



Aurelian Beneficial Trust

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



www.aureliantrust.co.za

THE CONTENT

Who are we

01

Key Highlights

02

Statement from the Chairperson

03

Industry-Academia Collaboration

04

Programs and Impact

05

Governance and Management

06

Future Plans and Strategies

07

Financial Report

08

Donors, Partners and Stakeholders

09

WHO WE ARE

Aurelian Beneficial Trust (ABT) is a charitable trust dedicated to driving access to quality education, skills development, and vocational training. As a key enabler of workforce readiness, ABT collaborates with industry and academic institutions to bridge the gap between education and employment, contributing to the development of critical skills essential for South Africa's economic growth.

Anchored in the global commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), ABT actively works to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. By aligning its mission with SDG 4, ABT fosters initiatives that address educational disparities, enhance teaching and learning environments, and equip youth and adults alike with relevant skills for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship.

This 2025 Annual Report provides a transparent and in-depth overview of ABT's impact, highlighting key achievements, strategic partnerships, and initiatives that drive sustainable change. It serves as a vital tool for stakeholder engagement, accountability, and compliance with reporting standards, while affirming our ongoing contribution to South Africa's education and economic development landscape within the broader framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda.



WHAT WE STAND FOR



Integrity

We uphold transparency and ethical conduct in all our actions, thereby fostering trust and accountability.



Commitment

We are dedicated to making a lasting impact through consistent support and resources for education and skills development.



Compassion

We approach our work with empathy, understanding, and respect for the diverse needs of the communities we serve.



Excellence

We approach our work with empathy, understanding, and respect for the diverse needs of the communities we serve.



Professionalism

We maintain reliability, competence, and respect in all interactions, reflecting the importance of our mission.



Respect

We honour the dignity and potential of every individual, promoting an inclusive and supportive environment.



Collaboration

We enhance our Impact through strong partnerships and collective efforts, working together to create sustainable change.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Completion of Phase1:Workshop Upgrade at Fort Cox Agricultural College
- Formalisation of Industry-Academia Collaboration with Harmony Gold & Vuselela TVET College
- Partnership with N2P to provide workplace-based learning for students from Ikhala TVET College and lecturer exposure to modern farming operations, enhancing curriculum relevance and employability.
- ABT's education support strategy was achieved when Fort Cox received provisional accreditation from the Engineering Council of South Africa in November 2024.
- ABT began groundwork to incorporate tourism & hospitality as a focus area by identifying strategic partners and potential employers for graduates and internships.
- ABT held strategic meetings with the Austrian and German Embassies and engaged the Southern African-German Chamber of Commerce, to explore support for vocational training, particularly in engineering and tourism sectors.

Through the promotion of charitable causes, we avail resources to needy communities.



STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Buyelwa Sonjica
Chairperson, Aurelian Beneficial Trust



"ABT's mission to bridge the gap between education and employment has never been more urgent."

It is with great pride and a deep sense of purpose that I present the 2025 Annual Report of the Aurelian Beneficial Trust (ABT). This year has been one of consolidation and growth—marked by strengthened partnerships, increased programmatic impact, and a deepening commitment to transforming education and training in South Africa.

ABT's mission to bridge the gap between education and employment has never been more urgent. As our country grapples with high youth unemployment and a growing skills deficit, our efforts to foster industry-academia collaboration and experiential learning are proving to be not only relevant but vital. Through targeted partnerships in agriculture, engineering, ICT, and tourism, we are unlocking opportunities for young people to access quality education and practical training that prepares them for meaningful careers.

The success of the Fort Cox workshop upgrade—made possible through a landmark partnership with Barloworld Trust—is a testament to what can be achieved when like-minded stakeholders come together with a shared vision. Similarly, our collaborations with Harmony Gold and Number Two Piggeries have set new benchmarks for how industry engagement can directly uplift students, institutions, and communities.

As we look ahead, ABT is resolute in its vision of being a catalyst for access to quality education. We are committed to deepening our impact, growing our network, and ensuring that our work continues to align with national development goals. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our partners, trustees, management team, and, most importantly, the students and communities we serve. Your trust, support, and commitment fuel our journey toward a more inclusive, skilled, and hopeful South Africa.

