

I am Lina Makaula, born and raised in a small village called Bizana in the Eastern Cape. My journey in higher education began in 2022 when I was accepted into the LLB programme. It was an exciting and hopeful time, but it was also one of the most difficult periods of my life. During my second year, I lost my older brother, the one person who had always supported me emotionally and financially throughout my studies. His passing changed everything.

In October of my second year, I applied for the 18twenty8 bursary. At the time, I was overwhelmed with academic pressure, and financial uncertainty. About a month later, I received a call that changed my life. 18twenty8 informed me that they would settle my 2023 student debt and support me going forward. They didn't just fund my studies; they walked the journey with me. They checked up on me regularly, provided therapy when I needed it most, and continuously reminded me that I was not alone.

Their support showed me the true meaning of the saying, "it takes a village to raise a child." In moments when I felt like giving up, they became part of my village, lifting me up and helping me continue when I had no strength left.

I am truly here today because of 18twenty8, and I will forever be grateful for their kindness, their belief in me, and the opportunities they opened for me at a time when I felt lost. Their impact on my life will always stay with me.

Thank you 18twenty8 Team.