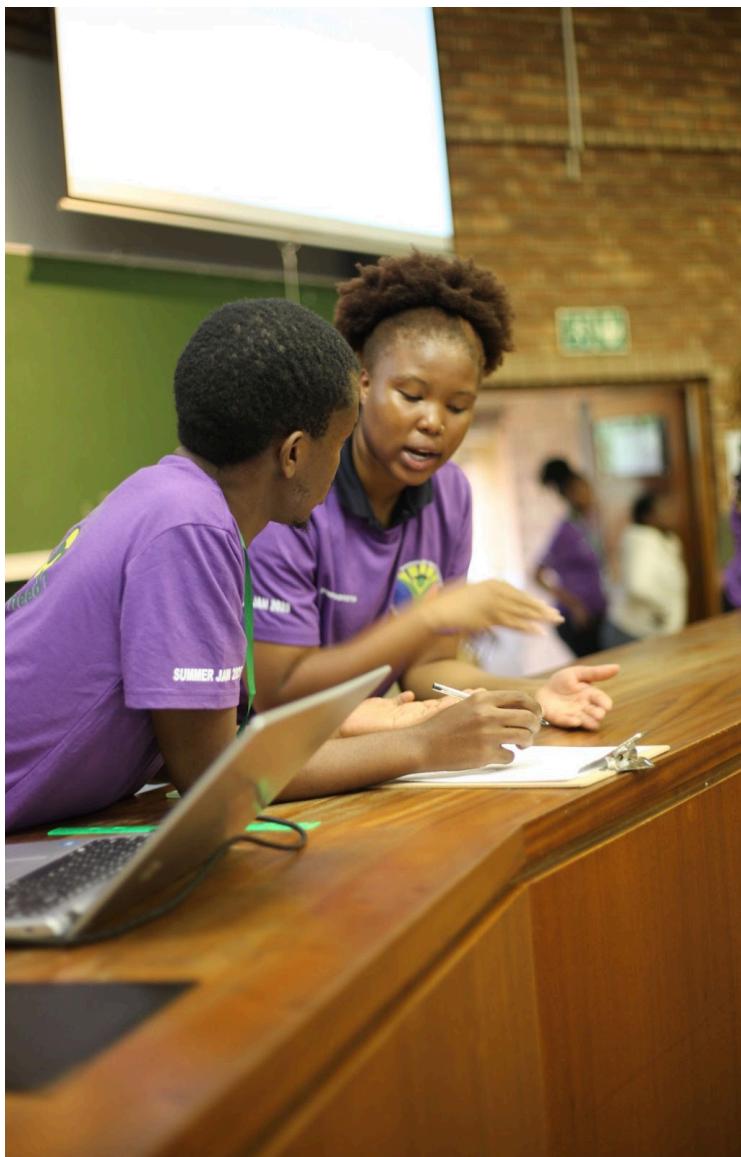
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Executive Summary

Summer Jam 2025



Summer Jam 2025 Overview

The Summer Jam 2025 (SJ25) planning phase focused on strategic coordination, volunteer recruitment, curriculum development, and logistical arrangements to ensure a structured and impactful program. Emphasis was placed on refining training processes, selecting relevant academic content, and addressing operational needs to enhance learner engagement and program efficiency.

Securing Venue

One of the key challenges was securing a venue. While initial plans were to host SJ25 at Vista Campus, infrastructural delays at the University of Pretoria led to uncertainty. As a contingency, Tsako Thabo was secured as an alternative venue. However, with support from the CRU team, MI successfully transitioned the program to Vista by January 6, 2025. Despite securing the venue, learner attendance was significantly lower than expected, prompting urgent communication efforts via bulk SMS to inform learners of the venue change. This experience underscored the importance of early confirmations and proactive communication in future planning.

Math and English

English performance was mixed across different grades, with some showing improvements while others experienced declines. Grade 8 showed no significant improvement, while Grade 9 showed an average score increase of 12 points. Grade 10 experienced a notable decline of 19 points, but the essay average was the highest among lower grades, suggesting writing skills may not have been the primary issue. Grade 11 showed a substantial average score decrease of 14.86 points, suggesting a real drop in performance. Grade 12 demonstrated strong performance gains, with an average score increase of 25.75 points.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Summer Jam 2025 successfully navigated several challenges, including venue uncertainties and fluctuating learner attendance. The strategic planning, coupled with the inclusion of core subjects like Math and English, contributed to a structured program aimed at addressing learners' academic needs. The lessons learned will help refine future programs, especially in terms of venue coordination, communication, and targeted academic support.

1. Introduction

Summer Jam 2025 (SJ25) marked another milestone in our ongoing commitment to providing learners with valuable academic support during the holiday season. With a focus on bridging learning gaps, strengthening foundational knowledge, and preparing students for the upcoming school term, SJ25 was designed to enhance both academic performance and personal growth. This report delves into the key elements of the program, examining the planning phase, the challenges faced, and the outcomes achieved. From securing a venue amid logistical hurdles to implementing targeted Math and English sessions, SJ25 was an opportunity to refine our approach and ensure that the experience was both impactful and efficient. Through this reflection, we aim to highlight successes, identify areas for improvement, and lay the groundwork for future growth in the program.



Photo 2: Pat and Tammy with some of our volunteers during their closing social.

2. The Planning

The planning phase was crucial in ensuring a well-structured and impactful program. This stage involved strategic coordination, volunteer recruitment, curriculum development, and logistical preparations to create a great learning experience for both learners and volunteers. Key focus areas included refining training processes, selecting relevant academic content, and addressing operational needs such as scheduling, resource allocation, and learner engagement strategies. This section outlines the key steps taken during the planning phase, highlighting the efforts made to optimize program efficiency and enhance overall learner outcomes.

2.1 Venue Securing and Transition for Summer Jam 2025

The process of securing a venue for SJ25 was a significant challenge that required adaptability and swift decision-making. Initial efforts to host SJ25 at Vista Campus began in September 2024, following a meeting with Vista's management team. While the university was open to the request, they were still addressing infrastructural challenges, specifically the waterway repairs, and could not provide immediate confirmation. As a result, MI was advised to wait until the issue was resolved before proceeding with the venue booking.

As soon as it became clear that the university had addressed the water situation, Thato took immediate action and submitted a formal venue application through the university's booking system. However, due to the timing of the submission—just before the university closed for the year—there was no confirmation received before the break. The university informed MI that feedback would only be available on January 3, 2025, the same day that SJ25 was set to begin.

Given the uncertainty, MI proactively secured Tsako Thabo as an alternative venue. The initial plan was to operate SJ25 at both Tsako Thabo and Vista, should the latter become available. However, with Tammy's (CRU) assistance, MI gained access to the Vista Campus on 6 January 2025.

Attendance at Tsako Thabo on our first day was sitting at 74 over the 400 we had anticipated. Recognizing the need to inform students about the venue change (Tsako Thabo to Vista), we took immediate steps to send bulk SMS notifications to learners from past program databases, ensuring they were aware of the move to Vista and could make the necessary adjustments to attend.