Yours sincerely

Buyelwa Sonjica
Chairperson, Aurelian Beneficial Trust

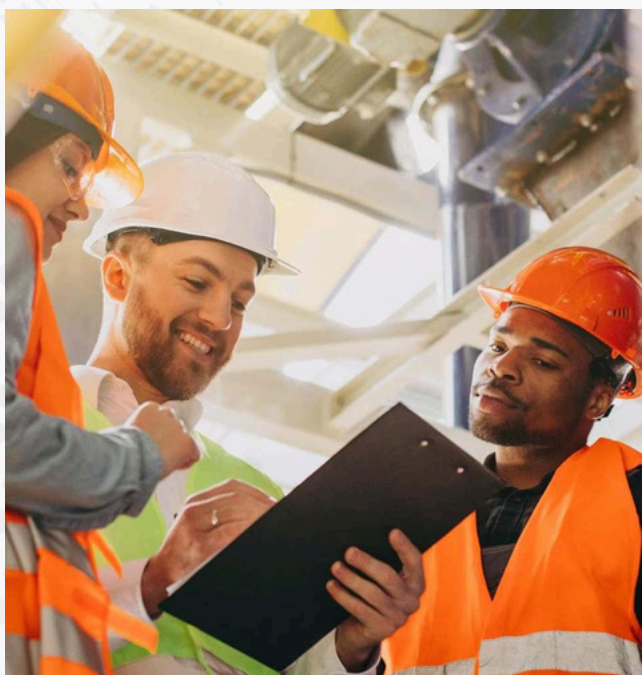


*As we look ahead, ABT is resolute
in its vision of being a catalyst
for access to quality education.*

The Impact of Industry-Academia Collaboration on Skills Development and Innovation in South Africa

The collaboration between industries and academic institutions has emerged as a central pillar in addressing South Africa's pressing need for a skilled workforce. As the country strives to meet its developmental goals, particularly those outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP), the role of partnerships in skills development cannot be overstated. This model fosters innovation, reduces skills mismatches, and equips the workforce with the relevant skills to thrive in the global economy.

Fostering Innovation through Industry-Academia Partnerships: Aurelian Beneficial Trust (ABT) is committed to facilitating collaboration between TVET colleges and industry leaders. By forging partnerships with key sectors such as agriculture, ICT, engineering, and tourism, ABT aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. These collaborations not only enhance the employability of graduates but also contribute to research, innovation, and the development of new technologies that are essential for sustaining economic growth.



Research has shown that such partnerships can drive up to a 40% increase in employment rates for graduates of programs closely aligned with industry needs (World Economic Forum, 2024). Additionally, businesses benefit by gaining access to a pool of job-ready candidates with the skills necessary to meet industry demands. This symbiotic relationship is central to developing a workforce capable of addressing both current challenges and emerging trends in the economy

Addressing South Africa's Skills Gap and Unemployment Crisis:

South Africa faces a significant skills gap, particularly in technical and vocational fields. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), there is a severe shortage of skilled artisans and technicians, with only 15,000 artisans being produced annually, far short of the 30,000 required by 2030. ABT is at the forefront of efforts to mitigate this gap, particularly through Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs that integrate industry experience into the academic curriculum. These programs are designed to improve the quality of education and provide students with the hands-on experience needed to succeed in their careers.

By enhancing apprenticeship and learnership programs, ABT is contributing to the broader goal of reducing youth unemployment, which stood at over 60% in 2024 for those aged 15-24 (Statistics South Africa, 2024). Providing industry-relevant training not only improves the employability of young South Africans but also addresses the broader economic challenge of high youth unemployment.

Creating Pathways for Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth:

ABT's strategic initiatives also focus on fostering entrepreneurship among students and graduates. In line with the NDP's goal of increasing the number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa, ABT works with industries to create pathways for students to not only find employment but also to start their own businesses. These entrepreneurship programs are designed to equip learners with critical business skills, including financial management, marketing, and innovation.

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic diversification and job creation. According to the World Bank (2023), SMEs account for over 80% of

job creation in emerging economies, making it essential for South Africa to support the growth of small businesses. Through partnerships with industries, ABT is helping to nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to South Africa's long-term economic development.

