

## **ISFAP appoints Werner Abrahams as CEO**

Press Release  
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The Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme Foundation NPC (ISFAP) is pleased to announce the appointment of Werner Abrahams as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective as of 1 September 2024.

“Mr Abrahams brings a decade of Executive Management experience and a unique blend of expertise in financial aid, project management, and digital transformation within the higher education sector,” said Sizwe Nxasana, ISFAP Board Chair.

Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 2010, Abrahams began working in higher education soon after, pursuing a life-long admiration for higher learning which stems from having a family that has its roots firmly in the higher education space.

“The conversation at family gatherings always revolved around education, which geared me towards starting off my career as Financial Manager and then Chief Financial Officer at West Coast TVET college. I then joined the University of Stellenbosch (US) in 2016, first as Deputy Director and Head of Student Fees and Debtors before ending my journey at the university as Director: Student Finance,” Abrahams shared.

Motivated by a desire to see technological advancements being leveraged for the benefit of students in pursuit of higher learning, Abrahams values seeing the tangible impact that tech-driven innovation can have on the lives of students. This commitment led him to develop a transformative financial services experience for students at US, which included the establishment of a dedicated Student Finance walk-in centre, call-in support line, as well as an online financial aid application process resulting in a dramatic improvement in customer satisfaction.

Similarly, Abrahams also developed strategies that improved student fee collection, having implemented an integrated mobile phone and online payment application. This development saw US become the first university on the Snapscan platform where tuition fees, meals, laundry, and other services could be paid.

Lining up more directly with the ISFAP vision and mission, Abrahams has also been actively involved in missing middle funding for US students, having launched innovative student loan products with preferential interest rates by partnering with the major commercial banks.

When asked what drew him to the role of CEO at ISFAP, Abrahams shared that he felt an alignment with the work that ISFAP does. “The role seemed like a natural fit for me given

everything that I had learned in my career previously. Being that ISFAP is also one of the funders at US, the staff and students alike have always been impressed by their operating model and use of wrap-around support to assist students, ISFAP also aligned with my values and interest in using technology for the benefit of students” he said.

In terms of his vision for the future of ISFAP, Abrahams shared that he hopes to find innovative solutions to missing middle funding and implement strategic initiatives to expand the number of students supported. He added that he would also like for the organisation to be an important role player between government, tertiary institutions, and corporates as a trusted entity of donor funding so that students from each financial aid income category can be optimally funded.

“My hope is for a future where eligible students who require funding will have access to it. The success of our students has a direct impact on the success of our country as new graduates enter the job market, which will increase the tax base so that all citizens can benefit from service delivery, access to healthcare and other important services,” he said.

“The appointment of Werner Abrahams as CEO of ISFAP marks an exciting new chapter for the organisation, and we are confident that his expertise and alignment with ISFAP vision and culture will significantly contribute to our overall success. We look forward to the positive impact he will bring to our organisation and the higher education sector,” Nxasana concluded.

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\*\*About ISFAP\*\*

The Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme Foundation NPC (ISFAP) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to funding and supporting the higher education of South Africa’s poor and middle-class students. Established in 2017, ISFAP partners with various universities and private sector entities to ensure that students in need can access and succeed in higher education, contributing to the nation’s economic development.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.isfap.org.za>