Upon looking into factors such as the poor attendance of learners in the first 2 days of the program at Tsako Thabo, we opted to fully transition SJ25 to Vista Campus instead of hosting it in 2 venues. While venue-related uncertainties posed initial setbacks, the swift response and adaptability of the team volunteers ensured that the program proceeded successfully.

2.2 Administrative Preparation

The Class Administration Training for Summer Jam 2025 took place on December 13, 2024. This session played a critical role in ensuring that the administrative team was well-prepared to manage their responsibilities efficiently. The training emphasised key aspects such as punctuality, effective communication, and teamwork, all of which are essential for maintaining the smooth operation of SJ25. Through this session, the team developed a shared understanding of their roles, to foster a sense of accountability and collaboration that would contribute to the programme's success.



Photo 3: A photo of one of our learners writing a pretest

2.3 Inclusion of Math and English Core Subjects

In response to insights gained from previous Road to Finals (RTF) post-test results, this year's Summer Jam introduced Mathematics and English as part of compulsory subjects to provide targeted academic support. These subjects were selected based on their importance in foundational learning and their relevance to the first-term curriculum across different grade levels.

In English sessions, learners engaged in journaling exercises, which aimed to improve their writing skills, critical thinking, and self-expression. The structured approach to journaling encouraged learners to reflect on their experiences and articulate their thoughts more effectively.

Mathematics focused on reinforcing fundamental algebra concepts, particularly the BODMAS rule and factorization. These topics were chosen due to their significance in early-term lessons and their role in building a strong mathematical foundation. To assess the impact of these sessions, learners participated in pre-and post-tests, allowing for a measurable evaluation of their progress and readiness for the upcoming

school term. By incorporating these core subjects, Summer Jam 2025 aimed to bridge learning gaps, strengthen foundational knowledge, and boost learners' confidence as they prepare for the academic year ahead.



Photo 4: Learners during one of our morning assembly

3. The Summer Jam 2025 (SJ25)

SJ25 aimed to provide learners with an engaging and structured holiday learning experience. SJ25 brought together dedicated volunteers, an enriched curriculum, and a diverse group of learners eager to learn and grow.

This section provides an in-depth review of volunteer training and selection feedback, offering insights into the recruitment process, preparation sessions, and overall effectiveness of volunteer engagement. The learner attendance analysis examines participation trends, retention rates, and factors influencing learner commitment. The curriculum evaluation explores the content delivered, its impact on academic progress, and recommendations for future program improvements.

Through this analysis, we aim to highlight key successes, identify areas for growth, and refine strategies to enhance the impact of future Summer Jam programs.

3.1 Volunteers: Training and Selection Feedback

The SJ25 volunteer selection and training process was designed to ensure that all participants were well-prepared for their roles. The training, which took place on 2 January 2025, focused on key aspects such as cultural awareness, child protection, classroom conduct, and teamwork. The goal was to equip volunteers with the necessary skills to create a safe, engaging, and inclusive learning environment for the learners.

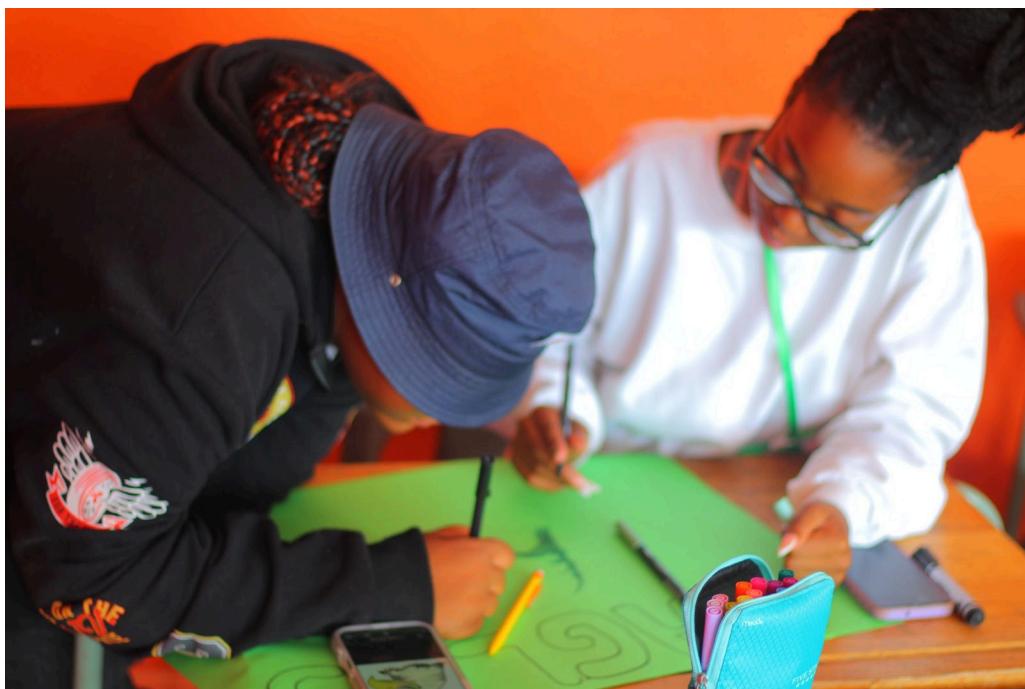


Photo 5: Two of our volunteers creating the class posters

3.1.1 Volunteer Training Overview

During the session, volunteers were introduced to the code of conduct, expectations, and best practices for working with children. The training covered child protection policies, ensuring all volunteers understood their responsibilities in maintaining a safe and supportive space for learners. Cultural awareness and diversity training were also key components, as SJ25 brings together individuals from different backgrounds. Volunteers appreciated the emphasis on inclusivity and the importance of fostering teamwork among diverse groups.

A significant portion of the training was dedicated to classroom management and conflict resolution strategies, ensuring that tutors and volunteers could handle various situations effectively. Additionally, volunteers were introduced to MI's mission and history, giving them a deeper understanding of the program's impact and their role in delivering quality educational experiences.



Photo 6: Volunteers at Kilmerton during their training

3.1.2 Volunteer Feedback & Key Takeaways

Feedback from the volunteers highlighted several aspects of the training that they found most valuable:

- **Child Protection & Classroom Conduct:** Many volunteers expressed appreciation for the child protection session, which was led by Hailey. This session provided practical insights into handling sensitive situations and ensuring learner safety.
- **Cultural Awareness & Diversity:** Volunteers recognized the importance of cultural awareness in fostering inclusivity. They valued discussions on differences and equality among people, noting that these lessons strengthened teamwork.
- **Code of Conduct & Communication:** Several volunteers highlighted the importance of learning about classroom conduct, volunteer expectations, and communication strategies, which helped them feel more prepared for their roles.
- **Team Building & Icebreakers:** Many volunteers appreciated the interactive elements of the training, particularly the icebreaker activities, which helped them get to know their teammates.

