THE MAMELODI INITIATIVE

Learn. Grow. Dream. Achieve.

2026

Winter Jam Report

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Executive Summary

Winter Jam 2026



Program & Reach

Winter Jam 2026 ran over three weeks, providing learners with a structured holiday program supported by volunteers, administrators, staff, and YLC members. The program continued to engage learners from across the Mamelodi community through academic support, leadership, and other developmental activities.

Academic outcomes

Winter Jam 2026 showed encouraging academic outcomes, with statistically significant improvements in English essay-writing performance among Grade 6 and Grade 9 learners. Grade 6 learners' mean essay scores increased from 2.63 to 5.13 out of 10, while Grade 9 learners' scores increased from 4.00 to 6.22. These improvements were statistically significant ($p = 0.0066$ and $p = 0.0024$, respectively). The results suggest that Winter Jam provided valuable opportunities for learners to strengthen their writing skills, although outcomes varied across grades. The findings also highlight the importance of continued academic support and consistent assessment to better understand learner progress.

Volunteers & operations

Volunteers were trained before the program and generally reported feeling prepared for their roles. Catering was provided by Spar, with the removal of individually supplied juice reducing the initial catering quotation from R217,126.40 to R161,488.20. Food collection and delivery improved significantly compared to previous jams. Learner and volunteer feedback on food was mostly positive, although seasoning, variety, dry meals, and dietary requirements remain areas for improvement. YLC learners also supported operations through breakfast sales as part of their fundraising activities.

Finance & next steps

Winter Jam 2026 included several fundraising activities led by the YLC, including breakfast sales and contributions collected during the final-day event. The program also successfully raised **R12,303 through BackaBuddy**, although this amount is not reflected in the current financial records, as it had not yet been transferred into the organization's account. Going forward, MI will continue strengthening catering arrangements, volunteer coordination, stakeholder communication, and the management of dietary requirements.

1. Introduction

Winter Jam 2026 (WJ26) was an important period of learning, growth, and community engagement for The Mamelodi Initiative (MI). The program brought together learners, volunteers, parents, and partners to provide academic support, personal development, and a safe, structured environment during the winter school holidays.

This report presents an overview of the planning, implementation, and outcomes of Winter Jam 2026. It also reflects on program feedback, financial performance, learner and volunteer experiences, stakeholder input, key challenges, and areas for improvement. The findings and lessons from the program will help strengthen MI's future programs and year-round support for learners.



Photo 2: Some of our volunteers during their closing social.

2. Winter Jam 2026 Planning Process

The planning process for Winter Jam 2026 was an important part of preparing for a program of this size and duration. Planning extended beyond developing the academic timetable and involved coordinating the venue, learner registration, volunteer recruitment and preparation, fundraising, catering, classroom arrangements, logistics, and the overall operational systems required to support the program.

The planning process also reflected a growing understanding within MI that, as Winter Jam continues to grow, program development must be supported by equally strong operational systems. One of the key lessons identified by the program director was that the organization has become more experienced in running the program, but the next stage of growth requires greater intention around the systems behind it.

2.1 Planning for learners and the academic program

A significant part of the planning process focused on understanding the learners who would participate in Winter Jam 2026. Registration and pre-testing were deliberately included at the beginning of the program to provide an early indication of learner numbers, academic needs, and the level at which teaching would need to begin. This information later became useful for class placement, learner support, and grouping learners according to their academic needs.



Photo 3: Volunteer Closing

This approach was important because Winter Jam brings together both returning and new learners, often with different academic levels, personalities, and support needs. The planning process therefore had to allow enough flexibility for adjustments once the actual learner group became clearer.

The program director also noted that while the planned academic content was covered, the experience highlighted the importance of preparation before volunteers enter the classroom. A strong curriculum alone is not enough; volunteers also need to understand the content, their learners, and the classroom environment well enough to respond confidently to different needs.

2.2 Volunteer recruitment and preparation

Volunteer planning remained central to the success of Winter Jam. The program depended on having enough volunteers to support learners across different grades, subjects, and classrooms. Volunteer training was therefore used to prepare volunteers for their roles before the program began.

However, planning for volunteer capacity proved to be an important lesson. As the program progressed, some volunteers had to return to school earlier than expected, which reduced the number of available volunteers and placed greater pressure on those who remained. In some instances, the number of learners exceeded the available volunteer capacity, making classroom management more difficult, particularly for first-time volunteers.



Photo 4: Volunteers and learners dancing

This experience showed that future planning should not only focus on recruiting enough volunteers to start the program but also on building in additional capacity to account for absences, changing commitments, and the intensity of a long program. The program director has therefore proposed increasing the volunteer target for future Winter Jams to provide greater flexibility and allow for smaller, more manageable classes.

Volunteer feedback also highlighted the importance of clearer communication during the preparation stage. Some volunteers wanted more clarity around the curriculum, lesson planning, class admin responsibilities, and the procedures they were expected to follow. These issues were generally addressed during the program, but the feedback suggests that some of this clarity should be established earlier in the planning process.

2.3 Operational and logistical planning

Winter Jam 2026 required detailed planning around the practical systems needed to run the program every day. This included classroom allocation, volunteer responsibilities, learner registers, program schedules, daily communication, and the distribution of resources.

The experience showed that small operational gaps can have a direct impact on the academic program. For example, volunteer feedback raised concerns about unclear class admin procedures and the timing of administrative activities such as taking registers, which could sometimes interrupt lessons or result in time being lost.

This highlights an important planning lesson: operational procedures need to be finalized and communicated before the program begins wherever possible. Clear systems reduce confusion and allow volunteers to spend more time focusing on learners rather than trying to resolve avoidable administrative issues during the program.

2.4 Planning as an ongoing process

One of the most important lessons from Winter Jam 2026 is that planning does not end when the program begins. Several issues only became fully visible once learners and volunteers were in the program environment. The first week, particularly the second day, demonstrated the need for flexibility and ongoing adjustment. Volunteers experienced challenges with classroom management, but the daily debrief process created an opportunity to identify these problems early and respond before they became more serious.

As the program progressed, volunteers and learners became more settled, communication improved, and the daily structure became easier to manage. This demonstrated the value of combining pre-program planning with continuous monitoring and adjustment during implementation.

2.4.1 Key planning lessons

The Winter Jam 2026 planning process provided several important lessons for future programs:

- Volunteer preparation should be strengthened and made more practical
- Volunteer capacity planning should allow for unexpected changes and absences
- Classroom allocation should be based as far as possible on learner numbers and needs

- Roles and responsibilities, particularly for class admins, should be clarified before the program begins;
- Operational procedures should be finalized early to reduce disruption during lessons;
- assessment and registration data should continue to inform learner grouping and academic support; and
- Planning should include strong systems for accountability, communication, learner safety, parent engagement, and post-program follow-up.

Overall, the Winter Jam 2026 planning process provided a strong foundation for the program, but it also demonstrated that the scale of Winter Jam is increasing and that its planning systems must continue to develop alongside it. The program was successfully delivered, and many of the challenges that emerged were managed through flexibility, daily communication, and the willingness of the team to adjust.

3. The Winter Jam 2026 (WJ26)

This section brings together the volunteer feedback during Winter Jam 2026, alongside hard data on learner and volunteer attendance and the schools our learners came from. Using end-of-program surveys, daily registers, and our central database, we review training and role readiness, day-to-day support, and areas to improve; we also map who showed up, how often, and from which schools. The aim is simple: to understand what worked well for volunteers on the ground was to spot gaps that affected attendance or delivery (especially in a holiday context with uneven schedules) and to use the school distribution to guide outreach so that the next program is easier to run and reaches more learners more fairly.

3.1 Program Learner Reach

By the second week, 380 learners had registered, supported by 55 volunteers on the ground. This represented a substantial coordination effort, involving the management of learner registration, classroom allocation, volunteer deployment, academic activities, and the daily needs of a large group of young people.

The school distribution records identified learners from **80 schools**, with 329 learners represented in that breakdown. The five schools with the highest recorded representation were:

Table 1: **Top 5 schools represented at WJ26**

School	Learners
Solomon Mahlangu (Freedom School/Secondary)	34
Lehlabile Secondary School	30
Ribane Laka	29
Gatang Secondary School	28
Vlakfontein Secondary School	22

The remaining learners were drawn from a further 75 schools. Notably, 37 schools had one learner represented in the distribution. This spread is significant because it shows that Winter Jam was not limited to learners from a handful of schools. It attracted participation from a broad range of educational institutions, creating an opportunity for learners from different school communities to access additional academic support.

3.2 Volunteer Recruitment and Contribution

Volunteers are central to the delivery of Winter Jam. They provide much of the direct support learners receive, from assisting with lessons and facilitating classroom activities to mentoring learners and helping with the day-to-day running of the program.

Recruitment for Winter Jam 2026 was encouraging. Applications exceeded expectations, and the application process was closed before the planned deadline at the end of May once the available spaces had been filled. The volunteer application records also show a mix of first-time and returning volunteers, including individuals who had previously participated in MI programs as learners.

This cycle of participation is particularly meaningful. Some volunteers returned to the program having once been learners themselves. Their involvement represents more than additional capacity for the program: it demonstrates how young people who have benefited from community-based educational support can return and contribute to the development of others.

The volunteer pool included university and college students, working individuals, and aspiring educators. Applicants identified strengths and interests in subjects including mathematics, mathematics literacy, English, and grade 12 support. Their wider interests included sport, public speaking, debating, music, and other activities that could contribute to the learners' experience beyond the classroom.

During the second week, **55 volunteers were actively on the ground**. Their responsibilities included administration, tutoring, classroom assistance, workshops, and mentoring. This range of responsibilities was important to the program's delivery, as volunteers supported both the academic activities and the operational work required to keep the program running.



Photo 5: Learners during one of the class sessions

3.2.1 Volunteer Training

Volunteer training was an important part of the preparation for Winter Jam 2026. The training introduced volunteers to their roles and responsibilities and covered cultural awareness, the code of conduct, community asset mapping, curriculum and subject allocation, as well as other expectations for working with learners.

Overall, the feedback was positive. Of the 45 volunteers who completed the training evaluation, 40 volunteers (88.9%) rated the overall training program as either excellent or good, while only five (11.1%) rated it as fair. The strongest-rated components were the code of conduct and community asset mapping, cultural awareness, and the welcome session and icebreaker. The curriculum training and subject-splitting session received more mixed feedback, suggesting that this was an area requiring greater clarity and practical support.



Figure 3.1: Volunteer Assessment of Training Components

3.2.2 Volunteer readiness

Most volunteers indicated that they felt ready to begin tutoring after the training. **34 volunteers (75.6%) said yes,** while five (**11.1%**) were unsure and six (**13.3%**) did not yet feel fully prepared.

The feedback shows that volunteers valued the training on conduct, safeguarding, cultural awareness, and their responsibilities within the organization. However, some volunteers felt that the training was too theoretical and recommended more practical preparation, including role-playing, real-life scenarios, tutoring practice, and opportunities to shadow experienced tutors. One volunteer specifically noted that more practical tutoring would help them feel more confident.

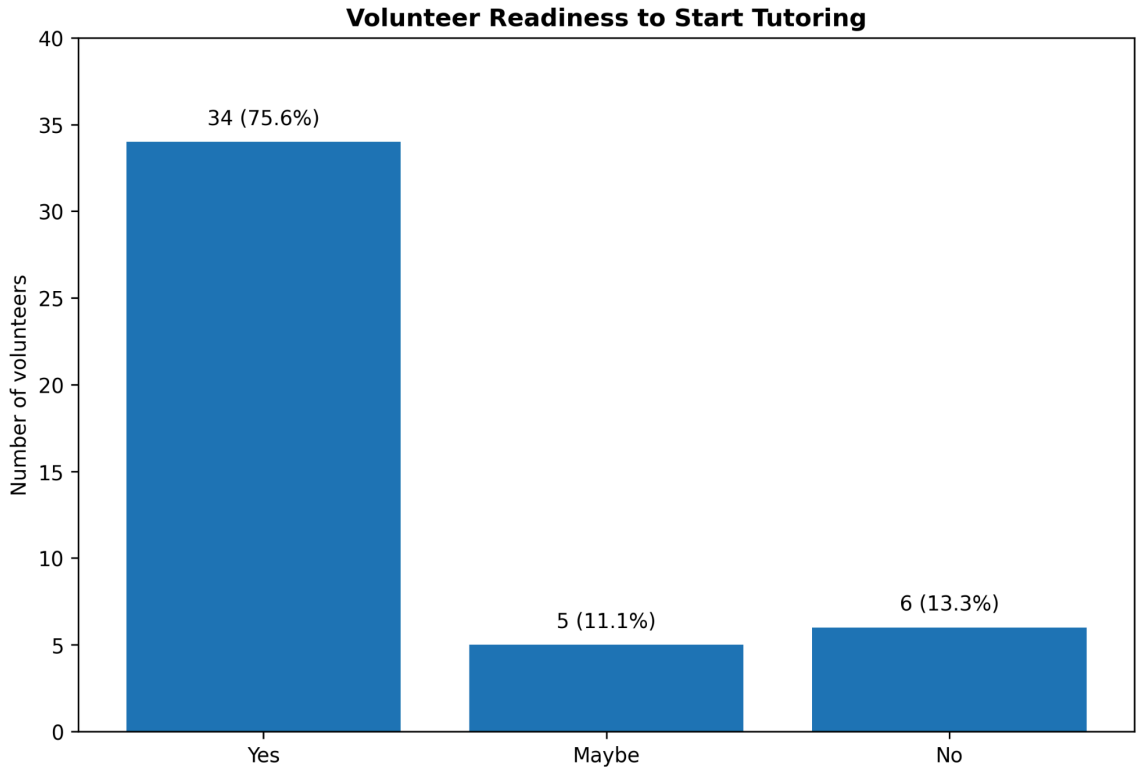


Figure 3.2: Volunteer Readiness to Start Tutoring

3.2.3 What the program experience showed

The importance of continued volunteer support became clearer during the first week of Winter Jam. The program director reported that the second day of the program was particularly challenging for some volunteers, especially around classroom management and learner behavior. The afternoon debrief created an opportunity for volunteers to openly discuss these challenges, and the situation improved as volunteers became more familiar with their learners and classroom dynamics.

This supports the program director's broader recommendation that MI should continue strengthening volunteer preparation, classroom allocation, and volunteer capacity planning.

3.2.4 Overall assessment

Volunteer training provided a strong foundation for Winter Jam 2026. The feedback shows that the training was generally well received and that most volunteers felt prepared to participate. The main lesson for future programs is that training should become more **practical and continuous**.

Future training should therefore place greater emphasis on practical tutoring and classroom management, role-playing and real-life scenarios, supporting first-time tutors, clearer subject and class allocation, and continued support and debriefing during the program itself.

3.3 Overall Winter Jam 2026 Volunteer Feedback

The overall volunteer feedback provides a positive picture of the Winter Jam 2026 experience. Food and breakfast feedback have been excluded from this analysis, as this is addressed separately in the catering section. A total of 58 valid overall experience responses were analyzed. The average rating for the overall Winter Jam experience was 4.28 out of 5, with 87.9% of volunteers rating their experience as either Good (4) or Excellent (5). Only one volunteer gave the program a rating of 2, while no volunteer rated their overall experience as 1.

