



ENOCK MATHEBULA FOUNDATION HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL “FINAL STRETCH” EVENT TO EMPOWER GRADE 12 LEARNERS



On 23 January 2026, the Enock Mathebula Foundation (EMF) proudly hosted its first Annual Final Stretch event, aimed at motivating and equipping Grade 12 learners as they enter the critical final months of their matric year. Held at Noblehoek Assemblies of God Church in partnership with the Mopani District Department of Education, the event welcomed 200 learners from the Mamaila Circuit, identified as low-performing learners in need of additional support and encouragement.

The initiative brought together education stakeholders, industry professionals, and the University of Venda, providing learners with a blend of inspiration, academic guidance, career advice, and wellness support. The program was carefully structured to address the key areas that impact learner success, from career planning to mental resilience.

A WARM WELCOME AND PURPOSE OF THE DAY

The event kicked off with an opening prayer led by Mr. NP Maswanganyi, followed by programme direction from Mr.

Fumani Miyeni, who was joined by Mr. Tlabo Leboho, who served as the MC for the second part of the day. The Mamaila Circuit Manager delivered a warm welcome address, setting the tone for a day dedicated to empowerment.

The purpose of the day was articulated by Vonani Mathebula, representing the Enock Mathebula Foundation, who shared the foundation's mission to support learners in reaching their full potential. The event was officially officiated by Mr. Kuna, Acting District Director for Mopani, who delivered the keynote address and encouraged learners to embrace the opportunities ahead.



INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

Learners were inspired by career insights from Leonardo De Wet, a mining engineer, and Themba Rikhotso, an HR site officer. Both speakers shared short, practical stories from their careers, highlighting the importance of perseverance, continuous learning, and professional development in achieving success.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BREAK

During a short health break, learners were treated to snacks generously sponsored by Local Choice Pharmacy Phalaborwa, whose support was specially acknowledged for contributing to the smooth running of the event.

UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT AND CAREER GUIDANCE

The University of Venda played a key role in helping learners explore post-matric options. Ms. Mosutao Monyai, a lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations, introduced staff members, outlined the department's academic offerings, and explained the opportunities available to students.

Following this, Ms. Tracy Nyatheli, also a lecturer, guided learners on navigating university life and making informed career decisions after matric. This session encouraged learners to start thinking critically about their next steps, ensuring they are prepared to make choices aligned with their interests and potential.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND STUDENT WELLNESS

Academic support was provided by Ms. Usanda Bekebu, who introduced learners to the Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) and explained how it helps students succeed academically, especially in challenging subjects.

The wellbeing of learners was also prioritized. Ms. Doreen Morukhu led a session on mental health, resilience, and coping strategies for academic and life pressures. Learners were engaged in discussions on how to manage stress, maintain focus, and stay motivated during the final stretch of their schooling journey.

INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

An open engagement session allowed learners to ask questions directly to speakers, creating a space for interaction, clarification, and reflection. Facilitated by the MC, this segment ensured learners could actively engage with the guidance offered.

NETWORKING AND CLOSURE

The day concluded with a networking session, where learners had informal engagements with the speakers and university representatives while enjoying refreshments. The programme officially closed at 13:00, leaving learners energized, informed, and better equipped for the months ahead.

The EMF Annual Final Stretch event was more than just a programme it was a platform of empowerment, inspiration, and support. By bringing together education, industry, and university stakeholders, the Enock Mathebula Foundation created an environment where learners could see the possibilities beyond matric, gain practical advice, and build the resilience needed to succeed.