3.1.3 Areas for Improvement

While the overall training was well received, volunteers provided constructive suggestions for improving future sessions:

- **Time Management:** Several volunteers suggested better adherence to the schedule to ensure all sessions run efficiently.
- **Venue Upgrade:** Some volunteers noted that the training venue was old and suggested finding a more visually appealing and comfortable space in the future.
- **Interactive & Engaging Content:** A few volunteers recommended incorporating more interactive activities to keep sessions engaging and maintain high energy levels throughout the day.
- **Lesson Planning Training:** Some volunteers felt that a lesson planning session should be added to help them better prepare for their teaching responsibilities.
- **Administrative & Curriculum Preparation:** Volunteers suggested an admin session before curriculum training, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of how to lead lessons effectively.
- **Conflict Resolution Training:** A few participants highlighted the need for focused training on handling conflicts, both between learners and among volunteers.

3.1.4 Volunteer Confidence and Preparedness for Tutoring

A key measure of the effectiveness of the SJ25 volunteer training was assessing whether participants felt confident and prepared to begin tutoring. Based on survey responses from 43 volunteers, an overwhelming 90.7% of participants indicated that they felt confident and ready to start tutoring after the training.

4. Do you feel confident and prepared to start tutoring after this training?

43 responses

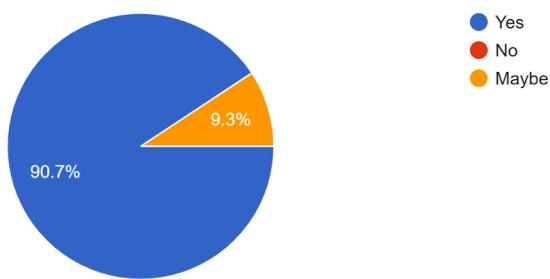


Figure 1: Volunteer sentiments

A smaller percentage (9.3%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting that while they found the training beneficial, they might have needed additional guidance or hands-on practice before feeling fully prepared. Notably, no respondents indicated that they felt unprepared, highlighting the overall success of the training.

The high confidence levels can be attributed to the comprehensive training structure, which included child protection, cultural awareness, classroom conduct, and interactive team-building sessions. However, 9.3% of those who responded with "Maybe" suggested areas where further refinements could enhance the training experience. Some volunteers recommended more interactive sessions, additional lesson planning guidance, and conflict resolution training to help them feel fully equipped.

3.2 Learner Attendance Analysis

One of the first significant challenges we faced was low learner attendance, with only 74 learners attending out of the expected 400 on the first day of the SJ25. To understand the reasons behind this, feedback was gathered from 178 respondents who did not attend the program.

If you answered "No" above, what was your reason for not attending?

88 responses

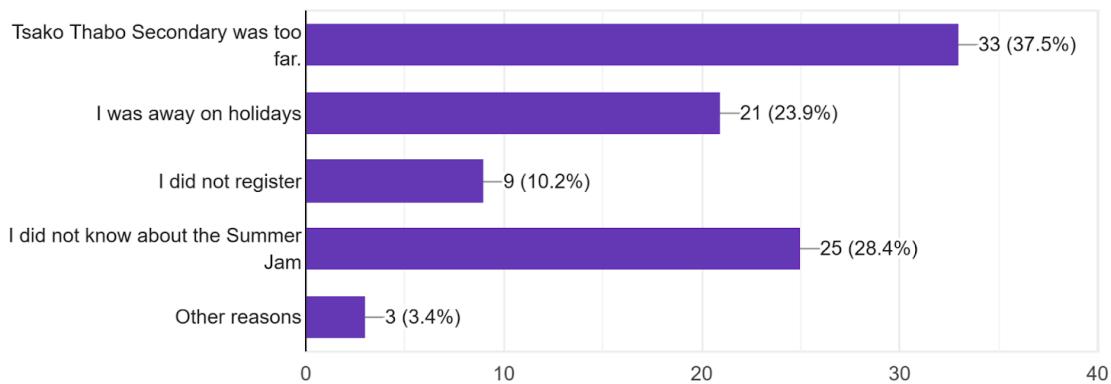


Figure 2: Learners Attendance feedback

The most cited reason for non-attendance was distance, with 37.5% (67 learners) indicating that Tsako Thabo Secondary School was too far. This suggests that accessibility remains a key barrier for many learners and highlights the importance of securing a centrally located venue in future programs.

Another major factor was that 28.4% (51 learners) were unaware of SJ25, indicating potential gaps in outreach and communication strategies. Despite efforts to inform past participants, some learners did not receive or see the information in time, reinforcing the need for early and targeted promotional efforts in the future. Additionally, 23.9% (43 learners) were away on holidays, which is a common challenge given the timing of the program during the festive season. This underscores the importance of early registration and engagement strategies to secure commitments before the holiday period.

A smaller percentage, 10.2% (18 learners), reported that they did not register, while 3.4% (6 learners) cited other reasons. These figures suggest that refining the registration process and improving accessibility to sign-ups could further boost attendance.

To address these attendance challenges, MI will focus on the following:

- Plan to host the Winter Jam at two venues in 2025. One in Mamelodi West and one in Vista, which is the eastern side of Mamelodi, to ensure that there's access to all learners across Mamelodi.
- Enhance our communication strategies, including bulk SMS notifications, school visits, and social media campaigns to ensure learners receive timely information.
- Plan to launch early registration drives and physically go to schools to assist learners to register for the Jam.

By implementing these strategies, we believe attendance and engagement for future programs will be improved.

3.3 Academic Performance Analysis: Summer Jam 2025

The SJ25 curriculum aimed to provide academic support in mathematics and English to learners across multiple grade levels as they get ready for the year ahead, but academics were not the main focus. Each grade had a set curriculum that they were meant to follow and included subjects such as entrepreneurship, community engagement, financial literacy, study Skills and Leadership. These curriculums occupied the bulk of the time in the timetable. We also had math and English as add-on subjects to create a holistic curriculum for the learners. The program sought to improve learners' understanding and performance in these subjects through structured lessons, interactive activities, and peer engagement.

3.3.1 Demographics

The Summer Jam 2025 saw participation from a diverse group of learners across various schools and grade levels. A total of 284 learners attended the program, representing 56 different schools (Winter Jam 2024 had 40 schools). The breakdown of school representation is as follows:

- **Ribanelaka Secondary School** had the highest representation with 56 learners.
- 45 learners were unallocated to a specific school, many of whom were younger learners who were included in the Grade 8 statistics.
- **Gatang Secondary School** (30), **Lehlabile Secondary School** (24), and **Tsako Thabo Secondary School** (19) were among the most represented institutions.
- Several schools contributed smaller numbers, including **Winterveld High School**, **Cornerstone College**, and **Charity School in Mamelodi**, each sending one learner. (See Annexure D: Schools).