Advancing Global Competitiveness and Export Potential:

In today's globalized economy, it is essential that South Africa's workforce is equipped with skills that meet international standards. ABT's focus on aligning training programs with global industry requirements is helping South African graduates remain competitive in the global labour market. By fostering international partnerships and ensuring that local skills align with global demand, ABT is helping South African businesses attract foreign investment and expand their export potential.

The recent establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) further underscores the importance of a skilled, adaptable workforce capable of driving growth across Africa. As South Africa positions itself as a key player in this economic bloc, ABT's role in strengthening industry-academia collaborations will be critical to ensuring that the country's workforce is ready for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Through strategic partnerships, industry-academia collaborations, and a focus on fostering entrepreneurship, ABT continues to play a crucial role in shaping South Africa's workforce for the future. By ensuring that educational programs are closely aligned with industry needs, ABT not only enhances the quality of education but also helps to address the skills gap, reduce unemployment, and foster innovation. This multifaceted approach is vital in driving economic growth, competitiveness, and sustainable development in South Africa.



PROGRAMS & IMPACT

“Aurelian Beneficial Trust (ABT) is dedicated to supporting education through strategic collaborations and interventions. Our initiatives focus on improving teaching quality, aligning education with market demands, and enhancing learning outcomes in partner institutions. This section provides an overview of our ongoing efforts and their impact on education.”

FORT COX WORKSHOP PROJECT

Fort Cox Agricultural College is pursuing accreditation from the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) to reinforce its stature as a leading institution for agricultural engineering programs. To achieve this objective, Aurelian Beneficial Trust (ABT) orchestrated a strategic partnership between Fort Cox College and Barloworld Trust to refurbish and modernize the college's workshop facilities. In a demonstration of commitment, Barloworld Trust has pledged R5 million over a five-year period to support the project. Phase one of the procurement was successfully completed in May 2024, marking a significant milestone in the initiative. As a result, Fort Cox Agricultural College received provisional accreditation from ECSA in November 2024, a major step towards full accreditation. With phase two of the procurement now underway and anticipated to be completed by May 2025, all stakeholders remain actively engaged in acquiring additional machines and equipment to further enhance the college's workshop

capabilities. The impact of this collaboration is substantial, as it not only aligns with the college's objective of securing full accreditation but also strengthens its ability to deliver high-quality agricultural engineering education. To celebrate the successful culmination of this initiative, an official handover ceremony is planned to be held before the end of 2025. This event will serve as a testament to the collaborative efforts between Fort Cox Agricultural College, ABT, and Barloworld Trust in advancing skills development and technical education.



Before



After

The impact of this collaboration is substantial, as it not only aligns with the college's objective of securing full accreditation but also strengthens its ability to deliver high-quality agricultural engineering education. To celebrate the successful culmination of this initiative, an official handover ceremony is planned to be held before the end of 2025. This event will serve as a testament to the collaborative efforts between Fort Cox Agricultural College, ABT, and Barloworld Trust in advancing skills development and technical education.

Technical & Non-Technical Training programme

Strengthening industry-academic collaboration, Aurelian Beneficial Trust has brought together Harmony Gold and Vuselela TVET College to create valuable opportunities for students to gain practical workplace experience. Initiated in 2024, this partnership directly addresses the need for career-aligned training in both technical and non-technical fields.

Building on engagements throughout 2024, the three partners formalized their commitment in March 2025. Over the next three years, the initiative will provide structured support for both technical and non-technical students, equipping them with the skills and experience needed to transition into the workforce successfully:

- 15 learners will be hosted over three years in non-technical disciplines, including Information and communications technology (ICT).
- 12 learners will be hosted for artisan training over three years in Fitting and Turning, Boiler making, Electrical Work, Rigging, and Mechanical Engineering, with two intakes per year to maximize opportunities.

The three intakes are scheduled for the 2025/26 period, with the first in July 2025, the second in January 2026, and the final intake in July 2026. This marks a significant step in strengthening industry-academic linkages. By facilitating these placements, ABT continues to drive skills development, workplace readiness, and economic growth through strategic partnerships.