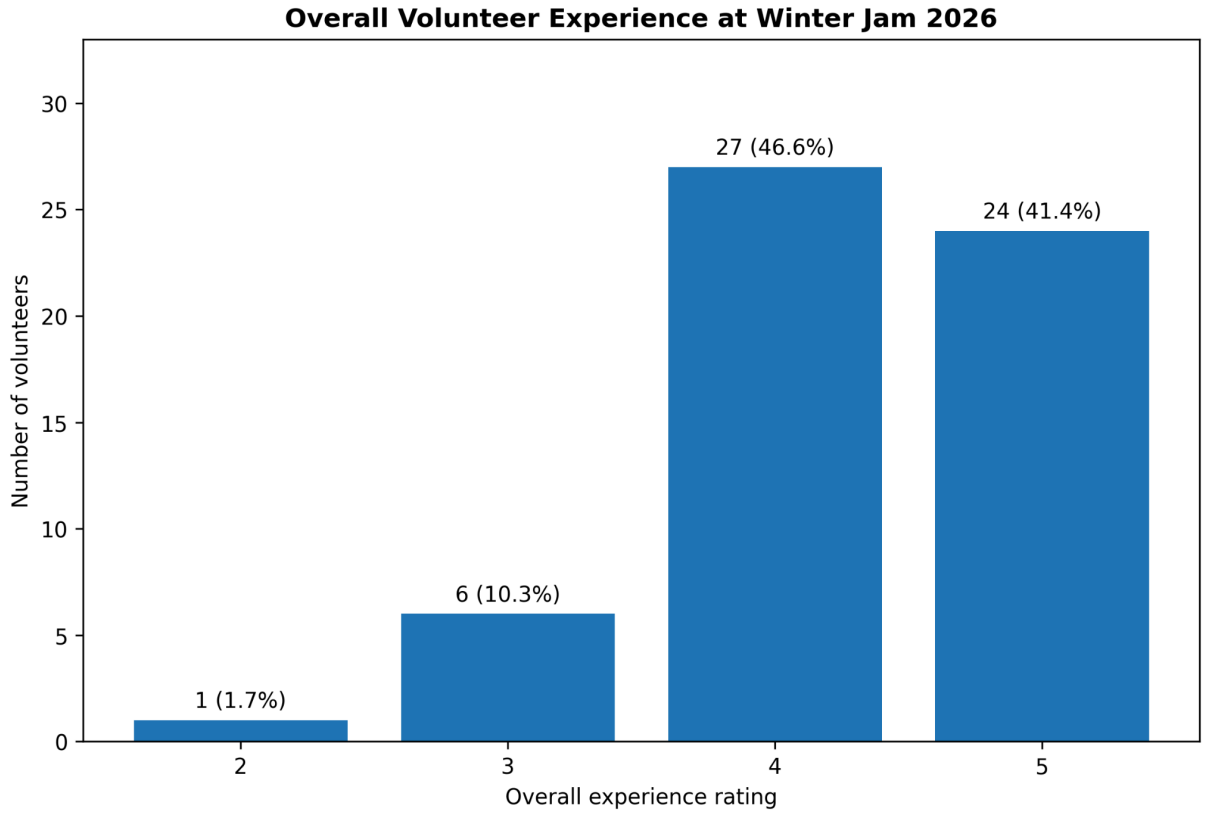


Figure 3.3: Overall Volunteer Experience at Winter Jam 2026

3.3.1 Support, value, and commitment

The feedback shows that volunteers generally felt supported and valued throughout the program. 77.6% stated that they always felt supported by the MI staff team, while 82.8% said that they felt respected and

valued in their roles. The strongest indication of overall satisfaction was the willingness of volunteers to return. 56 out of 58 respondents (96.6%) said that they would volunteer with MI again.

Volunteers also felt that their contribution mattered. 87.9% believed that they had made a positive impact, with many describing their most meaningful experiences as working with learners, seeing learners become more confident, building relationships, and contributing to the Mamelodi community. This supports the program director's reflection that Winter Jam is about more than academic support; it also creates opportunities for learners and volunteers to grow, take responsibility, and contribute meaningfully.

3.3.2 Role clarity and daily operations

Most volunteers understood what was expected of them. 79.3% indicated that their roles and responsibilities were clear, while 89.7% found the daily schedule manageable. However, the feedback also identified areas where clearer systems would improve the volunteer experience. Some volunteers wanted clearer responsibilities and procedures, particularly for class admins, while others raised concerns about how and when administrative activities, such as taking registers, were conducted during the academic program.

This aligns with the program director's conclusion that future programs require better classroom allocation, clearer accountability structures, and stronger operational planning.

3.3.3 Teamwork and communication

The feedback on teamwork was generally positive. Many volunteers described their teams as supportive, cooperative, and enjoyable to work with. Communication within the wider volunteer group also improved as the program progressed. The program director noted that volunteers became more active in responding to information, raising concerns, and assisting where support was needed.

At the same time, teamwork was not consistent across all groups. Some volunteers reported poor communication, cliques, and unresolved disagreements within teams. One volunteer described having to call a meeting to encourage their team to work together, while another noted that some groups struggled to communicate and resolve issues before they became bigger problems.

This suggests that MI should continue strengthening team communication, conflict resolution, and shared accountability, particularly among smaller volunteer teams and class groups.

3.3.4 Challenges experienced by volunteers

The most significant challenges raised related to classroom and learner behavior, managing larger groups of learners, inconsistent teamwork and communication, unclear procedures in some administrative roles, and accountability when volunteers did not fulfill their responsibilities.

Classroom management was particularly challenging during the early stages of the program. The program director noted that the second day resulted in an emotional volunteer debrief, where several volunteers openly shared difficulties with learner behavior and classroom management. However, these discussions

allowed the team to respond early, and the situation improved as volunteers became more familiar with their learners and classroom environments.

3.3.5 Overall assessment

The volunteer feedback confirms that Winter Jam 2026 was a positive and meaningful experience for the majority of volunteers. The strongest results were seen in volunteers' willingness to return, their sense of positive impact, and the manageability of the daily program.

Table 2: ***Key Volunteer Experience Indicators***

Indicator	Positive result
Overall experience rated 4 or 5	**87.9%**
Felt supported by MI staff at all times	**77.6%**
Roles and responsibilities were clear	**79.3%**
Felt respected and valued	**82.8%**
Daily schedule was manageable	**89.7%**
Felt they made a positive impact	**87.9%**
Would volunteer with MI again	**96.6%**

The main areas for improvement are not necessarily about the purpose or value of Winter Jam, but rather about the systems supporting the people delivering it. As the program continues to grow, greater attention should be given to clearer role allocation, stronger teamwork, practical classroom support, communication, and accountability.

3.4 Curriculum and Academic Program

The academic component of Winter Jam 2026 was designed to identify learners' existing academic needs, group learners according to their levels, and provide focused teaching and revision before the final assessment. The program covered learners from **Grade 6 to Grade 12**, with mathematics and English forming the core subjects used for the pre- and post-assessment process.

3.4.1 Pre-Assessment and Learner Grouping

On the first day of Winter Jam, learners in grades 6–12 completed standardized **mathematics and English pre-tests**. The same tests were used across the grades to establish a baseline of learner performance. Because learners arrived in two batches, the pre-testing process was completed over the first two days of the program.

Volunteers were required to mark the first batch of assessments on the Monday so that the results could be used immediately to inform classroom placement. This allowed the program team to move away from simply grouping learners according to their school grade and instead consider their demonstrated academic ability.

For **Grades 6–9**, learners were placed into **two classes per grade according to their pre-test results**. This created more focused teaching groups and allowed volunteers to work with learners who had broadly similar levels of understanding.

For the **FET phase (Grades 10–12)**, learners were organized into three academic streams:

- **Science Stream**
- **Commerce Stream**
- **General Stream**

Within these streams, learners continued with subjects relevant to their academic pathways.

3.4.2 Curriculum Structure

The curriculum was structured differently across the phases of the program. For Grades 6–9, the core academic program focused on mathematics, English, and natural sciences. The FET program provided mathematics/mathematical literacy and English, alongside subjects aligned with each learner's chosen stream.

Table 3: ***Winter Jam Curriculum***

Phase	Core Academic Subjects	Additional Subjects
Grades 6–9	Mathematics, English	Natural Sciences
Grades 10–12 – Science	Mathematics/Math Literacy, English	Life Sciences, Physics
Grades 10–12 – Commerce	Mathematics/Math Literacy, English	Business, Economics, Accounting
Grades 10–12 – General	Mathematics/Math Literacy, English	History, Geography, Life Sciences, Business, Tourism

This structure allowed Winter Jam to maintain a common academic foundation while recognizing that FET learners have different subject choices and academic pathways.

3.4.3 Teaching and Revision Approach

The FET curriculum did not follow one uniform mathematics and English curriculum throughout the three weeks. Instead, learners worked through their **respective grade and subject curricula**, with the program using the second week to introduce focused revision based on the MI assessment requirements.

This was particularly important because the final assessment was intended to measure whether learners had made progress during the program. By the middle of Week 2, teaching increasingly incorporated revision of the areas that learners would encounter in the post-tests.

The approach therefore followed a simple progression:

Pre-test → Ability-based grouping → Targeted teaching → Revision → Post-test

3.4.4 A Typical Academic Day

The academic program generally began at **09:30**, following the morning assembly, and provided approximately three hours of structured subject teaching before lunch.

Table 4: ***Grades 6–9 timetable***

Time	**Subject**
09:30–10:30	Mathematics
10:30–11:30	English
11:30–12:30	Natural Sciences
12:30	Lunch

For grades 10–12, the first two periods remained focused on mathematics/mathematical literacy and English, followed by a stream-specific subject.

The afternoon program then moved away from formal academic lessons and included **workshops and afternoon challenges**, providing learners with opportunities for personal development, practical learning, and interaction outside the classroom.

3.4.5 Post-Assessment

The post-tests were administered during **Week 3 on Tuesday**. The intention was to measure changes in learner performance following the teaching, revision, and academic support provided during Winter Jam.

The use of pre- and post-assessments provided MI with an important opportunity to move beyond attendance figures and assess whether learners demonstrated measurable academic progress during the program.

3.4.6 Curriculum Reflection

The 2026 approach demonstrated the value of using assessment data to inform learner grouping and teaching. Rather than placing all learners within a grade into the same learning environment, Grades 6–9 were divided according to their demonstrated performance. The FET stream structure also allowed learners to receive support that was more closely aligned with their chosen academic pathways.

Going forward, the assessment results will be particularly important in determining whether these grouping and curriculum decisions produced the intended academic gains. They will also help MI identify which subjects, grades, and content areas require greater attention in future Jams.

3.5 Mathematics Pre-Assessment

The mathematics assessment process for Winter Jam 2026 was designed to establish learners' existing mathematical knowledge and identify areas requiring additional support. Learners from Grade 6 to Grade 12 completed pre- and post-assessments to help us track changes in performance and assess progress across foundational mathematical skills. The pre-assessment established a baseline before classroom grouping and teaching began, while the post-assessment provided an opportunity to evaluate changes following learners' participation in the program. This section analyzes overall performance, topic-specific improvements, and statistically significant changes, highlighting encouraging outcomes while identifying areas for continued reinforcement to strengthen learners' mathematical foundations.



Photo 6: ***Some of our matric learners during a class session***

3.5.1 Mathematics Pre- and Post-Assessment

As part of the academic assessment process, all Winter Jam 2026 learners from **Grade 6 to Grade 12** completed a mathematics pre-assessment at the beginning of the program. The assessment was designed as a **foundations-based test**, allowing MI to establish a common baseline of learners' mathematical understanding before classroom grouping and teaching began.

The assessment covered a progression of foundational mathematical skills rather than focusing on one particular grade's curriculum. This included addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, followed by work with fractions, mixed operations, negative numbers, and order of operations. The structure therefore moved from basic numerical operations towards more complex manipulation and reasoning.

3.5.1.1 Areas Assessed

The 40-question assessment was broadly divided into the following areas:

Table 5: ***Skill sets in the mathematics test***

Section	Questions	Skills assessed
Addition	1–3	Whole-number addition, including larger numbers
Subtraction	4–6	Whole-number subtraction
Multiplication	7–11	Basic and multi-digit multiplication
Division	12–16	Division, including long division
Fractions	17–21	Reducing and simplifying fractions; converting mixed and improper fractions
Fraction operations	22–26	Addition and subtraction involving fractions and related fraction concepts
Fraction multiplication & division	27–31	Multiplication and division of fractions
Negative numbers	32–34	Operations involving negative numbers
Order of operations	35–40	Applying the correct sequence of mathematical operations

The first section of the paper therefore assessed learners' fluency with the **four basic operations**. Questions 1–16 progressed from relatively straightforward calculations to larger numbers and long-division problems. For division, learners were allowed to provide answers either as remainders or as reduced fractions.

Questions 17–31 moved into **fraction concepts and operations**. Learners were required to reduce and simplify fractions, convert between mixed and improper fractions, and perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with fractions. The instructions specifically required fractions to be fully reduced and expressed in the appropriate form.

The final section focused on **integers and order of operations**. Learners had to work with negative numbers and apply multiplication and other operations involving positive and negative values. The final questions required learners to apply the correct order of operations when more than one operation appeared in a calculation.

3.5.1.2 Assessment Progression

The structure of the paper provided a useful progression from **basic computational fluency to more complex numerical reasoning**:

Basic Operations → Fractions → Fraction Operations → Integers → Order of Operations

This progression was particularly useful for Winter Jam because it allowed MI to identify foundational gaps that could affect learners' ability to engage successfully with more advanced mathematics.

The pre-test results were also used to inform the ability-based grouping of Grades 6–9, with two classes created per grade according to learners' performance. This meant that the assessment served not only as a measurement tool but also as a practical tool for determining how teaching could be differentiated during the program.

The same 40-mark paper was used for the post-test, allowing the program team to compare performance against a common baseline. The academic analysis that follows will therefore examine the changes between pre- and post-test performance and identify where the program appears to have strengthened learners' foundational mathematics skills.

3.5.2 English Pre-Assessment

The English assessment was designed to provide a consistent measure of learner performance before and after Winter Jam 2026. The pre-test and post-test followed the same structure, format, and level of difficulty, although the questions and written prompts were different. This allowed the program to compare changes in learners' performance without simply testing their ability to remember the original questions.

The assessment covered three main areas:

- Sentence Construction: Four multiple-choice questions assessed learners' understanding and use of basic English sentence structures, including grammar, word choice, and correct sentence formation.
- Reading Comprehension: Ten multiple-choice questions were based on a reading passage. Questions progressed from basic understanding and vocabulary to higher-order skills such as identifying the main idea, extracting information, applying information from the text, and interpreting the author's message or tone.
- Essay Writing: Learners selected one of three writing prompts. The prompts assessed their ability to develop ideas, organize their thoughts, and communicate meaning in writing. Topics included personal aspirations, an influential person, or identifying and solving a community problem.

The written component was assessed using two five-point rubrics: writing mechanics (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) and content (relevance, development, and depth of ideas). These scores were combined to produce an overall essay score out of 10, which could also be used to support learner-level grouping. The assessment recorded the number of correct, incorrect, and blank responses for the multiple-choice sections, as well as the number of sentences and paragraphs in each essay.

Overall, the assessment was intended not only to measure learners' English proficiency but also to identify specific areas of strength and learning gaps that could inform classroom grouping, teaching, and revision during the program.

3.6 Academic Performance

Academic development remained a key element of the program, with learners engaging in structured mathematics and English activities to strengthen their foundational knowledge, problem-solving skills, literacy, and academic confidence. Pre- and post-assessments were used to understand changes in learner performance over the course of the WJ26 program.



Photo 7: ***Grade 12 class session***

The assessment results provide several encouraging indications of academic growth. In mathematics, particularly notable improvements were observed in division and fraction skills, while English results showed meaningful gains in essay writing among Grades 6 and 9. These results are particularly important because essay writing requires learners to combine several skills at once, including comprehension, organization, vocabulary, sentence construction, and the ability to communicate ideas in writing.

The results should be understood within the context of the program. Learners entered the program with different levels of prior knowledge and familiarity with formal assessment. In the younger grades especially, some of the challenges observed during the pre- and post-tests appeared to relate not only to subject knowledge but also to test-taking skills, interpreting questions, managing time, and understanding what was

being asked of them. As learners became more familiar with the assessment environment and the program's expectations, some demonstrated substantial improvement.

3.6.1 Mathematics

Mathematics results show a particularly encouraging pattern, with learners making progress from relatively low starting points. The most notable improvements were seen in Grades 6, 10 and 11 at the overall level, while several specific mathematical topics showed statistically significant gains across Grades 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

3.6.1.1 Overall Mathematics Progress

The strongest overall movement was recorded among Grade 10 learners. Their average mathematics score increased from 6.47/40 before the program to 10.67/40 after the program, representing an increase of 4.20 marks. This change was statistically significant ($p = 0.0053$).

This is particularly important because the improvement was not simply the result of a small increase in one isolated area. Grade 10 learners demonstrated substantial gains in several areas of the assessment, particularly Division and Fractions, which contributed meaningfully to their overall improvement.