3.3.2 Grade-Level Distribution

Learners attended the program across all secondary school grades, with the following distribution:

- **Grade 8:** 13.6%
- **Grade 9:** 9%
- **Grade 10:** 19.4%
- **Grade 11:** 34%
- **Grade 12:** 24%

3.3.3 Daily Attendance Trends

Attendance grew significantly over the course of Summer Jam 2025. The program started with **74 learners** on the first day and peaked at **288 learners**. Below is a summary of daily attendance:

Learners and Volunteers Daily Program Attendance

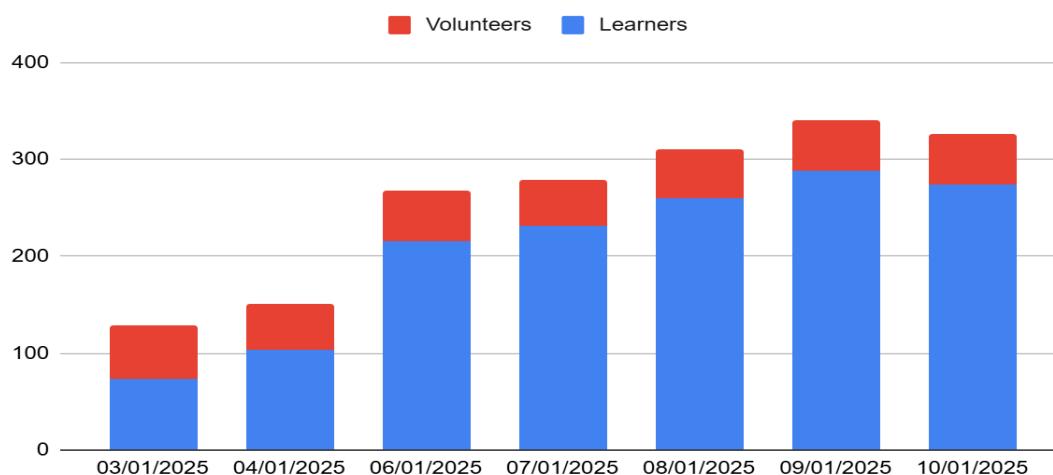


Figure 3: Daily Program Attendance

The attendance for the Summer Jam program saw a steady increase in participation as the days progressed. On 3rd January 2025, the program began with 74 learners and 54 volunteers, making a total of 128 attendees. This initial day set the foundation for what would be a significant rise in numbers in the following days.

By 4th January 2025, the number of learners increased to 104, and while volunteer numbers slightly dropped to 47, the total attendance rose to 151. This upward trend continued on 6th January 2025, when 216 learners attended, accompanied by 51 volunteers, bringing the total attendance to 267. This increase in learners marked a significant jump, showing a growing interest and engagement from both the volunteers and learners.

Attendance further grew on 7th January 2025, with 231 learners and 47 volunteers, resulting in a total of 278 attendees. The program saw its highest attendance on 8th January 2025, with 260 learners and 50 volunteers, pushing total attendance to 310.

On 9th January 2025, the attendance reached 341, with 288 learners and 53 volunteers, marking the highest attendance of the week. However, on 10th January 2025, a slight decrease in learner attendance to 274 was noted, although volunteer numbers remained steady at 52, leading to a total attendance of 326.

Overall, the attendance numbers for Summer Jam show a clear upward trend in learner participation, with a slight dip towards the end. The volunteer presence remained relatively consistent throughout the week, supporting the increasing number of learners.

4.3.3 Academic Performance Evaluation: Data Overview

Our curriculum and assessments assessed learners across five grade levels (Grade 8 to Grade 12) in Mathematics and English. A total of 320 learners participated in the assessments, with varying numbers per grade and subject. These assessments were designed to measure the learners' grasp of fundamental concepts before and after instructional intervention, providing valuable insights into their academic progress.

The data collected was carefully filtered to include only those learners who had completed both pre- and post-assessments. This approach was necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the evaluation, as incomplete data could lead to misleading conclusions. The breakdown of learners per grade and subject is shown in the table below:

Table 1: Number of learners per grade vs pre-and post-assessment numbers

GRADES	Total Number of Learners	Learners with both pre-and post-assessment scores	
		Math	English
Grade 8	52	2	0 (data lost)
Grade 9	35	10	6
Grade 10	49	6	4
Grade 11	110	30	33
Grade 12	74	11	8

The number of learners who completed both assessments varied significantly across the grades. In some cases, factors such as attendance, engagement, and external commitments may have influenced participation rates. Nevertheless, the collected data still provides a meaningful representation of the learners' progress within the programme.

3.4.1.1 Schedule of Instruction and Testing

The assessment schedule for Mathematics and English was structured differently to cater to the unique learning requirements of each subject. The pre-assessments were conducted over three days to ensure that all learners had the opportunity to participate, allowing for flexibility in scheduling and accommodating variations in attendance. This staggered approach also minimized disruptions and ensured that each learner had sufficient time to complete their assessments.

Following the pre-assessments, instructional sessions were conducted, focusing on targeted areas that required improvement. The post-assessments were then carried out to measure the impact of these instructional sessions. The detailed schedule is outlined in the table below:

Table 2: SJ25 Program Schedule

Time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
09:30 - 10:0 am	Math Pre - Test	Math Pre - Test	Math Pre - Test	Instruction	Instruction	Math Post Test	-	Closing
		Instruction	Instruction			Instruction	-	Closing
10:00 - 10:30 am	English Pre - Test	English Pre - Test	English Pre - Test	Instruction	Instruction	Instruction	English Post Test	Closing
		Instruction	Instruction				-	Closing
10:30 - 11:00 am	Short break	Short break	Short break	Short break	Short break	Short break	Short break	Closing

11:00 - 12:00 pm	Class Curriculum	Class Curriculum	Class Curriculum	Class Curriculum	Class Curriculum	Class Curriculum	Showcase Practice	Closing
12:00 - 12:30 pm	Lunch							
12:30 - 13:30 pm	Workshop							
13:30 - 14:30 pm	Afternoon Challenge							

The rationale behind having three different pre-assessment days was to accommodate logistical challenges, including variations in learner availability and classroom space constraints. This scheduling approach also allowed facilitators to gather a more comprehensive baseline assessment before moving into the instructional phase.

3.4.1.2 Mathematics Assessment

The Mathematics assessment was designed to test essential numeracy skills, ensuring that learners had a strong foundation in fundamental mathematical concepts. The test consisted of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering the following key topics:

- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Fractions and negative numbers
- Order of operations (BODMAS)
- Exponents

The decision to prohibit the use of calculators was intentional, aimed at encouraging mental arithmetic and problem-solving skills. This approach ensured that learners were not overly reliant on technology and could demonstrate a clear understanding of the underlying mathematical principles.

3.4.1.3 English Assessment

The English assessment aimed to evaluate learners' proficiency in grammar, reading comprehension, and written expression. The test was structured as follows:

- **Grammar (4 multiple-choice questions):** Designed to assess learners' understanding of key grammatical rules and structures.
- **Reading Comprehension (10 multiple-choice questions):** Focused on evaluating reading skills, including the ability to extract information, interpret meaning, and analyse text.
- **Essay (post-assessment only):** Introduced in the post-assessment to assess learners' ability to construct well-organized written responses, demonstrating coherence, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

One of the major differences between the pre- and post-assessments was the inclusion of the essay component in the post-test. This addition added a layer of complexity and tested learners' ability to structure and express their ideas effectively. The total testing period for English was 45 minutes, meaning that learners had to manage their time efficiently, particularly in the post-assessment where they had to balance completing the essay before moving on to multiple-choice questions. The sequencing of the post-test—starting with the essay—may have influenced how learners allocated their time and approached the assessment.

