



Morné du Toit, newly appointed CEO at the Ikusasa Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP) wants to afford young talent the chance to learn and grow despite their economic situation. However, financial support alone is not enough, he says.

Morné du Toit, fortunate to work in an environment where he can make a difference in other peoples' lives every day.

There are tens-of-thousands of students annually that cannot afford higher education.

Among them there may be the potential of a future cure for cancer, a future Elon Musk/Tesla/SpaceX entrepreneur, a future solution for climate change, a future solution for the water and energy crisis, or a future leader like Madiba. Imagine the great loss to

the country and the world if we do not give these young talents the chance to learn and grow purely because of their economic situation, says Morné du Toit, newly appointed CEO at the Ikusasa Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP).

Morné, a chartered accountant [CA(SA)] by profession, studied accounting because the prestige and high regard in which the

accountancy profession is held attracted him, as well as the diversity of possible career options that were available to him as a qualified accountant. He is passionate about what he can achieve in his new position.

His love for education was ignited as a student at Accountancy@UJ and as soon as he completed his articles and qualified as a

UJ Alumnus **Morné du Toit**

Appointed CEO at the Ikusasa Financial Aid Programme

THE 'MISSING MIDDLE' MAY HAVE AMONGST THEM THE POTENTIAL OF A FUTURE CURE FOR CANCER, AN ELON MUSK/TESLA/SPACEX ENTREPRENEUR, A SOLUTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, A SOLUTION FOR OUR WATER AND ENERGY CRISIS, OR A FUTURE LEADER LIKE MADIBA. – MORNÉ DU TOIT

CA(SA), he joined the Department of Accountancy at UJ as a senior lecturer, where he was later promoted to associate professor.

"It was a great honour to be a staff member of the Department of Accountancy and UJ and to lecture on the renowned UJ Accounting Honours/Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA), the Gauteng Board course and APT. I had the opportunity of working with legends of the profession such as Prof Ben Marx and Prof Amanda Dempsey."

It is from there that his career in the education sector launched and he spent time in the private and public education sector in South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Namibia before being appointed as CEO of ISFAP in September 2021.

He considers himself fortunate to work in an environment where he can make a difference in other peoples' lives. South Africa's unemployment rate is now the highest in the world and relishes the opportunity to make a significant contribution to turning South Africa's unemployment crisis around.

"We have incredible potential human capital in this country, but we need to invest to develop it,

specifically in the STEM fields. A massive partnership is required between government and the private sector – one cannot do it without the other," he says.

There also needs to be a change in the way students are supported during their higher education. "It is not enough to give financial support. We need to create an ecosystem of support that underpins students holistically through their study period. In this way we can ensure a significant increase in throughput rates, drastically reduce the wastage in the system, assist more students, and lower the cost per graduate," he explains.

ISFAP provides a wrap-around support ecosystem which, among other things, includes academic tutoring, mentorship, psychosocial support, and work-place preparation in addition to financial support (tuition, accommodation, living allowance, device, data, books, food, etc.) to give students the maximum chance of success.

"Many of our students come from environments where this kind of additional support is critical to their success. We have shown significant increases in success rates by providing this additional layer of support and we believe

that this may very well be a model that should be adopted far more broadly," says Morné.

Where the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) supports poor students with a family income below R350 000 per year, ISFAP focuses on those students that are 'too rich' for NSFAS, but 'too poor' to afford higher education – the so-called 'missing middle' with a family income of between R350 000 and R600 000.

Lastly, Morné has wise words for those about to start their careers: Whatever one would like to achieve in life it always comes back to the relationships one has with people. "You need to take care of people first and the results will follow. Spend time on your relationships – personal and professional. Care deeply and genuinely about people. Always be sincere in your interactions." ■

Morné du Toit holds a BCom, BCom (Hons) and master's degree in computer auditing from the University of Johannesburg.