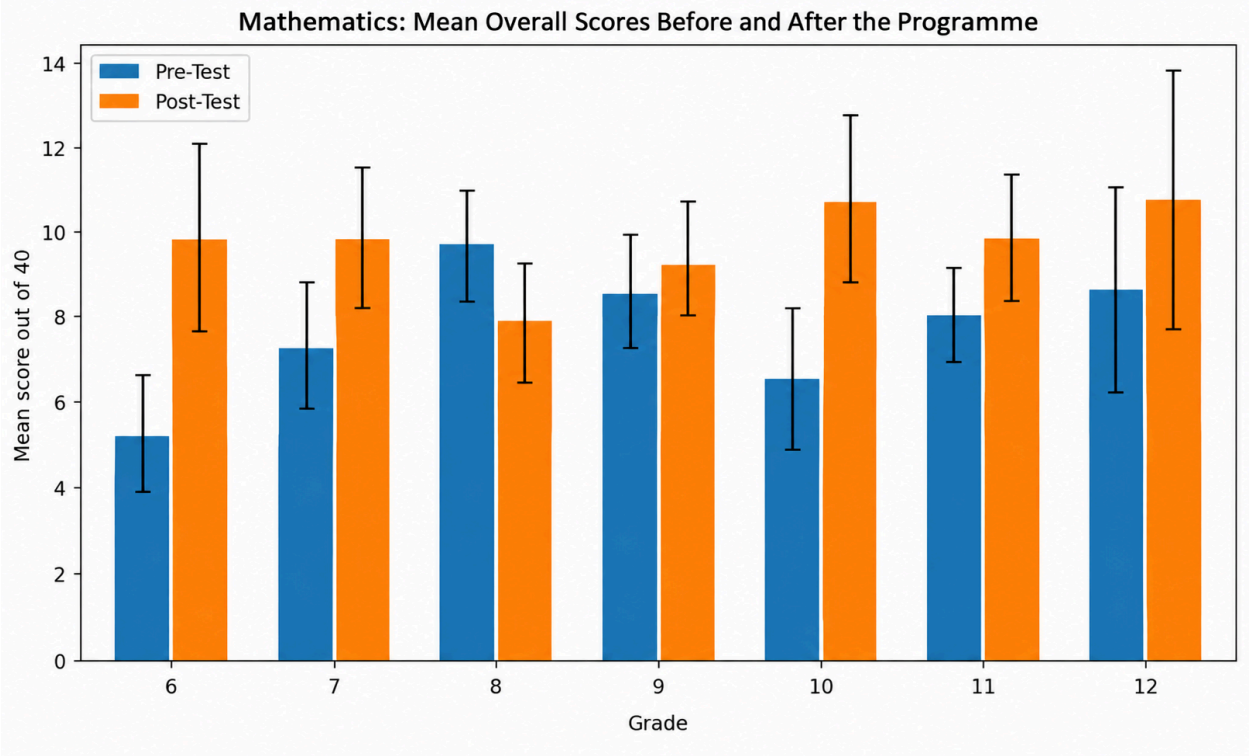


Figure 3.4: Mathematics—Mean Overall Scores Before and After the Program. NOTE: Grade 8 test conditions resulted in unreliable data (suspected calculator use in pre-test; p = 0.16). Error bars represent +/- standard deviation (SD) around each grade's mean score

The graph illustrates the movement in mean overall mathematics scores across Grades 6–12, with error bars providing an indication of the variation around the mean scores. The overall pattern shows particularly strong upward movement in Grades 6 and 10, with further positive movement among Grades 7, 9, 11, and 12.

Grade 8 requires particular caution when interpreting the graph. The Grade 8 assessment results were affected by concerns about the pre-test conditions, with suspected calculator use during the pre-test. This means that the Grade 8 pre-test score may not provide a reliable baseline for comparison with the post-test. The observed change was not statistically significant ($p = 0.16$), and the Grade 8 results have therefore not been used as evidence of either improvement or decline in the program's academic outcomes. The results are retained in the graph for transparency but should be interpreted with caution.

For **Grade 6,** the mean mathematics score increased from 5.17/40 to 9.83/40, an improvement of 4.67 marks. This overall change was statistically significant ($p = 0.0395$). Given the relatively low starting point, the increase represents meaningful movement in learners' foundational mathematical performance. The particularly great improvement in Division further supports this finding.

Grade 10 recorded the largest statistically significant overall gain, increasing by 4.20 marks. This was accompanied by significant gains in specific mathematical areas, particularly division and fractions, suggesting that the improvement reflected development across important areas of mathematical understanding rather than a single isolated skill.

Grade 11 also recorded positive overall movement, with the mean score increasing from 8.03/40 to 9.86/40, an increase of 1.83 marks. This overall improvement was statistically significant ($p = 0.0359$). The strongest specific contribution to this movement was the significant improvement in division.

Grade 7 increased from 7.33/40 to 9.80/40, an increase of 2.47 marks. Although the overall p-value of 0.0529 falls just above the conventional 0.05 threshold, the direction and size of the change remain encouraging. This is particularly relevant when considered alongside the statistically significant improvement in Division ($p = 0.0472$).

Grade 9 showed a smaller but positive overall movement, with the mean score increasing from approximately 8.53/40 to 9.28/40. While the overall change was not statistically significant, the Grade 9 results are particularly encouraging at the topic level. Learners recorded statistically significant gains across division and all three areas of fractions, demonstrating progress in more advanced mathematical concepts.

Grade 12 also moved upwards, from 8.57/40 to 10.71/40, an increase of 2.14 marks. While the overall change was not statistically significant, the small Grade 12 sample means that the result should be interpreted cautiously. Importantly, learners did actually demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in the addition and subtraction of fractions, an area requiring more advanced mathematical reasoning.

Taken together, the positive results indicate that the program supported meaningful movement in mathematics, particularly in foundational computation and fraction skills. The repeated improvement in division across several grades, together with the significant gains in fractions among grades 9, 10, and 12, provides some of the clearest evidence of academic progress during the program.

3.6.1.2 Strengthening Foundational Mathematics

One of the clearest themes in the mathematics results is the improvement in division. Division showed statistically significant improvement in Grade 6 (+2.33 marks, p = 0.0335), Grade 7 (+0.80 marks, p = 0.0472), Grade 9 (+0.63 marks, p = 0.0435), Grade 10 (+1.93 marks, p = 0.0003), and Grade 11 (+0.97 marks, p = 0.0036).

This represents an important pattern because division was initially one of the weaker areas for learners. The results suggest that learners in several grades were able to make measurable progress in applying fundamental computational skills.

The improvement was particularly pronounced in Grade 10, where the average Division score increased from 0.47/5 to 2.40/5. In percentage terms, this represents movement from approximately 9% to 48% of the available marks.

Similarly, Grade 6 learners moved from an average Division score of 0/5 to 2.33/5, while Grade 7 learners moved from 0.60/5 to 1.40/5. These changes are meaningful because they represent learners beginning to demonstrate competence in an area where their initial performance was very limited.

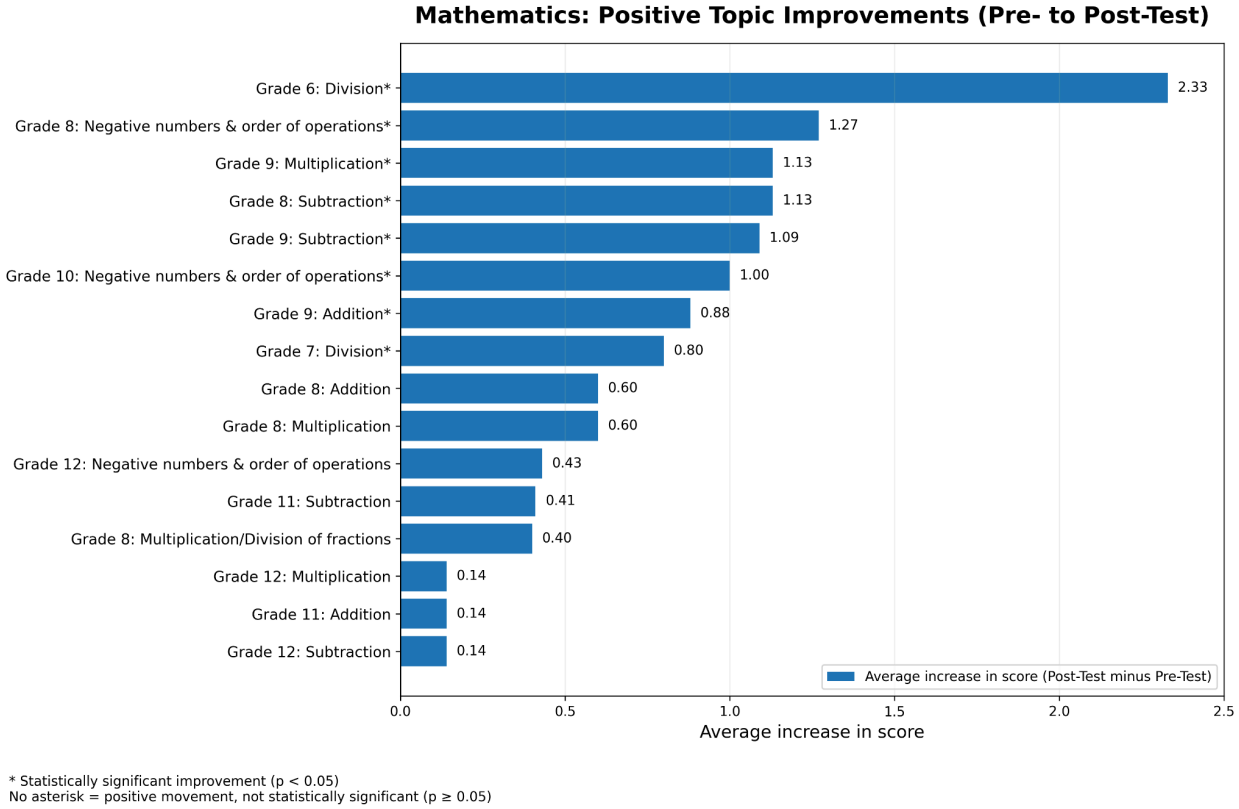


Figure 3.5: Mathematics – Statistically Significant Topic Gains

The numbers at the ends of the bars show the average increase in marks from the pre-test to the post-test. An asterisk (*) indicates a statistically significant improvement. The paired tests compare learners' results across the two assessments, using learners with both pre- and post-test scores. As Grade 12 has a relatively small sample, its results should be interpreted with particular care.

3.6.1.3 Progress in Fractions and Order of Operations (BODMAS/PEMDAS) Thinking

The topic-level mathematics analysis provides a more detailed view of the areas in which learners demonstrated progress between the pre-test and post-test. Rather than comparing overall scores alone, this graph highlights specific topics where the average score increased, helping to identify areas of learning that may have responded positively to the program.

One of the most encouraging findings was the improvement in Division. **Grade 6** recorded an average increase of approximately 2.33 marks, followed by **Grade 10** with an increase of approximately 1.93 marks and **Grade 8** with an increase of approximately 1.73 marks. Division also showed statistically significant improvement in **Grades 7, 9, and 11**. The consistency of these gains across several grades makes Division an important area of progress in the assessment results.

Learners also demonstrated gains in work with fractions. **Grade 9** showed statistically significant improvements in fractions, including addition and subtraction, as well as multiplication and division. **Grade 10** also recorded a significant improvement in fractions, while **Grade 12** showed a significant increase in the addition and subtraction of fractions. These results are encouraging because working with fractions requires learners to apply mathematical procedures accurately and draw on their understanding of numerical relationships.

Other positive changes were observed in addition, subtraction, and multiplication in selected grades. For example, **Grade 6** showed an increase in its average subtraction score, while **Grades 6 and 10** demonstrated positive movement in multiplication. Although not every increase reached statistical significance, these changes help identify areas where learners may be developing their understanding and where continued practice could support further progress.

The asterisks on the graph identify improvements that were statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This means that the paired statistical tests provided evidence of a meaningful change in those topics. Other bars represent positive average changes that did not meet this statistical threshold and should therefore be interpreted more cautiously.

3.6.2 English: Essay-Writing Skills

The English assessment focused specifically on essay writing, providing an opportunity to examine learners' ability to communicate ideas in written form. The updated results show encouraging gains in essay writing among **Grades 6 and 9**, with both grades recording statistically significant improvements. The graph also includes all grades for which paired assessment data were available, providing a complete view of the English essay-writing results.

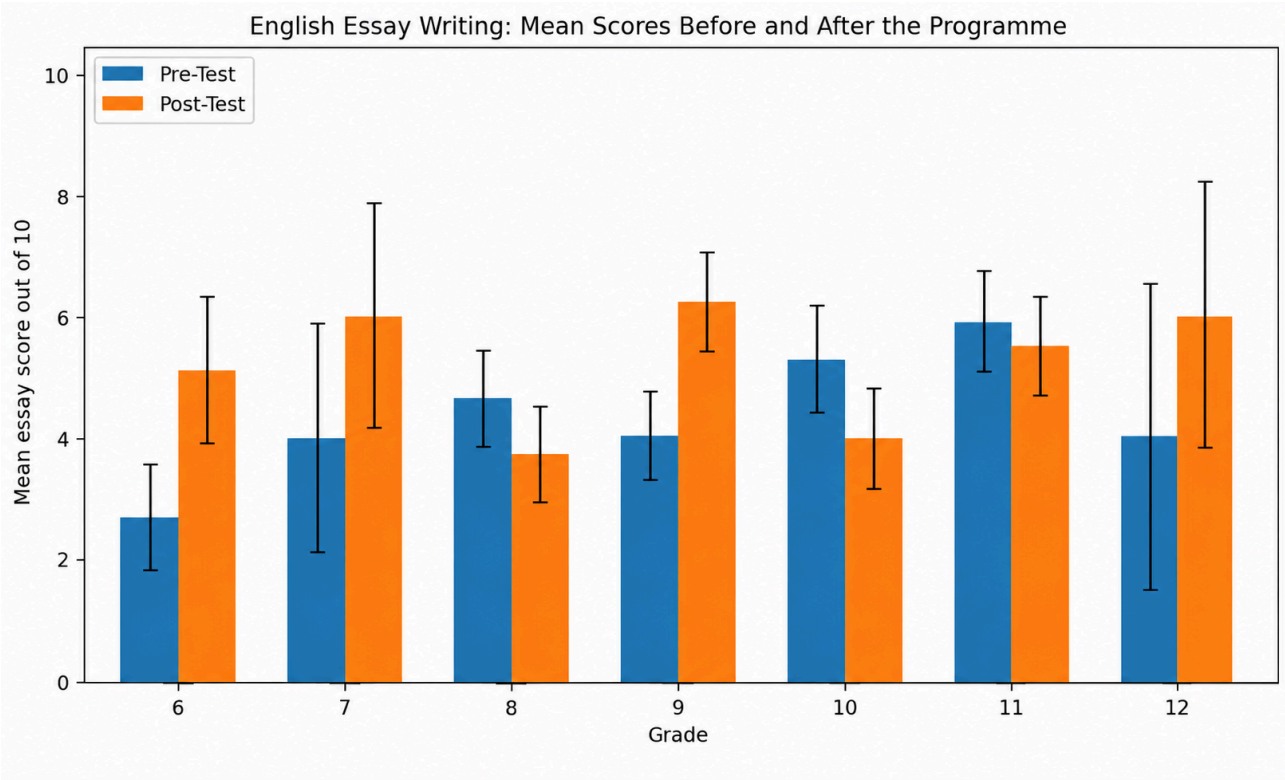


Figure 3.6: English Essay Writing—Mean Scores Before and After the Program

The error bars in the graph provide an indication of the variation in learner scores within each grade. The results show a particularly clear upward movement in Grades 6 and 9, while the smaller Grade 7 and Grade 12 samples should be interpreted descriptively.

3.6.2.1 Grade 6: Strong Growth in Written Expression

Grade 6 recorded one of the greatest improvements across the English assessment. The average essay score increased from 2.63/10 to 5.13/10, an improvement of 2.50 marks. In percentage terms, this represents an increase from 26.25% to 51.25%. This improvement was statistically significant ($p = 0.0066$).

The size of this improvement is particularly encouraging because learners began from a relatively low baseline. Moving from an average of approximately one-quarter of the available marks to above half of the available marks suggests meaningful development in learners' ability to respond to an extended writing task.