By structuring the assessments in this manner, the evaluation aimed to provide a balanced measure of both quantitative skills (grammar and comprehension) and qualitative improvement (writing skills) over the duration of the programme. These insights are crucial in identifying strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that future interventions are tailored to maximize learner outcomes.

3.3.4 Mathematics Performance

The analysis of learners' mathematics performance during The Mamelodi Initiative's Summer Jam 2025 reveals varying degrees of improvement across different grade levels. (Annexure B)



Photo 7: During one of the pretest sessions

- **Grade 8 (median score: pre=33, post=33):** Due to the small sample size (only 2 learners completed both pre- and post-assessments), our statistical analysis was inconclusive: average

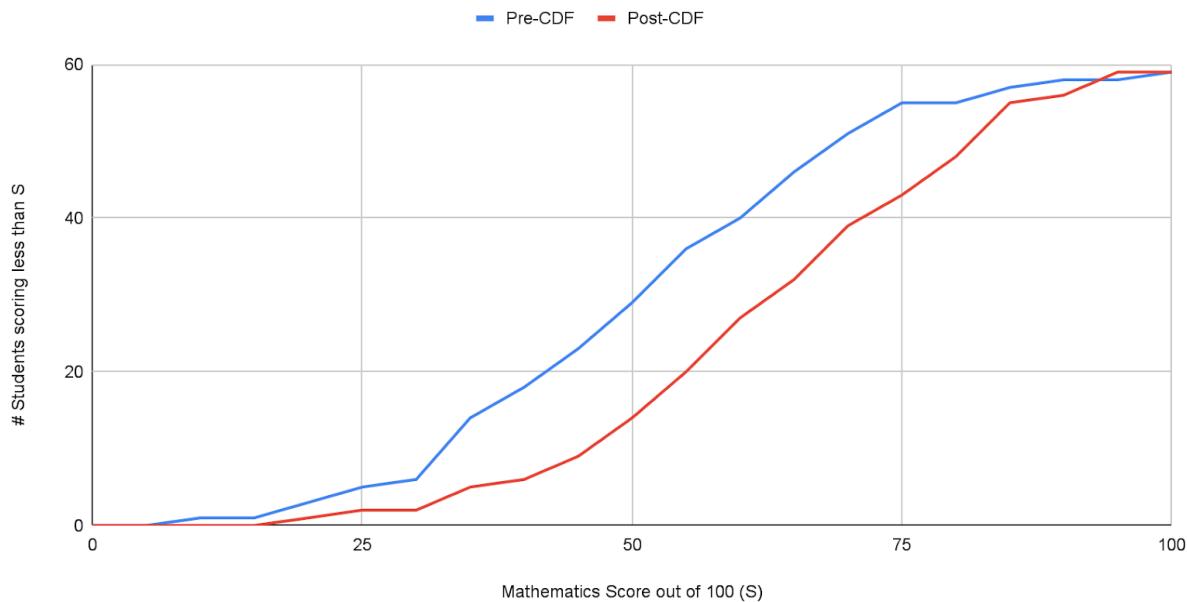
score change = 0, n = 2, p = 1.0. In the future, if better consistency in attendance is maintained for grade 8, then a more informative statistical assessment can be made.

- **Grade 9 (median score: pre=48, post=60):** Learners demonstrated an average score increase of 11 points. While the paired t-test ($p = 0.0505$) is closely approaching significance, the statistical test is slightly underpowered due to only having 10 learners. However, the average score increase is commensurate with the score increases in the upper grades, and we conclude that there was substantial improvement in mathematics that would become even more evident with a larger sample size.
- **Grade 10 (median score: pre=40, post=50):** A 12-point improvement was observed, but due to the small sample size ($n = 6$), the paired t-test was underpowered ($p = 0.0971$). However, similar to Grade 9, we believe there was a substantial improvement in mathematics that would be statistically confirmed with a larger sample size.
- **Grade 11 (median score: pre=45, post=60):** Learners showed significant improvement in mathematics, with an average increase of 13 points. The paired t-test ($p = 0.0013$, $n = 30$) strongly confirms that this improvement is statistically significant.
- **Grade 12 (median score: pre=65, post=80):** Learners showed significant improvement in mathematics, with an average increase of 12 points. The paired t-test ($p = 0.0047$, $n = 11$) confirms that this improvement is statistically significant.

3.3.4.1 Interpretation of the overall Math Performance across grades

The graph presents the cumulative distribution functions (CDFs) of the pre- and post-assessment mathematics scores for all the learners across all grades. The blue line represents the pre-assessment CDF, while the red line represents the post-assessment CDF.

Figure 4: Cumulative Distribution Functions (Math Pre- and Post-Assessments) - MI Summer Jam 2025



Key Observations:

- a. **Interpretation Guide: Rightward is Better.** The cumulative distribution function is a visualization of the set of scores across a student population. The further to the right this curve is, the better the population of students scored. The CDF curve rises more sharply whenever a larger number of students have scores clustered in that region of the x-axis.
- b. **Overall Improvement in Scores:**
 - The post-assessment (red line) is consistently lower than the pre-assessment (blue line) for most score ranges, meaning that at each score level, fewer students scored below that threshold after instruction.
 - The rightward shift indicates that students improved their performance after participating in the programme. The average increase in performance exceeded 10 points, as can be seen by this plot.
- c. **Lower Proportion of Learners Scoring Low Marks:**
 - In the pre-assessment (blue), around half of our learners scored below **50%**, with the CDF rising sharply in that range.
 - In the post-assessment (red), the curve rises more gradually, indicating that fewer learners (roughly 1/4 of our learners) scored below 50% after instruction.
- d. **Higher Scores in the Post-Assessment:**

- Towards the higher end of the score spectrum (above **75%**), the post-assessment CDF remains below the pre-assessment CDF, meaning more learners achieved higher marks in the post-test.
- By the time we reach **100%**, both lines converge, as all students fall within the total population range.

e. **Implication for Learning Gains:**

- The observed shift in the CDF suggests that the **instruction and support provided during SJ25 had a positive impact** on the learners' mathematics performance.
- The programme appears to have reduced the number of students struggling with lower scores while increasing the number achieving higher marks.

The mathematics CDF analysis indicates **overall academic improvement** in all cases where there was sufficient data on mathematics pre-assessment and post-assessment scores. This is even in the face of a limited amount of instruction (3-4 days). We conclude that our mathematics foundations curriculum, combined with our volunteer training, was effective at improving learners' foundational mathematics skills throughout Grades 8-12.