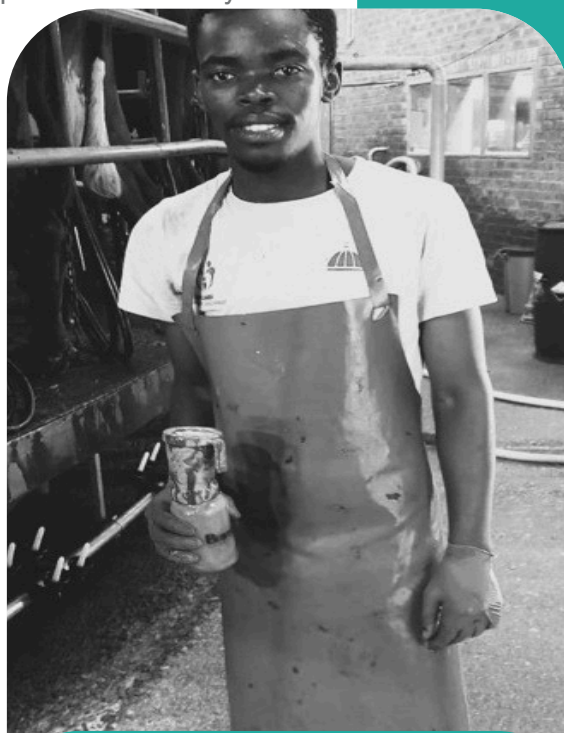


Strengthening Agricultural Training & Partnership with Number Two Piggeries (N2P)

The Trust continues to expand its commitment to skills development and industry-aligned training through strategic partnerships. In September 2024, ABT formalized a collaboration with Number Two Piggeries (N2P), a leading agricultural enterprise in the Eastern Cape, to enhance student and lecturer training in the agricultural sector.

This partnership is designed to provide experiential learning opportunities and industry exposure to students and faculty from ABT's partner institutions, ensuring alignment between academic programs and real-world agricultural practices. The key components of this collaboration include:

- **Workplace-Based Learning** – N2P is hosting students from ABT-affiliated institutions for experiential training in Farming and Primary Agriculture, allowing them to gain practical knowledge in a commercial farming environment.
- **Lecturer Industry Exposure** – Faculty members are also hosted at N2P's operations, providing them with firsthand experience of emerging agricultural technologies and industry best practices to enhance curriculum delivery.
- **Academic-Industry Advisory Support** – N2P has committed to nominating a representative to serve on the advisory board of one of ABT's partner institutions, offering expert insights to strengthen academic programs and industry relevance.



Yonela Ntlanga, an Ikhala TVET graduate, gaining hands-on experience during his 12-month training programme at Number Two Piggeries, a placement facilitated by the Trust

As part of its commitment to supporting young agricultural talent, N2P conducted its student recruitment process in October 2024 for the January–December 2025 intake of its Student Training Programme. Through ABT's facilitation, Farming Management students from Ikhala TVET College actively participated in this selection process, reinforcing ABT's role in bridging the gap between education and employment.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone in ABT's mission to enhance vocational training, strengthen industry-academic linkages, and equip students with the skills required for sustainable careers in agriculture. As ABT and N2P move forward, further efforts will be made in 2025 to maximize the impact of this partnership, ensuring that more students and lecturers benefit from innovative training opportunities and industry-driven learning experiences.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



Ms Buyelwa Sonjica

Chairperson



Mr Sango Ntsaluba (CA) SA

Trustee



Dr Nomonde Ngubentombi

Trustee



Mr Ayanda Ntsho (CA) SA

Trustee

FUTURE PLANS & STRATEGIES

In alignment with ABT's five-year strategic vision, the Trust will continue to build on the foundations laid in the previous year while expanding its efforts across key operational areas. The immediate focus is on strengthening internal capacity, diversifying funding sources, and amplifying ABT's visibility to enhance impact and sustainability.

Partnership Strengthening: ABT remains committed to deepening its existing partnerships with educational institutions and industry stakeholders through ongoing collaboration and structured engagement. This includes regular meetings to review progress, share feedback, and align on the implementation of joint initiatives.