The assessment experience also highlighted an important developmental issue among some of the younger learners: test-taking skills and familiarity with formal assessment conditions. Some learners appeared to be grappling not only with the academic content of the assessment but also with understanding how to approach the test itself. This is important context when interpreting the results. As learners become more familiar with assessment expectations, instructions, time management, and the structure of written

responses—improvement may reflect both growing subject knowledge and increased confidence in navigating formal assessment.

For the program, this presents an opportunity to continue strengthening both English writing ability and assessment literacy, particularly among younger learners.

3.6.2.2 Grades 6 and 9: Significant Improvement in Essay Writing

The strongest statistical evidence for improvement in English essay writing comes from Grades 6 and 9.

Grade 9 demonstrated the largest statistically significant improvement in average essay performance. The mean score increased from 4.00/10 to 6.22/10, representing an increase of 2.22 marks. In percentage terms, average performance increased from 40.0% to 62.2%. This change was statistically significant ($p = 0.0024$).

The Grade 9 result is particularly important because it shows that the positive movement was not limited to the youngest learners. Learners at this stage also demonstrated measurable growth in their ability to respond to an essay task and communicate their ideas in written form.

When considered alongside the Grade 6 results, the findings suggest that the program supported improvement in written communication at different stages of the learners' academic development. Grade 6 learners showed substantial growth from a low starting point, while Grade 9 learners demonstrated the ability to move from an average performance of 40% to above 60%.

3.6.2.3 Building Confidence in Written Communication

Taken together, the Grade 6 and Grade 9 results provide the clearest statistical evidence of improvement in English essay writing.

Essay writing requires learners to bring together several skills at once: understanding a prompt, generating ideas, organizing those ideas, constructing sentences, and communicating a coherent response. The gains observed in Grades 6 and 9 therefore represent more than improvement in a single factual skill; they indicate progress in learners' ability to engage with an extended written task.

The results also reinforce the value of providing learners with regular opportunities to write, receive feedback, and practice communicating their ideas in structured formats. Continued exposure to these activities may help learners develop both their writing skills and their confidence when approaching formal assessments.

3.6.2.4 Grade 7 and Grade 12: Positive Descriptive Movement

The English results for Grade 7 and Grade 12 should be treated as descriptive rather than statistical because only one learner in each grade had paired pre- and post-test essay results.

The Grade 7 learner increased from 4/10 to 6/10, while the Grade 12 learner also increased from 4/10 to 6/10. Although these results cannot establish statistical significance, the positive movement is encouraging and is consistent with the broader pattern of improvement seen in the strongest-performing cohorts.

The Grade 12 result should particularly be understood in the context of program participation. Most Grade 12 learners were not available during the pre-test period because they were still attending classes at their respective schools and joined the program later. Consequently, the Grade 12 English assessment sample was extremely limited.

This is an important program-learning point rather than simply a limitation of the data. In future programs, assessment scheduling and program participation should be aligned as closely as possible for senior learners, particularly Grade 12 learners whose school timetables and academic commitments may differ substantially from those of younger participants.

3.6.2.5 Context for the Other Grades

The updated graph includes grades 8, 10, and 11 to provide a transparent picture of the full set of available English essay results. These grades did not show an overall improvement in their paired mean scores and are therefore not presented as positive program outcomes in this section.

For Grade 8, the mean decreased from 4.56/10 to 3.67/10. The change was not statistically significant ($p = 0.1839$). Given the small cohort and the variation visible in the error bars, the Grade 8 result should be interpreted cautiously rather than as evidence of a definitive change in essay-writing ability.

Grades 10 and 11 also showed lower post-test means. These results are retained in the graph for completeness but are not used to support the positive-outcomes discussion. Grade 10 may have focused on multiple-choice questions and reading comprehension. There might have been significant gains there, so it simply reflects test-taking prioritization. (Test-taking strategy.)

Overall, the English assessment provides clear evidence of statistically significant improvement in essay writing among Grades 6 and 9, with additional positive descriptive movement among the individual Grade 7 and Grade 12 learners who completed both assessments. The findings highlight essay writing as an important area for continued development, particularly through regular writing practice, feedback, structured assessment preparation, and increased familiarity with formal test-taking conditions.

3.6.3 Overall Academic Reflection

The academic results provide several encouraging indications of learner progress across both mathematics and English. In mathematics, some of the clearest gains were recorded in **division and fraction-related concepts**. Division showed statistically significant improvement across several grades, while Grade 9 learners recorded significant gains across multiple fraction-related areas. Grade 10 showed particularly strong progress, with significant improvements in both division and fractions, alongside a statistically significant improvement in their overall mathematics performance.

The English results show a similarly encouraging pattern in **essay writing**. The greatest statistically supported improvements were recorded in Grades 6 and 9. Grade 6 learners improved by **2.50 marks out of 10**, while Grade 9 learners improved by **2.22 marks out of 10**. These gains suggest meaningful development. in learners' ability to engage with extended writing tasks and communicate their ideas in written form.

An important feature of the results is the range of progress across different stages of the learners' academic development. Younger learners showed particularly encouraging movement in foundational mathematics and written expression, while learners in the middle and senior grades demonstrated progress in more complex mathematical concepts, particularly fractions. This suggests that the program provided opportunities for learners to strengthen skills appropriate to different stages of their academic journey.

The assessment process also highlighted the importance of developing assessment readiness alongside academic skills. Some of the younger learners appeared to experience challenges related to test-taking, including understanding instructions, managing assessment conditions, and responding appropriately to formal questions. Continued exposure to structured assessments, together with regular opportunities to practice these skills, may help learners become more confident and effective when demonstrating their knowledge in formal testing environments.

3.7 Catering and Food Provision

Catering was a major operational component of WinterJam 2026. The program was responsible for providing meals and refreshments to a large number of learners and volunteers over the WinterJam period. Given the food delivery challenges experienced during previous programs, particular attention was given to planning, procurement, cost management, dietary requirements, food collection, and distribution.



Photo 8: ***Some of the volunteers after the winning one of the afternoon challenges***

The WinterJam 2026 catering approach was therefore not only focused on providing food but also on improving the overall system through better planning, more flexible purchasing arrangements, and cost-saving measures.

3.7.1 Catering Provider and Cost-Saving Measures

Spar was again selected as the main catering provider for WinterJam 2026. An initial menu was submitted based on catering for approximately 460 people. The original quotation, which included individually packaged juice, amounted to **R217,126.40**.

During the May Board meeting, a decision was made to remove the individually packaged juice from the quotation and replace it with juice concentrate that could be prepared and served separately. This decision reduced the Spar invoice to **R161,488.20**.

This represented a direct saving of R55,638.20, or approximately **25.6% of the original quotation**.

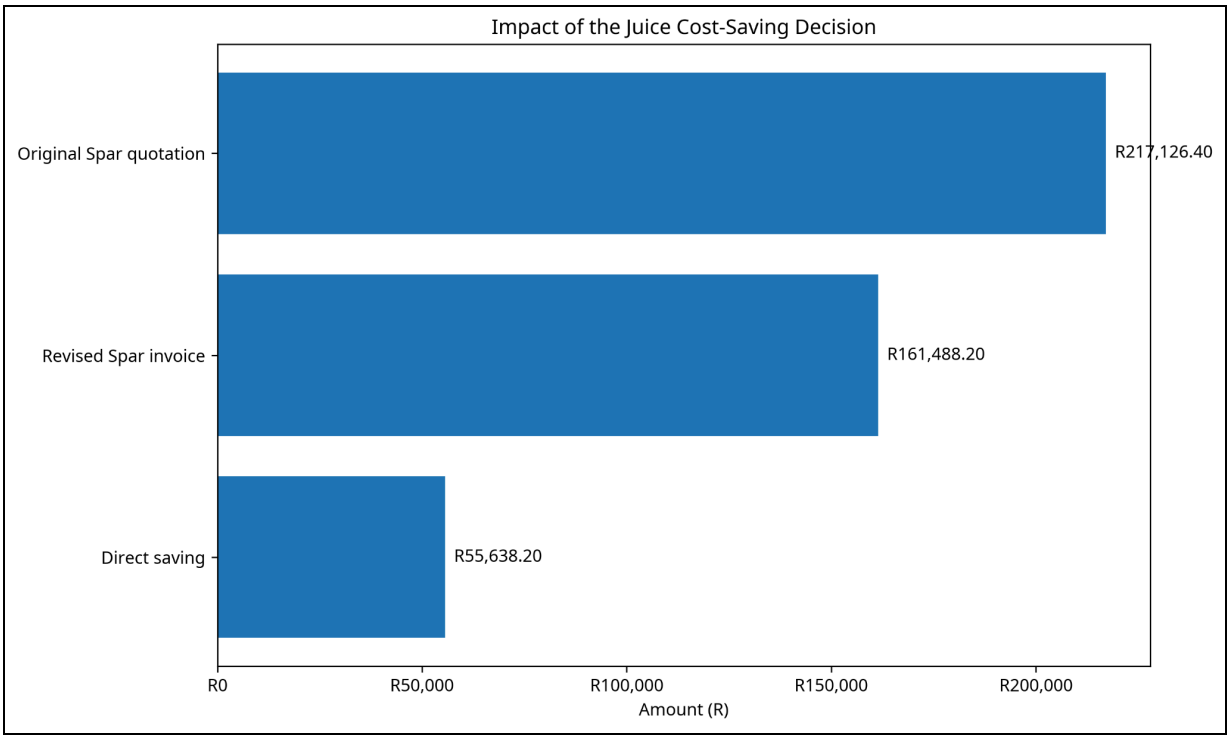


Figure 3.7: Impact of the Juice Cost-Saving Decision

The decision was therefore financially significant and provided important relief to the WinterJam budget. However, it also created additional logistical responsibilities for the program. Juice concentrate had to be purchased in advance, stored, and prepared throughout the WinterJam period.

The decision to move away from individually packaged juice was a good example of balancing program needs with financial realities. However, as later feedback from volunteers shows, the success of a cost-saving measure depends not only on the saving achieved but also on how consistently the alternative arrangement is implemented.

The revised catering arrangements and the planned menu, including drinks and special meals, were structured across the 16-day WinterJam program.

3.7.2 Fruit and Juice Supply

Fruitstop Silverton was used to supply both fruit and the juice concentrate required for the WinterJam period. The total Fruitstop Silverton invoice was **R13,718**. This included **40 bottles of 4-liter juice concentrate**, purchased at **R42.95 per bottle**, together with fruit for the duration of the program.

The combined fruit and juice arrangement allowed MI to provide fruit while also implementing the more affordable alternative to individually packaged juice.

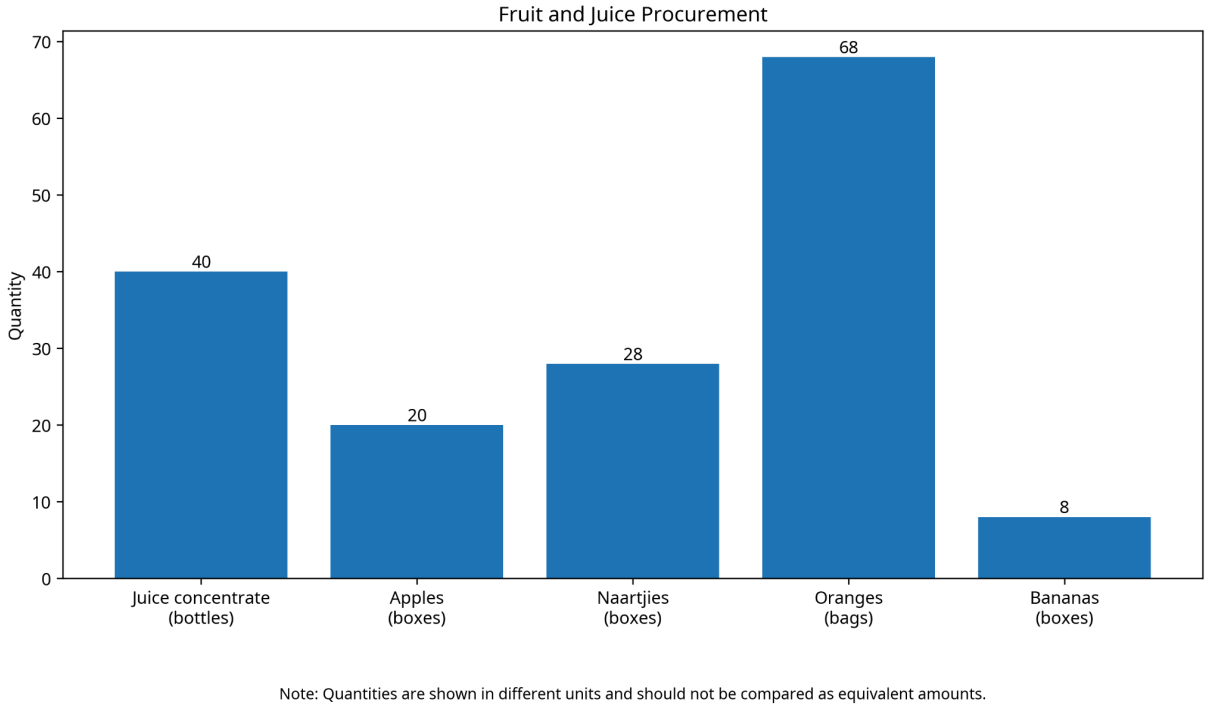


Figure 3.8: Fruit and Juice Procurement

While these quantities provide an indication of the scale of procurement, the different units should not be compared directly. The chart is intended to illustrate the range of products supplied rather than their relative financial value.

3.7.3 Daily Menu and Catering Structure

The WinterJam menu was planned across **16 program days** and included a range of meals such as assorted croissants, Mams snacks, hotdogs, lunch snacks, pap and chicken, mince quesadillas, footlong wors rolls, burgers and chips, lunch Mams boxes, and pap and wors. The menu also included a planned drinks arrangement, with different drinks scheduled on different days.

One of the intentions for WinterJam 2026 was to provide learners with soft porridge in the morning. This idea came from previous WinterJam experiences where food had sometimes arrived very late, resulting in learners receiving their main meals at approximately 2:30 pm or even 3:00 pm. By that time, many learners were preparing to return home. The proposed porridge initiative was therefore intended to ensure that learners had something to eat earlier in the day and were better able to concentrate during program activities. MI engaged Spar and other potential providers about this arrangement, but these discussions were unfortunately unsuccessful. Instead, Spar committed to improving the timing of the main food supply. This alternative arrangement proved to be important.

Importantly, special meals were incorporated into the catering plan. These included provisions for participants requiring:

- Vegan meals;
- No sauces; no lettuce; and no cheese;
- Gluten-free meals; and
- Other dietary adjustments.

Special meal requirements were therefore considered during the planning process rather than being completely ignored or treated as an afterthought.

3.7.4 Flexible Purchasing and Attendance Management

Attendance during WinterJam 2026 fluctuated throughout the program. Initial catering numbers ranged from approximately 400 to 460 participants on different days before later decreasing to approximately 410. Although MI had initially considered paying for the full catering order before the program began, the decision to pay at the store as food was collected proved beneficial.

This approach allowed the program to: Monitor actual attendance; adjust food quantities where necessary; avoid paying for unnecessary meals; respond to changes in daily participation; and manage the catering budget more carefully.

The flexible purchasing arrangement was therefore an important financial and operational decision. Rather than locking the organization into a fixed number of meals for the entire WinterJam period, MI was able to make adjustments based on the actual number of people attending.

3.7.5 Breakfast and the YLC Fundraising Initiative

Part of the WinterJam catering experience, particularly breakfast, was supported through the fundraising activities of the Youth Leadership Council (YLC).

YLC learners sold items such as fatcakes, cupcakes, coffee, muffins, scones, and other breakfast items.

This gave YLC learners an opportunity to participate practically in fundraising during the WinterJam season. Rather than fundraising being managed entirely by adults or external donors, learners were actively involved in generating income.

The program also purchased food for specific activities outside the daily learner catering program. This included pizza for volunteer training, food sold by YLC learners during training, bunny chows/spatlos for the volunteer social day, and other refreshments linked to program activities.

These activities formed part of the wider catering experience and should be considered separately from the main daily lunch provision.