3.3.5 Analysis of English Performance

The analysis of English performance across different grade levels is complicated by the fact that the post-assessment included an essay section whereas the pre-assessment did not include an essay. The essay appeared **before** the multiple-choice questions in the post-assessment, so most learners likely started with the essay. This significantly changed the testing environment, and we suspect that a substantial number of students struggled with time management, leaving insufficient time for the multiple-choice sections. Nevertheless, we present the results, noting that a significant change could have been due to time pressure, not due to decreasing proficiency in English language skills. (Annexure C) Below is a breakdown of the results:

- **Grade 8: No data.** The post-assessment data was lost, likely due to a data entry error where pre-assessment data was entered as post-assessment data.
- **Grade 9: Significant Decrease.:** Grade 9 learners saw an average multiple-choice score decrease of 12 points, with the paired t-test ($p = 0.0429$, $n = 6$) confirming statistical significance. However, we believe this to be due to time pressure given the addition of the essay section. The average essay score was 55 (post-assessment only).
- **Grade 10: Inconclusive:** Given that only 4 learners in Grade 10 completed both the pre-and post-assessments, we were unable to make any statistically relevant statements on English multiple-choice question performance. Keeping in mind the small sample size, the essay average was 60, which was the highest among lower grades, suggesting that writing skills may not have been the primary issue, at least for this set of 4 students.
- **Grade 11: Significant Decrease:** Grade 11 showed an average score decrease of 14.86 points on the multiple-choice questions, which was statistically significant based on the paired t-test ($p <$

0.0001, n = 33). We highly suspect this to be due to time pressure in the post-assessment, where most students spent a large portion of their 45 minutes crafting an essay, leaving insufficient time for the multiple-choice questions. The average essay score was 57.27 (post-assessment only).

- **Grade 12: Significant Improvement:** Unlike other grades, Grade 12 demonstrated strong performance gains despite the added essay, with an average score increase of 25.75 points in the multiple-choice questions. The paired t-test ($p = 0.0138$, n = 8) indicates that this improvement was statistically significant. The post-test standard deviation remained similar to the pre-test (18.69 vs. 19.14), showing that learners improved consistently rather than erratically. Additionally, the essay average was 67.5, the highest among all grades, which suggests a solid grasp of writing skills.

While the English assessments for Summer Jam 2025 were not an ideal way to measure academic improvement (due to the missing essay in the pre-assessment), we nevertheless observed a statistically significant improvement in the multiple choice questions (grammar and reading comprehension) for Grade 12. This suggests that by Grade 12, learners have already developed the test-taking maturity to be able to balance their time between the multiple-choice questions and essays. It is also encouraging that the Grade 12 learners scored higher than all other grades on the essay (data available for post-assessment only).

3.3.7 Action Steps for Improvement

- Leveraging successful strategies from Grade 12 and implementing them in lower grades to boost performance earlier. (For example, time management strategies for test-taking.)
- Ensure that as many learners as possible take **both** the pre-assessment and post-assessment (for both math and English).
- Ensure that the pre-assessment and post-assessment are equivalent in content (e.g., essay appears in both pre- and post- for English).
- Coach learners on the test-taking strategy for the English assessment: do the multiple-choice questions first.
- Random speed tests at the end of sessions (e.g., putting a time limit on the evaluation questions at the end of each lesson) may improve test-taking time management as well as reduce anxiety during the actual post-assessment.

3.3.6 Challenges and Considerations

A significant challenge was the inconsistency in learner participation for pre-tests and post-tests, mostly as a result of moving the programme to a different location (from Tsako Thabo to Vista) after the first few days of the programme. Many learners who wrote the pre-tests were not present for the post-tests, affecting the reliability of the performance analysis. Additionally, while pre-tests were successfully administered in the first three days, the growing attendance at Vista made it impractical to conduct

pre-tests for all new learners. The programme started with 74 learners at Tsako Thabo and expanded to a total of 284 learners at Vista by the end of the Jam.

The results indicate that SJ25 had a generally positive impact on learners' academic performance, particularly in mathematics for Grades 11 and 12 and English for Grades 8 and 12. However, some challenges remain, including sample size limitations for certain grades and consistency in testing given the changing population of students throughout the programme. Future programmes should focus on addressing these disparities through targeted interventions and increased sample sizes to improve the reliability of findings.

3.4 Food and Catering

The original plan for SJ25 was to collaborate with local small businesses as our official caterer, and we advertised the opportunity, with several applications received. However, we had to revise our plans due to the food poisoning incidents affecting many schools in Gauteng towards the end of last year. Additionally, as part of our agreement with Vista, we were required to have a certified caterer for SJ25. As a result, we decided to reach out to Spar, who had successfully catered for WJ24. We chose them over PicknPay (our other WJ24 caterer) due to their wider variety of meal options. The menu they provided included burgers and chips, hot dogs (originally planned to be boerewors rolls), paninis, assorted rolls, and fresh fruit from Fruitstop Silverton.



Photo 8: Learners at Tsako Thabo Secondary School

The challenges we faced with them during the last Jam were resolved, and we were able to receive food on time. Pat and Tammy were incredibly helpful with food collections each day, which allowed us to serve lunch on schedule. However, our main challenge with them was their inability to meet the dietary requirements we had requested. We had learners who were vegetarian and others with specific food preferences, all of which we communicated to them well in advance, almost every day. Despite this, many of our needs were not met. On more than three occasions, we requested at least 25 vegetarian options, but the quantities provided did not match our requests — we received 125 instead of 25 on one occasion, and 100 on another. While working with Spar was a positive experience overall, communication remains a critical issue. This is something we must address properly if we are to continue working with them in the future.

3.4.1 Meal Feedback Analysis

Annexure J highlights feedback from volunteers regarding the food provided during the Winter Jam. While the menu received positive feedback, many volunteers raised concerns about the timing of the food delivery. Below is a pie chart illustrating the volunteers' satisfaction levels with the lunch during the Jam.

How satisfied were you with the Lunch provided?

45 responses

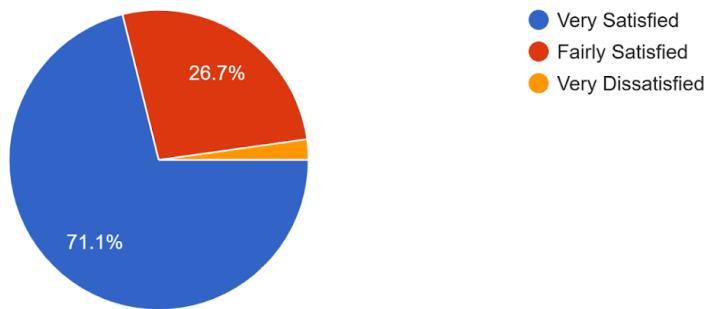


Figure 5: Volunteer satisfaction with the lunch provided during the Winter Jam

The feedback from volunteers regarding lunch during SJ25 highlighted several key themes, including overall satisfaction, areas for improvement, and specific concerns. See Annexure F.

a. Positive Feedback

- Many volunteers appreciated the lunch provided, describing it as "delightful," "fantastic," "very good," and "really delicious."
- Several volunteers noted that special dietary requirements, such as vegetarian meals, were well catered for.
- The quantity of food was generally considered sufficient.
- Some volunteers acknowledged improvements compared to previous years.

b. Areas for Improvement

- **Food Variety and Quality:** Some volunteers mentioned that the meals were repetitive and dry. They suggested adding more variety to the menu.
- **Freshness of Ingredients:** A few comments pointed out that the bread rolls were not always fresh.
- **Juice Quality:** Multiple volunteers noted that the juice was too sweet and suggested providing a less sugary option.
- **Dietary Considerations:** Volunteers recommended catering more for individuals with allergies and expanding meal options beyond standard offerings.