3.7.6 Improvements in Food Preparation and Collection

In response to previous concerns about late food, Spar introduced a different preparation system for WinterJam 2026. A night-shift team was assigned to prepare WinterJam orders during the night so that the food would be ready when the MI team arrived for collection. According to the operational experience of the program, this significantly improved food collection and delivery. MI did not experience the same level of challenges with food collection that had affected previous Jams.

This was one of the most significant operational improvements in the WinterJam 2026 catering system.

However, feedback from learners and volunteers suggests that this improvement should be understood carefully. Food collection and delivery improved significantly, but isolated delays and concerns about food temperature were still reported.

The program therefore appears to have successfully addressed the major logistical problem of repeated late food while still needing to improve the final stage of food distribution and service quality.

3.7.7 Catering Feedback: Learner and Volunteer Experience

Feedback was collected from learners and volunteers to assess how the catering arrangements were experienced by participants.

This feedback is particularly important because financial and operational success does not automatically mean that participants experienced the catering positively. The responses provide an opportunity to compare the planned catering system with the actual experience of those receiving the food.

Overall, the feedback was positive.

Learners were generally highly satisfied with the meals provided. Volunteer feedback was also positive overall but was more mixed and identified several areas requiring improvement.

3.7.8 Learner Feedback on Food

Learner feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Most learners rated the food at the higher end of the five-point scale, with ratings of **4 and 5 appearing most frequently**. Learners repeatedly described the meals as 'delicious,' 'good,' 'excellent,' 'amazing,' 'wonderful,' 'healthy,' 'nutritious,' 'fresh,' and 'tasty.'

Several learners also appreciated the effort made to provide food safely and accommodate allergies. One learner noted that the program made sure that food was checked where allergies were involved. Other learners described the food as healthy, fresh, and well prepared. The classroom distribution system was also mentioned several times. Learners noted that food was brought to them or distributed by their class

administrators. This suggests that the classroom distribution model was a visible and generally effective part of the catering process.



Figure 3.9: Learner food satisfaction

The visual above is a thematic representation of recurring comments rather than a count of individual responses.

3.7.8.1 Areas of Concern Raised by Learners

Although learner feedback was strongly positive, several recurring concerns emerged. The most common issue was **seasoning**, particularly with chips and fries. Learners commented that the chips had little or no salt, needed more seasoning, had little flavor, or were dry.

Other concerns included occasional food freshness issues; dry food; certain unpopular menu items; limited preference for pap on some days; and isolated food delays. One learner specifically reported receiving food late, while another mentioned a late meal on **16 July 2026**.

This does not contradict the operational finding that food delivery improved. Rather, it suggests that while major and repeated delays were reduced, isolated problems still occurred.

3.7.8.2 Volunteer Ratings of Daily Food and Breakfast

A total of **59 volunteers** rated the daily food and breakfast on a five-point scale. The average rating was **3.9 out of 5.**



1 – Very Poor		1 (1.7%)

Figure 3.10: Volunteer Ratings of Daily Food and Breakfast

Overall, **67.8% of volunteers rated the food and breakfast at 4 or 5 out of 5**. This indicates that most volunteers were satisfied with the catering. However, **32.2% rated the experience at 3 or below**, meaning that the concerns raised in the written feedback should not be overlooked.

3.7.8.3 Positive Volunteer Feedback

Many volunteers expressed strong satisfaction with the food. Comments included: “Excellent.” “Delicious.” “The food was nice.” “That's some of the best food MI has provided.” “The food was good. Thank you!” “Exceptional.” “The food was amazing; the kids always enjoyed it."

One volunteer provided a particularly useful summary: “The food and breakfast provided were good and filling. There was enough variety, and it was served on time. It helped keep us energized throughout the day.” Volunteers also positively commented on food timing: “Food arrived on time.” “They were good because food always arrived on time.”

This supports the conclusion that the revised Spar preparation arrangement made a meaningful difference.

3.7.8.4 Dry Food, Drinks, and Juice Availability

One of the strongest concerns in the volunteer feedback was that some food was too dry. Comments included: “The no juice really was not cool. Food was dry.” “The lunch was dry sometimes.” “The food was too dry and tasteless.” “Too much dry food.”

Feedback from the volunteer training also raised a similar concern: “We needed juice due to the dry buns.” This finding is particularly important when considered alongside the decision to remove individually packaged juice from the Spar quotation. The decision saved the program **R55,638.20**, but the feedback suggests that the alternative juice arrangement may not always have been experienced as consistently available, particularly by volunteers.

The issue is therefore not necessarily that the cost-saving decision was incorrect. The more important lesson is that the alternative system needs to be implemented consistently.

3.7.9 Breakfast Costs and the YLC Fundraising Model

Volunteer feedback revealed mixed feelings about the breakfast fundraising initiative. Some volunteers enjoyed the breakfast items: “The muffins and the tea were really nice.” “I really loved the muffins and the voetkoek with the mince.”

Others supported the fundraising purpose: “I didn't expect it to be sold, but it was a good strategy to raise some funds.” However, some volunteers were unhappy about having to pay: “The food was good; the problem is that I had to use money to get the breakfast.” “Paying for breakfast was not fun.” “Breakfast is costly.”

One volunteer also reported that muffins were often finished. This does not suggest that the YLC fundraising initiative was unsuccessful. Instead, it highlights a tension between two objectives:

Objective 1: Using breakfast as a fundraising opportunity for YLC learners.

Objective 2: Meeting volunteer expectations around food provision during the program.

For future WinterJams, we may need to communicate the breakfast model more clearly or consider providing a basic breakfast while allowing the YLC to sell additional items.

3.7.10 Dietary Requirements and Allergy Accommodation

Dietary requirements produced some of the most mixed feedback. There were clear positive comments: “Allergies were catered for.” “They provide for all people who eat certain things and those who do not.”

Learners also appreciated efforts to check food for allergies. However, several volunteers reported inconsistent implementation. Concerns included dietary requirements not being met on some days, allergies being forgotten, limited vegetarian alternatives, special lunches not being correctly prepared, and participants having to remove ingredients themselves.

One volunteer explained: “Special lunches were not catered for per se. For example, some kids had to wipe off sauce from their food.” Another stated, "Some days my dietary requirements were not met.” A further volunteer reported concern that some learners were not properly accommodated because of allergies.

This is an important distinction for the report. **Special meals were included in the catering plan, but implementation was not always consistent.**



Figure 3.11: Dietary Accommodation Experience

The visual represents the balance of themes raised in the feedback and should be read alongside the qualitative responses.

3.7.11 Food Temperature and Freshness

An important issue raised by volunteers was that food could sometimes be cold. One volunteer stated, "Excellent, but the food is always cold." Learners also made occasional comments about stale or less fresh food. This is an important operational lesson because **food arriving on time is not the same as food being served in the best condition**.

The revised Spar system appears to have solved many collection and timing problems, but future monitoring should also consider what happens after collection.

3.7.12 Combined Learner and Volunteer Feedback

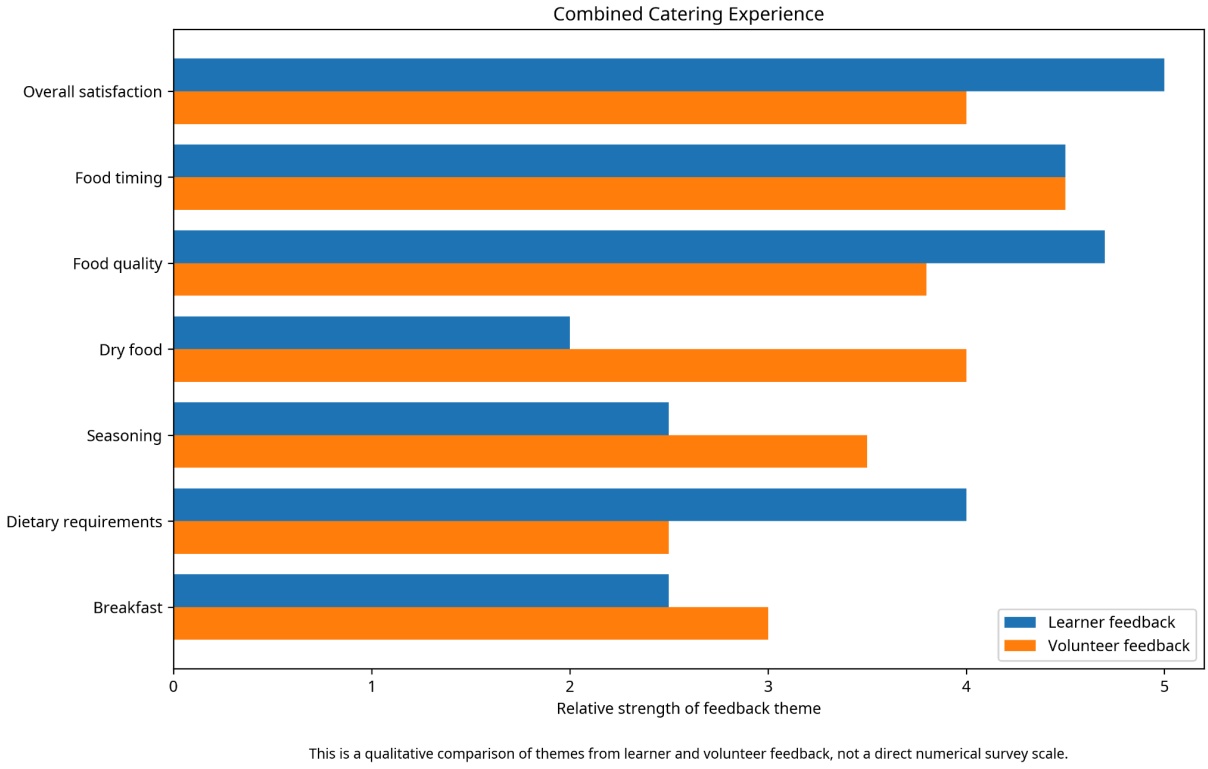


Figure 3.12: Comparison of Catering Experience

3.7.13 Overall Catering Assessment

WinterJam 2026 made meaningful progress in the management of catering. The program successfully introduced a number of important operational and financial improvements. The removal of individually packaged juice from the Spar quotation resulted in a substantial saving of **R55,638.20**, while the use of juice concentrate and separate fruit procurement provided a more flexible alternative.

The decision not to pay for all meals upfront also proved beneficial because it allowed MI to adjust food purchases according to fluctuating attendance.

Perhaps the most significant operational improvement was Spar's decision to prepare WinterJam orders overnight. This appears to have significantly reduced the food collection and delivery challenges that had affected previous programs.

Participant feedback broadly supports the conclusion that these improvements were meaningful. Learners were highly positive about the food, while **67.8% of volunteers rated the food and breakfast at 4 or 5 out of 5**.

3.8 Financial and Fundraising Analysis

The financial analysis of WinterJam 2026 should be understood within the broader funding structure of The Mamelodi Initiative. While the program recorded a total income of R558,440 during the reporting period, it is important not to interpret all of this income as money raised specifically through new WinterJam fundraising initiatives.

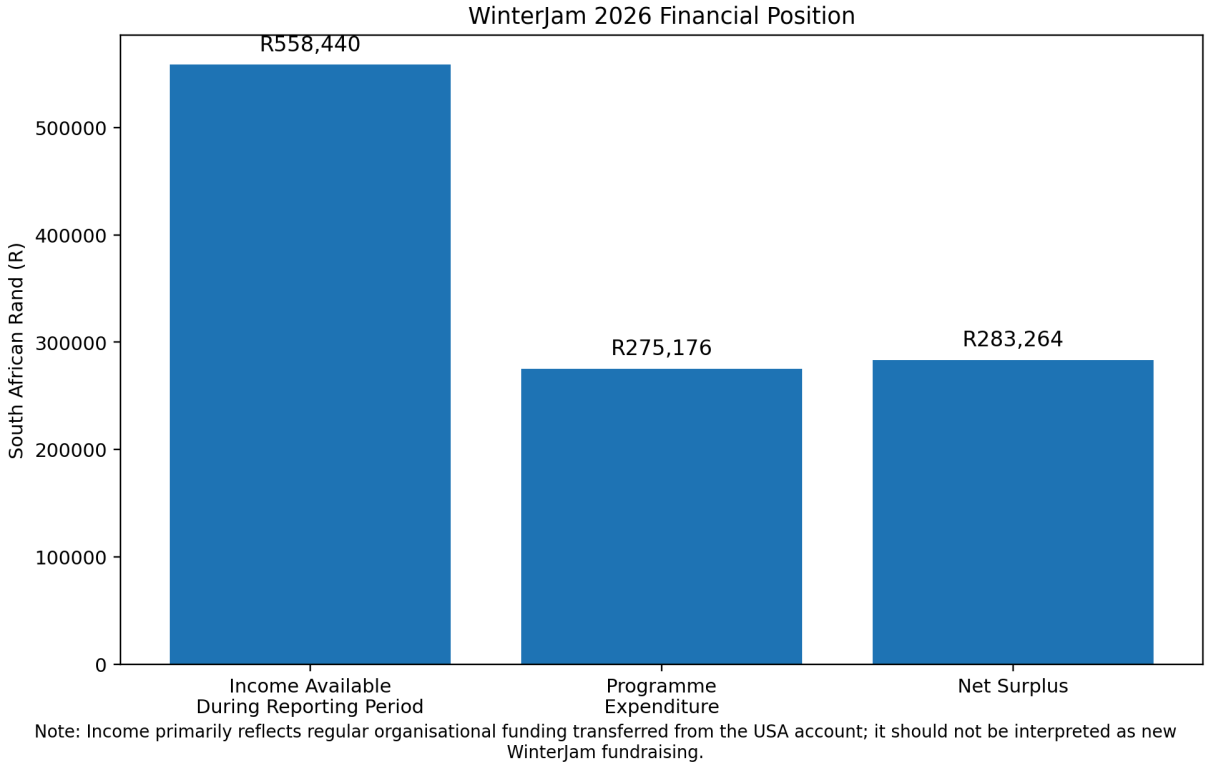


Figure 3.13: Winter Jam Financial Position

The largest portion of the income, R552,438 recorded as donation income, represents the organization's regular funding received through transfers from its USA bank account. This funding is received as part of the organization's normal quarterly funding arrangements and should therefore not be presented as a direct result of new fundraising activities undertaken during WinterJam 2026.

WinterJam 2026 did, however, include deliberate fundraising initiatives led partly by learners through the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). These activities created opportunities for learners to participate practically in fundraising while contributing towards the program.

The program also successfully raised R12,303 through the BackaBuddy campaign. This amount has not been included in the current financial spreadsheet because the funds had not yet been transferred into the organization's account at the time of reporting. Nevertheless, the funds were successfully raised and should be recognized separately as fundraising income secured for WinterJam 2026.

3.8.1 Direct WinterJam 2026 Fundraising Initiatives

Fundraising during the WinterJam season went beyond traditional donor support. A number of practical fundraising initiatives were introduced, including activities involving YLC learners.

On selected days, learners participated in selling breakfast to volunteers. While these activities did not take place every day, they provided learners with a direct opportunity to participate in fundraising and understand the practical work involved in generating financial support for a program.

The fundraising activities were particularly important from a learner development perspective. Learners were not simply beneficiaries or participants in the program. They were given an opportunity to contribute towards the wider WinterJam community and to participate in activities that required responsibility, initiative, and engagement with others.

The final day of WinterJam 2026 also included a paid entrance component. Learners were encouraged to attend with their parents, and an entrance contribution of R20 per person was charged.
Attendance on the day was lower than anticipated. The program director's report notes that fewer than 40% of learners attended the closing activities and that only 19 parents attended out of approximately 350 invited parents. Despite this lower-than-expected turnout, the learners and parents who attended still made a meaningful financial contribution through the entrance initiative.

This is an important finding because it shows that the low turnout did not result in a complete loss of fundraising opportunity. The initiative was still able to generate contributions while also providing an opportunity to involve parents directly in the program.

3.8.2 BackaBuddy Fundraising

The WinterJam 2026 BackaBuddy campaign successfully raised R12,303. This amount is not reflected in the current financial statements because the money had not yet been transferred into The Mamelodi Initiative's bank account at the time the financial report was prepared. For financial reporting purposes, it is therefore appropriate to distinguish between funds received and recorded in the organization's accounts and funds successfully raised but still awaiting transfer.

The R12,303 should therefore be recognized in the program analysis as successful fundraising secured through the WinterJam 2026 campaign, while remaining excluded from the actual cash income reflected in the current Profit and Loss Report until the funds are formally received.

3.8.3 Income Analysis

The Profit and Loss Report records a total income of R558,440 for the WinterJam reporting period.
This income consists primarily of:

Table 6: ***Income Source Analysis***

Income Source	**Amount**	**Interpretation**
Donation Income	R552,438	Regular organizational funding transferred from the USA account
Cash Deposit	R5,974	Income/deposits received during the reporting period

Cash Refund	R28	Refund received
BackaBuddy Fundraising	R12,303	Successfully raised but not yet transferred; excluded from current actual income figures

The reported R558,440 should therefore not be described as money raised through WinterJam 2026 fundraising activities. Rather, it reflects funding available to the organization during the reporting period, with the majority coming from existing and regular funding arrangements.

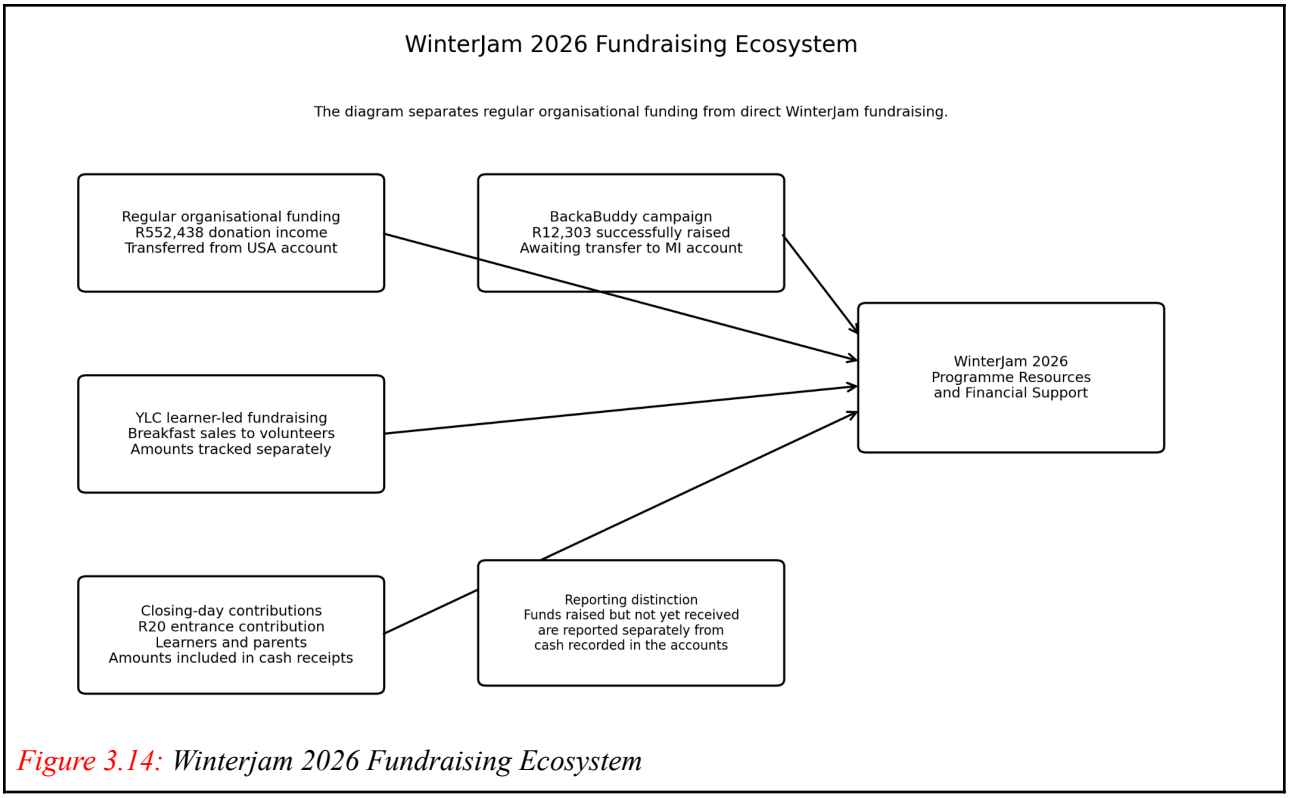


Figure 3.14: Winterjam 2026 Fundraising Ecosystem

The direct fundraising success of WinterJam 2026 should instead be measured separately through the YLC-led activities, the parent and learner contributions at the closing event, and the R12,303 successfully raised through BackaBuddy.

3.8.4 Expenditure Performance

Total WinterJam 2026 expenditure amounted to R275,176. The largest expenditure category was volunteer and delegate refreshments, amounting to R198,085. This represented approximately 72% of total program expenditure.

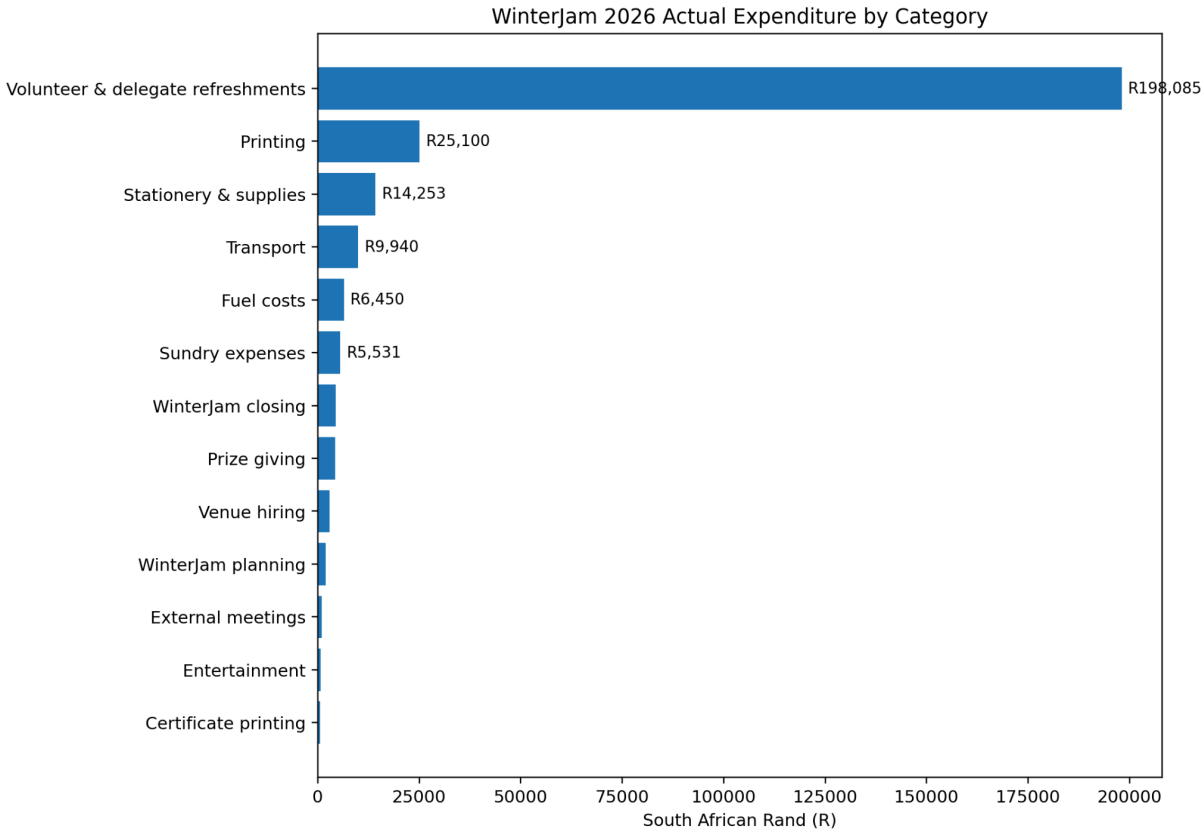


Figure 3.15: Actual Expenditure by category

Other significant expenditure categories included

- Printing: R25,100
- Stationery and supplies: R14,253
- Transport: R9,940
- Fuel: R6,450
- Sundry expenses: R5,531
- WinterJam closing: R4,420
- Prize giving: R4,339

The high expenditure on refreshments reflects the scale and operational demands of WinterJam. Feeding learners and volunteers over an extended program period remains one of the most significant financial requirements.

3.8.5 Budget Performance

WinterJam 2026 spent R275,176 against a budget of R358,650. Based on the financial report provided, actual expenditure was therefore R83,474 below the planned expenditure level. This represents approximately 23% lower expenditure than budgeted.

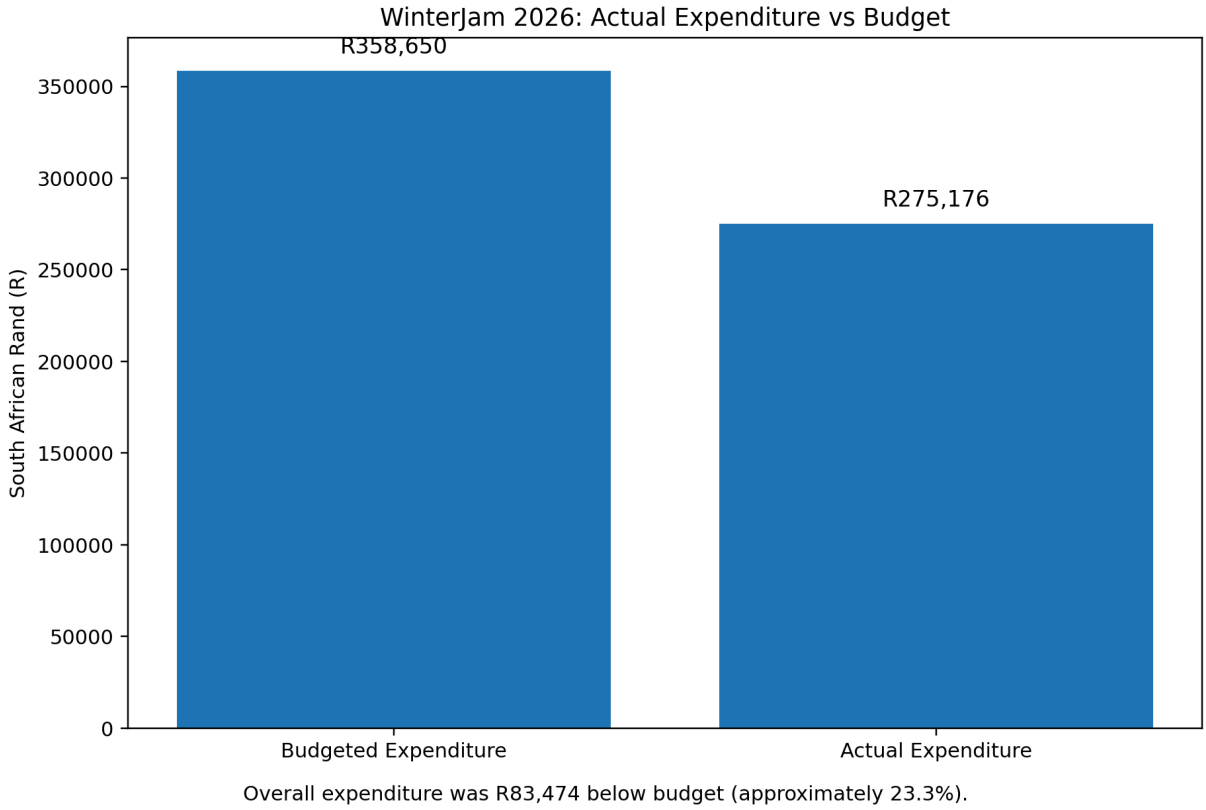


Figure 3.16: Actual Expenditure vs Budget

The largest savings against the budget were recorded in:

- Volunteer and delegate refreshments;
- Transport;
- Stationery and supplies;
- Prize giving; and
- WinterJam planning.

However, printing exceeded its planned budget significantly. Actual printing expenditure was R25,100, compared with a budget of R9,200.

This suggests that future WinterJam budgets should include a more detailed assessment of printing requirements before the program begins. Learner materials, assessments, registration documents, administrative requirements, and other printed resources should be estimated more accurately during the planning stage.

3.8.6 Net Financial Position

The Profit and Loss Report records a net surplus of R283,264 for the reporting period. This positive position should be interpreted carefully. The surplus was supported largely by the regular funding received by the organization rather than by new WinterJam fundraising initiatives alone.

The significance of the WinterJam fundraising initiatives therefore lies not in suggesting that they financed the entire program, but in demonstrating the program's growing ability to generate additional contributions and create opportunities for learners, parents, and the wider community to participate in supporting the work.

3.8.7 Financial and Fundraising Lessons

WinterJam 2026 highlighted several important lessons for future fundraising and financial planning.

- Separate regular funding from program fundraising. Future reports should clearly distinguish between existing organizational funding, donations specifically secured for a program, and funds generated through program-led fundraising initiatives.
- Track fundraising initiatives separately. Each initiative should have its own income and expenditure record. This will make it possible to measure which fundraising activities are most effective.
- Recognize funds raised but not yet received separately. The BackaBuddy campaign demonstrates the importance of tracking successful fundraising commitments separately from money that has already entered the organization's bank account.
- Build on learner-led fundraising. The YLC breakfast sales created an opportunity for learners to contribute directly to the program. This model can be strengthened and developed into more structured fundraising activities.
- Review the closing event model. Although parent attendance was lower than anticipated, the paid entrance initiative still generated contributions. Future events can explore better ways of combining parent engagement, fundraising, and program showcasing.
- Strengthen budget accuracy. Significant differences between planned and actual expenditure, particularly in printing, show the need for more detailed operational budgeting.

3.8.8 Overall Assessment

WinterJam 2026 was financially stable and was delivered below its planned expenditure budget. The program also introduced meaningful fundraising activities that involved YLC learners, volunteers, learners, and parents.

The financial story of WinterJam 2026 is therefore not simply one of high income. It is a story of responsible expenditure, the use of existing organizational funding, and deliberate efforts to create additional sources of program support.

The R12,303 successfully raised through BackaBuddy is particularly important because it represents direct fundraising achieved through the WinterJam 2026 campaign, even though the funds had not yet been transferred into the organization's account at the time of reporting.

4. SWOT Analysis and Stakeholder Feedback

The SWOT analysis for Winter Jam 2026 brings together feedback from learners, volunteers, and parents/guardians. This broader approach is important because the success of Winter Jam cannot be measured only by whether the program was delivered as planned. It must also consider how learners experienced the program, how volunteers experienced implementation, what parents and guardians valued, and where stakeholders believe improvement is needed.



Photo 9: One of our learners with her grandmother during our award ceremony

The analysis shows that Winter Jam 2026 had a strong overall foundation. Learners largely experienced the program as a positive space for learning and personal development, while parents and guardians valued its role in supporting academic progress and keeping young people constructively occupied during the school holidays. At the same time, the feedback points to areas that require greater attention as the program continues to grow.