While the majority of volunteers were satisfied with the meals, there are opportunities for improvement in meal variety, punctuality, and accommodating dietary needs. Addressing these concerns could enhance the overall volunteer and learner experience in future programmes.

3.5 Summer Jam Finances

The total expenditure for SJ25 amounted to R199,004.45 (\$10,672), reflecting a 31.7% reduction compared to the budgeted R291,550 (\$15,517.39). Compared to the previous year's actual expenditure of R221,150 (\$11,770.44), the SJ25 spending was 10% lower, demonstrating a continued trend of financial prudence while maintaining programme effectiveness.

One of the most significant cost reductions was in Volunteer & Delegate Refreshments, which had been budgeted at R206,700 but ultimately only cost R113,122 (a 45.3% decrease). This decline in spending was primarily due to the shorter duration of SJ25. Unlike previous Summer Jams that spanned over two weeks, SJ25 lasted only eight days, significantly reducing the number of meals and refreshments required for both volunteers and learners. See Annexure G.

3.5.1 Volunteer Transport Reimbursements

To support volunteers with travel costs, R30 per day of transport reimbursement was provided to them. However, to qualify for the reimbursement, volunteers were required to have attended at least 90% of SJ25. Additionally, the admin teams were awarded reimbursements for the days they met for programme planning.

The **hand-to-hand distribution** of reimbursements posed a significant challenge in terms of efficiency and tracking. Moving forward, a new strategy for issuing reimbursements must be implemented. In previous years, eWallets were used, and this method proved to be more feasible, secure, and easier to track and record. Given these advantages, we will reintroduce electronic transfers for reimbursements. These payments will be prepared ahead of time to ensure smooth and timely disbursement, enhancing transparency and reducing administrative burden. See Annexure G.

4. Overall Successes and Challenges

SJ25 presented both challenges and valuable learning experiences. While SJ25 achieved significant success, it also highlighted areas for improvement in our planning and execution. From health and safety incidents to venue considerations, we have gained insights into how we can enhance our future programs. This section outlines the challenges, lessons learned, and the steps we plan to take to ensure continuous growth and success in the future.

4.1 Challenges

During the jam, several challenges emerged that tested our preparedness and ability to adapt. These challenges ranged from health and safety incidents to logistical and operational difficulties. Addressing these issues head-on allowed us to identify areas where improvements are necessary. The following section delves into the key challenges encountered during the program and the lessons we are taking forward to ensure smoother execution in the future

4.1.1 Injury During Class

During an afternoon class challenge, a student was injured when he missed a step while running across tables. Although the situation was handled well, including calling an ambulance and informing the parents, we realised that in future emergencies, the university's security personnel should be contacted first, as they are trained to handle such situations. A private ambulance was sourced due to the slow response time from government services. We advised not to move the child until medical professionals arrived, as we were unsure of the extent of the injury.

4.1.2 Sickness Incident

Another student fell ill during the program and was attended to by a volunteer and staff. We immediately notified the security personnel, retrieved the student's details from our system, and called the parents, as

no medication was required. This event highlighted the need for improved emergency protocols. We plan to offer first aid training and certification to enhance our readiness for future incidents.

4.1.3 Dietary Agreement Issues

SPAR failed to meet the dietary requirements outlined in the catering contract. This highlighted the need for stricter agreements and clearer expectations in future catering arrangements.

4.1.4 Inclusive Programming

Three learners with special needs attended the program, demonstrating our commitment to inclusivity. However, we identified the need for additional training to better equip volunteers to manage and support special needs learners effectively.

4.1.5 Primary School Learners

Including learners in Grades 4–7 posed unique challenges, especially as many learners had to choose between attending the program and staying home to care for siblings. While we allow learners to bring siblings, we are evaluating the inclusion of this age group moving forward. A tailored program focusing on literacy and foundational skills for younger learners may prove more effective. This is also under review by the program committee to address literacy rates in township schools.

4.2 Lessons Learned

The challenges faced during SJ25 provided valuable opportunities for growth and improvement. By reflecting on these experiences, we gained important insights that will guide our future efforts. The following section highlights the key lessons we learned, focusing on areas such as health and safety protocols, dietary management, inclusive programming, and venue logistics. These lessons will help us refine our approach, ensuring that we can better support participants and volunteers in future programs.

4.2.1 Health and Safety Protocols

In future incidents, it is crucial to involve the university's security personnel for a quicker and more efficient response to health and safety issues. Their expertise in handling emergencies can improve our overall preparedness and ensure faster intervention. Additionally, attending a first aid course and obtaining certification will be an important preventive measure. This will better equip us to handle emergencies effectively and ensure the safety of all participants.

4.2.2 Dietary Management

To avoid issues with dietary requirements, we will implement clearer and more defined agreements with caterers in future programs. Stricter contracts will ensure that all dietary needs are consistently met, reducing the chances of miscommunication or failure to comply with specific requirements.

4.2.3 Inclusive Programming

Volunteers need enhanced training to effectively manage special needs learners. Providing this training will create a more supportive environment and ensure that volunteers are equipped with the patience and skills necessary to work with diverse groups of participants.

4.2.4 Primary School Learners

To better support younger learners, we should consider developing tailored programs focused on literacy and foundational skills. This approach would be more impactful in addressing their specific needs. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the balance between program attendance and learners' family responsibilities. We must explore ways to support families further, ensuring that learners can participate without neglecting their obligations at home.

5. 2025 Programs and Plans

As we move forward with the planning and execution of the Road to Finals (RTF) and Youth Leadership Council (YLC) programs in 2025, several key areas are being addressed to ensure their successful launch and implementation. From preparing training sessions and engaging with parents to securing an appropriate venue, we are focused on creating a strong foundation for both pilots. Additionally, we are prioritizing the safety and preparedness of our volunteers through targeted training initiatives. This section outlines the current progress in these areas and the steps being taken to ensure that all aspects of the programs are aligned and well-supported.

5.1 Road to Finals (RTF) and Youth Leadership Council (YLC) Pilots

We are set to launch the pilot phases of the Road to Finals (RTF) and Youth Leadership Council (YLC) programs this month (February). As part of the preparation, we have scheduled training days and parent meetings to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and prepared for the program's inception. These sessions will also serve as an opportunity to align expectations, discuss the structure of the programs, and address any concerns. In order to maintain transparency and ensure that both the board and

program committee are kept up to date, we will provide monthly updates on the progress of both pilots. These updates will not only highlight successes but also identify any challenges encountered, ensuring that any necessary adjustments can be made promptly.

5.2 Venue Exploration

Efforts to secure Mae Jamison as the venue for the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) program are actively underway. Mae Jamison is an ideal location, and we are optimistic about its potential to serve as a hub for the YLC's activities. However, in the event that we are unable to confirm Mae Jamison as the venue, we are exploring alternative locations to ensure that the program can proceed without disruption. This exploration process includes evaluating the logistical feasibility, accessibility, and suitability of other venues, with the goal of securing a space that aligns with the program's needs.

5.3 Volunteer Training

As part of our commitment to ensuring a safe and effective learning environment, we are considering incorporating first-aid certification as part of the training for our volunteers. This initiative arises in response to health and safety challenges faced during previous programs. By providing volunteers with first-aid training, we aim to enhance their ability to respond effectively in emergencies, reducing potential risks and improving the overall safety of participants. This certification will serve as a critical mitigation strategy to prepare volunteers for unforeseen health issues and ensure that we are fully equipped to manage such challenges moving forward.

6. Conclusion

The Summer Jam 2025 programme faced its share of challenges, particularly with venue uncertainty and fluctuating attendance, but the efforts of the team ensured its success. The adaptability shown in securing an alternative venue and smoothly transitioning to Vista Campus underscored the commitment to delivering a quality learning experience, despite logistical setbacks. The inclusion of key academic subjects such as Math and English helped address critical learning gaps, while also offering a solid foundation for learners as they prepared for the school year ahead.

The mixed results across different grades in English performance highlighted areas for improvement and further development in targeted interventions. However, the strong performance seen in Grade 12 demonstrated the positive impact of focused academic support. As we look towards future editions of Summer Jam, the lessons learned from this year—especially regarding venue coordination, communication, and learner engagement—will drive improvements and ensure that future programmes are even more effective in meeting learners' needs and achieving academic success.

Annexures

1. Annexure A

Date	Learners	Volunteers	Total Attendance
03/01/2025	74	54	128
04/01/2025	104	47	151
06/01/2025	216	51	267
07/01/2025	231	47	278
08/01/2025	260	50	310
09/01/2025	288	53	341
10/01/2025	274	52	326

2. Annexure B

Math Performance							
Grade	Average Score Change	Paired t-test p-value	2-Sample t-test p-value	Pre Std Dev	Post Std Dev	Std	Interpretation
Grade 8	0	1	0.1636	10.60660172	17.67766953		Inconclusive
Grade 9	11	0.05051941313	0.6392	20.06240265	19.35774321		Noticeable Improvement Sample size too small
Grade 10	12	0.09714330475	0.7769	13.19722193	8.612007122		Improvement noticeable, sample size too small (n=6, p=0.09)
Grade 11	13	0.001308079354	0.6155	18.41491774	15.53268708		Significant Improvement
Grade 12	12	0.004732742918	0.7262	16.19483644	16.78744119		Significant improvement

3. Annexure C

English Performance										
Grade	Average Score Change	Paired t-test p-value	2-Sample t-test p-value	Pre Dev	Std Dev	Post Dev	Std Dev	Interpretation	Essay Range	Essay Average
Grade 8	0.0071428 57143	0.9891729 581	0.99918 98979	22.073799 66	22.12851 221	No significant change	80		42	
Grade 9	-12	0.0429480 3133	0.33335 68109	15.121728 3	24.31186 267	Significant decrease	60		55	
Grade 10	-19	0.3268414 81	0.35387 41111	7	34.49154 486	No significant change	20		60	
Grade 11	-14.863636 36	0.0000002 15362688 2	0.00000 04815	18.859729 42	23.73699 804	Significant decrease	100		57	
Grade 12	25.75	0.0137896 6689	0.01650 02294	18.685364 78	19.13672 61	Significant Improvement	30		67.5	

4. Annexure D: Schools

No.	Name	Count of Schools
1	Ribanelaka Secondary School	56
2	unallocated	45
3	Gatang Secondary School	30
4	Lehlabile Secondary School	24
5	Tsako Thabo Secondary School	19
6	Phateng Secondary School	16
7	Nellmaphus Secondary School	13
8	Mamelodi Secondary school	12
9	Prosperitus Secondary school	10
10	Stanza Bopape Secondary School	9
11	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom School	9
12	Thuto Bohlale Secondary School	8
13	Mahube Valley Secondary School	8
14	Vukani Mawethu Secondary School	7
15	Vlakfontein Secondary School	7
16	Jaffa Mahlangu Secondary School	7
17	The Glen Secondary School	5
18	Hoerskool FH Odendaal	5
19	Bona Lesedi Secondary School	5
20	Silverton Hoerskool	4
21	Lompec Secondary School	4
22	Clapham Secondary School	4
23	Rietondale Primary School	3
24	Edenvale High School	3
25	CR Swart High School	3
26	Willow Ridge High School	2
27	Rephafogile Secondary school	2
28	Pretoria Technical High School	2
29	J Kekana Secondary School	2
30	Doornpoort Secndary School	2
31	Da Mokoma Secondary School	2
32	Curro Pretoria	2
33	Yellow Secondary School	2
34	Pula Difale Primary School	1
34	Boikgantso Primary School	2
35	SOMAFCO Secondary School	1

36	Settlers Agricultural High School	1
37	Pudedi Fátima	1
38	Ps Fourie	1
39	Pretoria West High School	1
40	Palmtempleton high school	1
41	P.S Fourie Primary School	1
42	Mogale Secondary School	1
43	Modiri Secondary School	1
44	Masilela Secondary School	1
45	Legora	1
46	Gijimane Secondary School	1
47	Flavius Mareka High School	1
48	Eersterust Secondary School	1
49	DR Im Monare Primary School	1
50	Cullinan Secondary School	1
51	Cornerstone College	1
52	Chipa-Tabane Secondary School	1
53	Charity School in Mamelodi	1
54	Bophelong Community Independent	1
55	Balebogeng Primary School	1
56	Winterveld High School	1

5. Annexure E: Grades and Gender Distribution Stats

Grade	Count of Grade
8	13.6%
9	9%
10	19.4%
11	34%
12	24%
Grand Total	100

6. Annexure F: Lunch Feedback

NO.	Any comments or suggestions regarding the Lunch?
1	It was delightful
2	Lunch was good
3	I'm vegetarian so everyday i was well taken care of.
4	The lunch was great!
5	Less MAYO
6	It was always late which made it harder to control the classroom. Quantity was fine
7	Lunch was great this year!
8	The food was dry and it never changed, just the same food/meat
9	Try to cater more for people with allergies
10	Improvement on the lunch provided
11	Keep up the good work
12	It was good and enough
13	Lunch was really delicious with special lunches catered for. The rolls were not fresh sometimes
14	the juice was too sweet
15	Best
16	Have pap sometimes, and a less sugary juice
17	Sometimes the lunch was dry. Nevertheless, the lunch was just great.
18	It sometimes came late which was a disadvantage because students usually complained about hunger
19	No suggestions, everything was alright.
20	Just satisfied
21	Lunch was always good
22	It was very good, very delicious. I wish the drinks were cold.
23	Lunch was fantastic
24	Some launches were too dry and the juice was too sweet