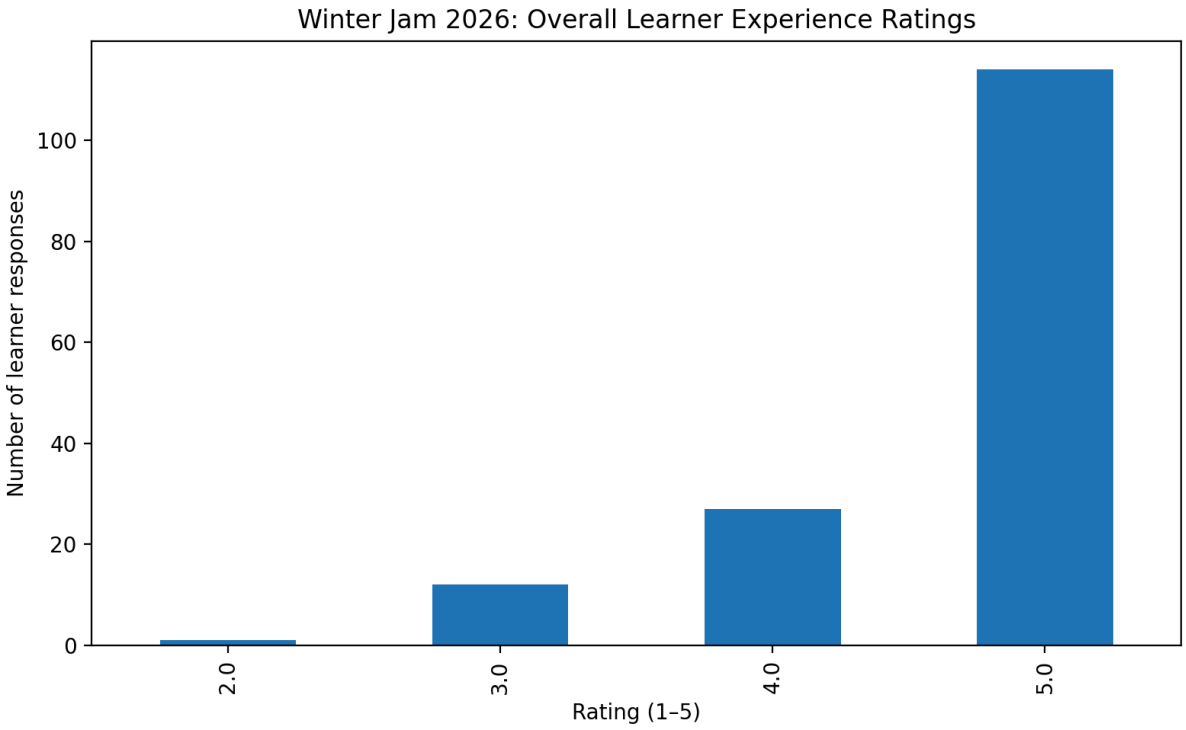


Figure 4.1: Overall Learner Experiences Ratings

The learner feedback included 154 usable overall experience ratings, providing a substantial basis for understanding how learners experienced Winter Jam 2026.

4.1 Strengths

This section highlights the key strengths of Winter Jam 2026 and the positive experiences reported by learners, parents, and volunteers.

4.1.1 Improved program management and responsiveness

One of the strongest developments during Winter Jam 2026 was the program team's ability to identify challenges early and respond while the program was still underway. The first week, particularly the second

day, presented challenges around classroom management as new and returning learners and volunteers adjusted to one another. Rather than allowing these issues to continue unaddressed, the daily debrief process created space for volunteers to raise concerns and receive support.

MI identified this growing ability to monitor, identify, and respond to challenges as a major strength of the program. This included providing additional or targeted support to volunteers who required it.

4.1.2 A positive learning environment

Learner feedback suggests that Winter Jam successfully created an environment where many learners felt comfortable learning, asking questions and engaging with others. Responses described the learning environment as collaborative, supportive, structured, and motivating. One learner specifically noted that it was easy to ask questions and learn from peers, even when dealing with difficult concepts.

This is an important strength because Winter Jam serves learners with different academic abilities and levels of confidence. Creating an environment where learners feel safe enough to participate is therefore as important as the academic content itself.

4.1.3 Strong relationships between learners and volunteers

The relationship between learners and volunteers emerged as one of the strongest features of the program. Learners repeatedly identified volunteers who had made a meaningful difference in their experience.

One learner explained that a volunteer treated them like a family member and made them feel wanted. Others spoke about volunteers who helped them understand difficult work, encouraged them to work hard, and supported them academically.

These relationships demonstrate that Winter Jam provides more than academic assistance. Volunteers can become sources of encouragement, motivation, and belonging for learners.

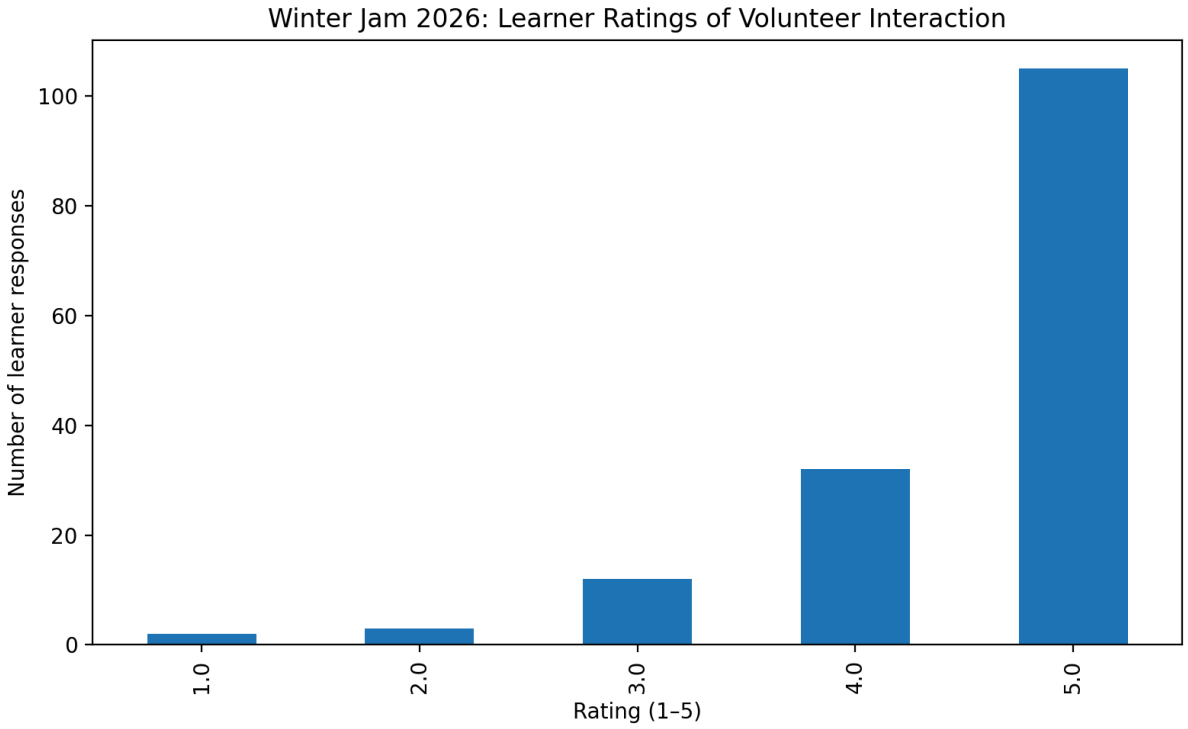


Figure 4.2: Learner Ratings of Volunteer Interaction

The learner feedback included 154 usable ratings of interaction with volunteers, allowing this part of the program to be assessed directly from the learner perspective.

4.1.4 Strong learner commitment and future interest

Learners were also asked whether the pre-tests and post-tests helped them reflect on their learning and whether they would like to attend Winter Jam again. The feedback shows strong continued interest in the program.

The responses provide evidence that learners do not simply attend Winter Jam as a once-off activity. Many see it as a program they would like to return to in the future.

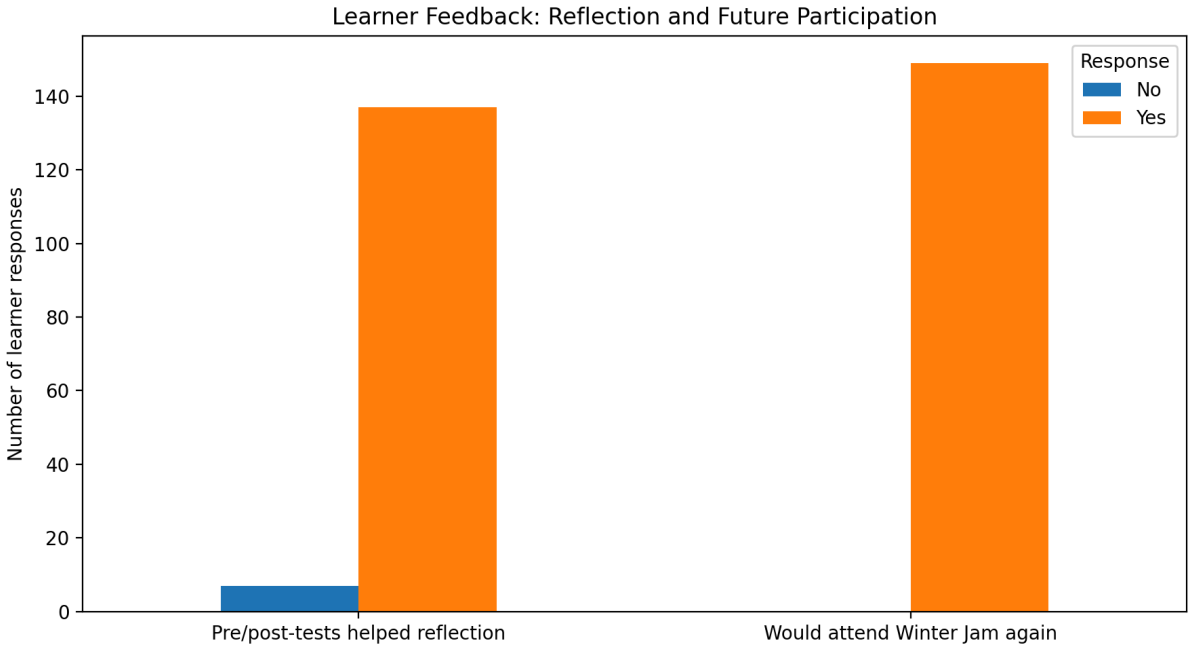


Figure 4.3: Learner Reflection and Future Participation

The analysis includes 144 usable Yes/No responses on the usefulness of the pre- and post-tests and 149 usable Yes/No responses on whether learners would like to attend again.

4.1.5 Strong parental appreciation of Winter Jam

Parental and guardian feedback strongly reinforces the social value of Winter Jam. A recurring theme was appreciation for the program's role in keeping children busy, safe, and away from the streets during the school holidays.

Parents and guardians also valued the academic support provided. Comments included appreciation for the extra lessons and requests for additional assistance in subjects where learners were struggling, particularly mathematics and accounting.

The parental feedback shows that Winter Jam is valued for three main reasons:

- academic support and improved school performance;
- a safe and supervised environment during the holidays; and
- keeping young people constructively occupied.

Several parents simply expressed appreciation, with comments such as thanking MI for the program, the extra lessons, and the work done to support young people.

4.2 Weaknesses

This section highlights the key operational and program delivery challenges experienced during Winter Jam 2026. While the program benefited from committed volunteers, positive learner relationships, and supportive parents, several areas required further attention, including volunteer capacity, classroom management, consistency in the learner experience, parent engagement, and communication. Reflecting on these weaknesses allows MI to identify practical improvements, strengthen program implementation, and ensure a more consistent, supportive, and effective experience for learners, volunteers, and parents in future programs.

4.2.1 Volunteer capacity and classroom management

Volunteer capacity remained a challenge during the program. Although volunteer commitment was strong, availability changed as some volunteers returned to their own academic commitments. This placed additional pressure on the volunteers who remained and could contribute to larger or more difficult-to-manage classes.

The program director's reflection on the second day of Winter Jam also showed that classroom management was particularly challenging during the adjustment period. However, the situation improved as volunteers became more familiar with their learners and the structure of the program.

This suggests that future planning should place even greater emphasis on practical classroom management preparation and reserve volunteer capacity.

4.2.2 Inconsistent learner experience with volunteers

While learner feedback about volunteers was largely positive, there were also important concerns that should not be ignored. Some learners suggested that volunteers should receive more guidance on how to deal with different types of learners and how to create an environment where everyone feels respected.

One learner specifically suggested that volunteers should have better knowledge of how to handle different learners appropriately.

These comments do not take away from the strong positive relationships many learners experienced. Instead, they highlight the need for consistency. A learner's experience should not depend entirely on which volunteer they happen to be assigned to.

4.2.3 Limited parent engagement beyond registration

The parental feedback shows that parents and guardians generally support the program. However, there is a difference between supporting Winter Jam and actively participating in it.

The low turnout at the closing event was a clear example of this challenge. Fewer than 40% of learners attended the closing activities, and only 19 parents attended out of approximately 350 invited parents.

This suggests that MI needs to better understand the barriers preventing parents from participating more actively.

4.2.4 Communication and individual learner follow-up

The parental feedback also identified the importance of clearer communication. Parents and guardians requested:

- clear program schedules and times;
- notification when learners would stay later than expected;
- communication when important decisions needed to be made;
- alternative contact arrangements; and
- more support for children struggling academically.

This suggests that learner information gathered during registration could be used more strategically. Parent communication should not end once permission has been received.

4.3 Opportunities

This section outlines opportunities for MI to build on the lessons learned from Winter Jam 2026 and strengthen future program delivery.

4.3.1 Build a stronger parent engagement strategy

The parental feedback presents a significant opportunity. Parents already value Winter Jam and trust MI with their children. The next step is to create more meaningful opportunities for them to engage with the program.

Future approaches could include a short parent orientation before Winter Jam, clear program schedules shared in advance, regular communication during the program, targeted communication for learners who require additional academic support, smaller parent engagement opportunities throughout the program, a post-program academic feedback process, and a short survey specifically exploring why parents may not attend program events.

The low turnout at the closing event should therefore be treated as useful information rather than simply a disappointing outcome.

4.3.2 Strengthen targeted academic support

Parents and learners identified a need for continued support in particular subjects. Learner feedback showed that different subjects and sessions were helpful to different learners, while parents specifically requested assistance where their children were struggling.

This creates an opportunity to use Winter Jam more deliberately as a point of identification. Learners requiring additional support can be referred or followed up through year-round programs such as Road to Finals.

4.3.3 Use learner feedback to improve program design

Learners provided useful suggestions for future Winter Jams. Their feedback can inform improvements in teaching approaches, volunteer preparation, classroom management, activities and workshops, sports and recreational opportunities, learning resources, and communication with learners.

This is an important opportunity because learners are not simply recipients of the program. Their experiences provide direct evidence of what works and what needs to change.

4.3.4 Develop a learner-to-volunteer pipeline

The strong relationships formed between learners and volunteers also create a longer-term opportunity. Learners who have a positive experience of Winter Jam may later return as volunteers, tutors, Youth Leadership Council members, or community leaders.

This would strengthen the long-term sustainability of the volunteer base and create a cycle in which former learners contribute to the development of future learners.

4.4 Threats

This section highlights external and operational risks that may affect learner well-being and the consistent delivery of Winter Jam.

4.4.1 Learner safety outside the program

One of the strongest messages from parents was their appreciation that Winter Jam keeps their children occupied and away from the streets. While this is a strength of the program, it also points to a wider concern: learners remain vulnerable once the structured program ends.

Winter Jam can provide a safe and supportive environment for a limited period, but MI must continue thinking about how vulnerable learners are supported beyond the holiday program.

4.4.2 Low parent participation

If parent engagement remains low, MI may lose opportunities to understand challenges affecting learners at home and to build stronger support around them.

Parents clearly value the program, but the closing-event attendance showed that appreciation does not automatically lead to participation. This remains a strategic risk that requires further investigation.

4.4.3 Volunteer availability and consistency

The program depends heavily on volunteers. Changes in volunteer availability, capacity, or conduct can directly affect learner experience. Continued recruitment, training, monitoring, and support will therefore remain essential.

***Table 7:* SWOT Summary Matrix**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Improved program management	Volunteer capacity pressure
Positive learning environment	Early classroom management challenges
Strong learner-volunteer relationships	Inconsistent volunteer experience for some learners
Strong learner interest and commitment	Limited parent participation
Positive parent trust and appreciation	Communication and learner follow-up gaps
Academic and personal support	Need for stronger systems as the program grows

Opportunities	Threats
Stronger parent engagement	Learner vulnerability outside the program
Targeted academic follow-up	Low parent participation
Improved use of learner feedback	Volunteer availability
Learner-to-volunteer pipeline	Larger learner numbers
Expanded year-round support	Operational systems falling behind program growth
More inclusive volunteer preparation	Safeguarding and reputational risks

4.5 Overall Assessment

The stakeholder feedback confirms that Winter Jam 2026 was more than an academic program. Learners experienced it as a place where they could learn, ask questions, form relationships, and build confidence. Parents and guardians valued the program because it supported their children's education while also providing structure and safety during the holidays.

The strongest message from the SWOT analysis is that the program itself is valued and trusted. The priority for future development is, therefore, not to change the purpose of Winter Jam but to strengthen the systems around it.

5. Upcoming programs and Key Dates

Following the completion of Winter Jam 2026, MI will move into the next phase of its annual program cycle. The lessons from Winter Jam will be carried forward into the organization's ongoing academic, leadership, and holiday programs. In particular, the experience gained in learner assessment, targeted teaching, volunteer support, and program management will continue to inform future implementation.



Photo 10: Some of our learners and volunteers during one of our afternoon challenges

The upcoming program period will focus on three main areas: Road to Finals (RTF), the Youth Leadership Council (YLC), and preparation for the 2027 Summer Jam and Winter Jam programs.

5.1 Key Upcoming Dates

Table 8: Upcoming programs and key dates

Program/activity	Date	Key Focus
Road to Finals (RTF) and YLC	Ongoing	Academic support, leadership development, and community engagement
YLC Community Engagement	Term 3 and school holidays	Community visibility and measurable engagement activities
Summer Jam 2027 Volunteer Training	**2 January 2027**	Volunteer preparation and program orientation
Summer Jam 2027 program	**4–9 January 2027**	Holiday program for learners
Summer Jam 2027 Volunteer Appreciation	**11 January 2027**	Recognition and appreciation of volunteers;
Winter Jam 2027 Volunteer Training	**26 June 2027**	Volunteer preparation and final program orientation
Winter Jam 2027 program	**28 June–17 July 2027**	Winter academic and development program
Winter Jam 2027 Volunteer Appreciation	**19 July 2027**	Recognition and appreciation of volunteers

These dates provide an important framework for early planning, volunteer recruitment, fundraising, program preparation, and stakeholder communication.

5.2 Road to Finals (RTF)

Road to Finals has resumed alongside the Youth Leadership Council. The program remains one of MI's most important year-round academic interventions and will continue to provide support to learners beyond the Winter Jam period.

The June examination results for Term 2 produced an overall 63% pass rate, with the program working towards a target of 80% across all grades combined. This provides a clear benchmark for the remainder of the academic year.

A key development within RTF is the move towards a more targeted tutoring approach. Rather than attempting to revise the curriculum broadly, tutoring is increasingly focused on foundational understanding and the key areas where learners need the most support. The main focus areas include:

- Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy;
- English; and
- relevant elective subjects.

The challenges differ across grades. Grades 8 and 9 continue to experience significant difficulties in mathematics and English, particularly where learners have gaps in foundational knowledge. Grades 10 and 11 face a wider range of subject-specific challenges and therefore require a more differentiated approach.

Building on a strategy used during Winter Jam 2026, learners are increasingly being grouped according to their baseline assessment results. This allows tutors to work from the actual needs of learners rather than assuming that all learners within the same grade require the same level of support. The approach creates opportunities for more focused teaching and deeper engagement with difficult concepts.

The immediate objective remains to improve the combined pass rate to **80%**. However, the longer-term goal goes beyond pass rates. RTF aims to help learners build the foundational knowledge, confidence, and understanding required to progress successfully into the next grade.

5.3 Youth Leadership Council (YLC)

The Youth Leadership Council will continue to build on the momentum created during Winter Jam 2026. The YLC played an active role during the Winter Jam season, including participating in fundraising activities and contributing to the broader program environment.

The next phase of the YLC will place greater emphasis on visibility, implementation, and measurable community engagement. The final activity plan is being developed, with the intention of ensuring that the YLC remains active beyond Winter Jam and continues to have a visible presence within the community. The next community engagement activities are planned for Term 3 and the school holiday period.

The program will also continue exploring ways in which the YLC can contribute to fundraising and community-based initiatives. This is important because it gives young people an opportunity not only to participate in programs, but also to take responsibility and contribute practically towards the sustainability of activities that benefit their community.

The next stage of the YLC should therefore focus on:

- implementing a clear activity plan;
- increasing visibility within the community;
- strengthening learner leadership;
- participating in community engagement initiatives;

- supporting selected fundraising activities; and
- Measuring the outcomes and impact of YLC activities.

5.4 Summer Jam 2027

Summer Jam 2027 will be the next major holiday program following the current program cycle. Planning should begin well in advance, particularly in the areas of volunteer recruitment, training, fundraising, academic content, logistics, and stakeholder communication.

Key dates are as follows:

2 January 2027 — Volunteer Training
4–9 January 2027—Summer Jam program
11 January 2027 — Volunteer Appreciation

The lessons from Winter Jam 2026 should directly inform Summer Jam planning. Particular attention should be given to stronger volunteer preparation, clearer accountability structures, learner assessment, classroom allocation, parent communication, and post-program follow-up. These were identified as important areas for continued organizational development following Winter Jam.

5.5 Winter Jam 2027

Winter Jam 2027 will build on the experience and systems developed during the 2026 program. Winter Jam 2026 demonstrated that the program has grown in its ability to respond to challenges and adjust during implementation. However, it also showed that operational systems must continue to grow alongside the program itself.

Planning for Winter Jam 2027 should therefore begin early and should prioritize volunteer recruitment and succession planning; stronger practical volunteer preparation; improved classroom allocation; clearer accountability structures; early learner assessment and grouping; stronger parent engagement; improved learner safety measures; targeted academic support; and structured post-program follow-up.

The key dates are:

26 June 2027 — Volunteer Training
28 June–17 July 2027—Winter Jam program
19 July 2027 — Volunteer Appreciation

5.6 Looking Ahead

The period following Winter Jam 2026 is not simply a break between programs. It is an opportunity to use what has been learned to strengthen the organization's year-round work.

Winter Jam 2026 showed that program development and operational discipline need to grow together. The organization has become more capable of delivering large programs, but the next stage requires greater intentionality around the systems that support that work. These include volunteer preparation, classroom allocation, accountability, parent engagement, learner safety, assessment data, and post-program follow-up.

The upcoming program cycle will, therefore, focus not only on delivering activities but also on strengthening the foundation behind them. The aim is to ensure that each program contributes to the next, with lessons from Winter Jam informing RTF, RTF data informing future academic programs, and the YLC continuing to develop young people as active contributors within their community.

6. Conclusion

Winter Jam 2026 was a successful program that demonstrated both the value of the work being done and the areas that require further development. Despite challenges relating to volunteer capacity, classroom management, parent participation, and other operational matters, the program continued to provide learners with meaningful academic support, encouragement, and a positive holiday experience.

The feedback and analysis in this report provide a strong foundation for future planning. The key focus moving forward will be to build on what worked, address the identified challenges, and strengthen the systems that support MI's growing programs.

Annexures

1. School Demographics at Winter Jam 2026

#	School	Learners
1	Solomon Mahlangu (Freedom School / Secondary)	34
2	Lehlabile Secondary	30
3	Ribane Laka (Rebane Laka / Ribanelaka)	29
4	Gatang Secondary	28
5	Vlakfontein Secondary	22
6	Phateng Secondary	21
7	Stanza Bopape Secondary	20
8	Somafco	17
9	Vukani Mawethu	13
10	Bona Lesedi	11
11	Bajabulile Primary	9
12	Mamelodi High (incl. “Mams High”)	8
13	Prosperitus Secondary (incl. “Pros SS”, “Prospectors”)	7
14	Jafta Mahlangu Secondary	6
15	Pretoria High School for Girls (incl. “PHSG”, “Girls High”)	6
16	Eersterust Secondary	6
17	Mfundzo Dintshedza Primary	6
18	Mamelodi Secondary	5
19	J. Kekana Secondary	5
20	Derdepoort Laerskool	5
21	Lompec	4
22	Silverton (High / Hoerskool)	4
23	Nellmapius Secondary	4
24	Balebogeng Primary	4
25	Boikgantso Primary	4
26	FH Odendaal	4
27	Lesedi Secondary	3
28	Glenmark Christian School	3
29	Rosina Sedibane	3
30	Norridge Park Primary	3
31	Pretoria Technical High	2
32	Nellmapius Primary	2

33	Koosmatla Primary	2
34	Puladifate Primary	2
35	Akasia Laerskool	2
36	Mohale Primary	2
37	Cullinan Secondary	2
38	Charisma School	2
39	Extension 6 Primary	2
40	Mogale Primary	2
41	Modiri (SS / Technical)	2
42	CR Swart	2
43	Mahube Valley Secondary	2
44–80	**37 schools with 1 learner each:** School of Excellence, Sematla PS, Urban "Suwwers", PS Fourie, Jan Kotlolo PS, Willridge High, Haakdoorn PS, DG Tsebe, Sikhanyisele PS, Chauke PS, Vukuzenzele SS, Nkumbulu, Arethabeng PS, Purehope PS, Deutsche International School, Blueroof Secondary, Pelotona Secondary, Manyako SS, Fred Magardie PS, Ikatisong Secondary, Tsako Thabo, Sijejewe, Clapham, Mveledzo, Morakoma PS, Klopper Park PS, Pro Arte Alphen Park, Ferndale High, Pretoria Central, Flavius Mareka, Christian Progressive College, Kilnerton PS, Harry Oppenheimer, Meyer's Park, Corner Stone College, The Glen HS, Mohale SS	37

2. Annexure A: Combined Table for Significant Improvements

Combined Table for Significant Improvements								
Grade	**N**	**Area of Improvement / Performance**	**Pre-Test Mean**	**Post-Test Mean**	**Average Change**	**Pre-Test %**	**Post-Test %**	**p-value**
Grade 6	6	Division (÷)	0.00/5	2.33/5	2.33	0.00%	46.67%	0.0335
		Overall Mathematics	**5.17/40**	**9.83/40**	**4.67**	**12.92%**	**24.58%**	**0.0395**
Grade 7	15	Division (÷)	0.60/5	1.40/5	0.80	12.00%	28.00%	0.0472
		Overall Mathematics	**7.33/40**	**9.80/40**	**2.47**	**18.33%**	**24.50%**	**0.0529**
Grade 8	15	Division (÷)	0.33/5	2.07/5	1.73	6.67%	41.33%	0.0001
		Overall Mathematics	**9.67/40**	**7.87/40**	**−1.80**	**24.17%**	**19.67%**	**0.1621**
Grade 9	32	Division (÷)	0.59/5	1.22/5	0.63	11.88%	24.38%	0.0435
		Fractions (a/b)	0.56/5	1.69/5	1.13	11.25%	33.75%	0.0009
		Addition/subtraction of fractions	0.13/5	0.97/5	0.84	2.50%	19.38%	0.000003
		Multiplication/division of	0.16/5	0.78/5	0.63	3.13%	15.63%	0.000002

		fractions						
		Overall Mathematics	**8.53/40**	**9.28/40**	**0.75**	**21.33%**	**23.20%**	**0.4942**
Grade 10	15	Division (÷)	0.47/5	2.40/5	1.93	9.33%	48.00%	0.0003
		Fractions (a/b)	0.07/5	1.33/5	1.27	1.33%	26.67%	0.0003
		Overall Mathematics	**6.47/40**	**10.67/40**	**4.20**	**16.17%**	**26.67%**	**0.0053**
Grade 11	29	Division (÷)	0.52/5	1.48/5	0.97	10.34%	29.66%	0.0036
		Overall Mathematics	**8.03/40**	**9.86/40**	**1.83**	**20.09%**	**24.66%**	**0.0359**
Grade 12	7	Addition/subtraction of fractions	0.00/5	1.43/5	1.43	0.00%	28.57%	0.0465
		Overall Mathematics	**8.57/40**	**10.71/40**	**2.14**	**21.43%**	**26.79%**	**0.3582**

3. Annexure 2: English - Grades 6 to 12 Combined for Essays

Grades 6 to 12 Combined for Essays								
Grade	**N**	**Pre-Test Mean**	**Post-Test Mean**	**Average Change**	**Pre-Test %**	**Post-Test %**	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Grade 6	14	2.63/10	5.13/10	2.5	26.25%	51.25%	0.0066	Significant improvement
Grade 7	1	4.00/10	6.00/10	2	40.00%	60.00%	N/A[1]	Descriptive improvement
Grade 8	11	4.56/10	3.67/10	−0.89	45.56%	36.67%	0.1839	No significant change
Grade 9	25	4.00/10	6.22/10	2.22	40.00%	62.17%	0.0024	Significant improvement
Grade 10	20	5.26/10	3.95/10	−1.32	52.63%	39.47%	0.0029	Significant decrease
Grade 11	34	5.91/10	5.47/10	−0.44	59.06%	54.69%	0.2176	No significant change
Grade 12	1	4.00/10	6.00/10	2	40.00%	60.00%	N/A[1]	Descriptive improvement
[1] N/A: Statistical significance was not calculated because only one learner had paired pre- and post-test essay results.								

4. Annexure C: Summary of Combined Findings

Theme	Learner Experience	Volunteer Experience	Overall Finding
Overall satisfaction	Very positive	Generally positive	Catering was successful overall.
Food timing	Significantly improved	Strongly positive	Major operational improvement
Food quality	Highly positive	Positive but mixed	Generally good
Dry food	Some concerns	Strong recurring concern	Requires attention
Seasoning	Repeated concern	Repeated concern	Clear improvement area
Drinks	Some concerns	Significant concern	The distribution system should improve.
Breakfast	Limited feedback	Major concern around cost and availability	Expectations need clearer management.
Dietary requirements	Generally positive	Inconsistent implementation	Stronger monitoring required
Menu variety	Some mixed preferences	Clear demand for more variety	Menu review recommended
Food temperature	Limited concern	Some concern	Post-collection monitoring needed

5. Annexure D: Winter Jam 2026 Profit and Loss Report

Winter Jam Profit and Loss Report for June 26-August 26								
The Mamelodi Initiative								
	Actual 2026		Budgeted 2026		Actual 2025		Budgeted 2025	
	R	Dollar	R	Dollar	R	Dollar	R	Dollar
Other Income								
Cash Deposit	R5,974.00	$376.36	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00
Cash Refund	R28.00	$1.76	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00
Donation Income	R552,438.00	$34,803.59	R250,000.00	$15,750.00	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00
Total for Other Income	**R558,440.00**	**$35,055.87**	**R250,000.00**	**$0.00**	**R0.00**	**$0.00**	**R0.00**	**$0.00**
Total for Expenses	**R275,176.00**	**$17,336.09**	**R358,650.00**	**$22,090.95**	**R258,745.00**	**$0.00**	**R333,100.00**	**$18,653.60**
Entertainment	R656.00	$41.33	R0.00	R0.00	R605.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00
Fuel Costs	R6,450.00	$406.35	R6,000.00	$378.00	R3,200.00	$0.00	R6,500.00	$364.00
Printing	R25,100.00	$1,581.30	R9,200.00	R579.60	R23,100.00	$1,293.60	R24,500.00	$1,372.00
Certificate Printing	R590.00	$37.17	R0.00	$0.00	R2,046.00	$114.58	R10,000.00	$560.00
Marketing	R0.00	$0.00	R4,000.00	R252.00	R2,970.00	$166.32	R2,500.00	$140.00
Prize Giving	R4,339.00	$273.36	R14,000.00	R882.00	R3,296.00	$184.58	R3,000.00	$168.00
Relationship Building - External Meeting	R1,000.00	$63.00	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00
Stationery & Supplies	R14,253.00	$897.94	R20,000.00	$1,260.00	R7,263.00	$406.73	R27,750.00	$1,554.00
Sundry Expenses	R5,531.00	$348.45	R10,000.00	R630.00	R396.00	$22.18	R0.00	$0.00
Transport	R9,940.00	$626.22	R34,650.00	R2,182.95	R35,270.00	$1,975.12	R32,850.00	$1,839.60
Venue & Conference Hall Hiring	R2,852.00	$179.68	R0.00	$0.00	R2,184.00	$122.30	R10,000.00	$560.00
Volunteer & delegate refreshments	R198,085.00	$12,479.36	R249,800.00	$15,737.40	R177,315.00	$9,929.64	R214,000.00	$11,984.00
Winter Jam Closing	R4,420.00	$278.46	R8,000.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00	R0.00	$0.00
Winter Jam Planning	R1,960.00	$123.48	R3,000.00	$189.00	R1,100.00	$61.60	R2,000.00	$112.00
Net Profit Or Loss Before Tax	**R283,264.00**	**$17,719.78**	**-R108,650.00**	**-$22,090.95**	**-R258,745.00**	**-$14,489.72**	**-R333,100.00**	**-$18,653.60**