In 2025, ABT will actively pursue new partnerships that support its mandate, with a particular focus on enhancing Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities and exposing lecturers to current industry practices. One key collaboration under exploration is with Number 2 Piggery, a major player in the agricultural sector. This partnership is intended to benefit ABT's partner institutions in the Eastern Cape, providing students and academic staff with valuable exposure to modern agricultural technologies and industry expectations.

ABT will also explore collaborations with local farmers in the Eastern Cape to strengthen the WIL programme. This initiative aims to address concerns about the limited number of host employers available to support experiential learning, ensuring that students gain practical, hands-on experience in real-world agricultural settings. On the international front, ABT is engaging with the China Education Association for International

Exchange (CEAIE) to strengthen global academic cooperation and resource exchange. This partnership is expected to open new opportunities for institutional capacity building, cross-border learning, and international exposure for both students and educators.

At the same time, ABT is exploring partnerships within the renewable energy sector and looking to play a role in addressing the skills required for the critical minerals industry. This initiative aims to ensure that students from partner TVET institutions are equipped with the necessary competencies to meet industry demands, bridging the gap between education and the evolving needs of these high-impact sectors.

Through these strategic partnerships, ABT aims to bridge the gap between education and industry, ensuring that its beneficiaries are equipped with relevant, practical skills and global perspectives.

Fundraising: ABT aims to continuously develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy, encompassing the preparation of compelling grant proposals tailored to the Trust's mission. This strategy will include the establishment of a donor database and engagement plan, as well as maintaining a grant calendar for timely submissions and compliance. Additionally, ABT will explore other fund-generating opportunities, such as creating a commercial arm to fund operational costs and collaborate closely with embassies to explore funding opportunities and support for educational initiatives. Moreover, ABT will explore joint projects with other NGOs to enhance its reach and impact, leveraging collaborative partnerships for additional fundraising avenues.

Expansion: Building on insights from previous partnerships with six tertiary institutions, ABT remains committed to expanding access to quality education and skills development. In 2025/26, the Trust will onboard three new TVET colleges as strategic partners, each from a province not currently covered. This deliberate expansion will enable ABT to broaden its geographic footprint and serve a more diverse beneficiary

To support this initiative, ABT will implement the partnerships in structured, manageable phases, guided by urgency, feasibility, and resource availability. Additionally, the Trust will identify and secure relevant collaborators to ensure the sustainable rollout and successful implementation of programs at the new institutions.

Staff Development: Recognizing the pivotal role of a skilled and motivated team, ABT is prioritizing staff development to support its growing scope. ABT will invest in targeted professional development for its team through workshops and training in areas such as fundraising, program management, and strategic planning. Regular performance reviews will be conducted to provide constructive feedback, recognize achievements, and boost staff motivation as the organization continues to grow.

Resource Mobilization: The Trust remains committed to fundraising while placing a greater emphasis on diversifying revenue streams. In 2025, efforts will focus on exploring social impact investment opportunities, targeting investors who seek both social returns and financial viability. To attract this form of capital, compelling business cases will be developed, demonstrating the long-term value and impact of key initiatives. To enhance financial sustainability, the establishment of an endowment fund is under consideration. A portion of the funds raised will be allocated toward building and growing this fund incrementally, ensuring a stable financial foundation for future programs. Strengthening donor stewardship practices will also be a priority, fostering long-term relationships and securing continued support.

Beyond financial contributions, expanding the network of strategic partnerships will be a key focus. Collaborations will extend beyond funding to include in-kind contributions, shared resources, and joint initiatives that amplify impact and create lasting value for beneficiaries.

By strengthening its governance framework, the Trust is laying a solid foundation for longterm sustainability and operational excellence, reinforcing its ability to deliver meaningful impact while maintaining stakeholder confidence

Marketing and Public Awareness: In 2025, ABT will continue to build on its marketing efforts, focusing on increasing visibility and impact. Key initiatives will include enhancing social media presence, engaging in webinars and conferences with like-minded organizations, and forming new partnerships with other NGOs to broaden its reach.

ABT will also strengthen its relationships with media outlets to secure coverage for its events and achievements. To further advocate for quality education and vocational training, ABT will launch targeted media and public awareness campaigns.

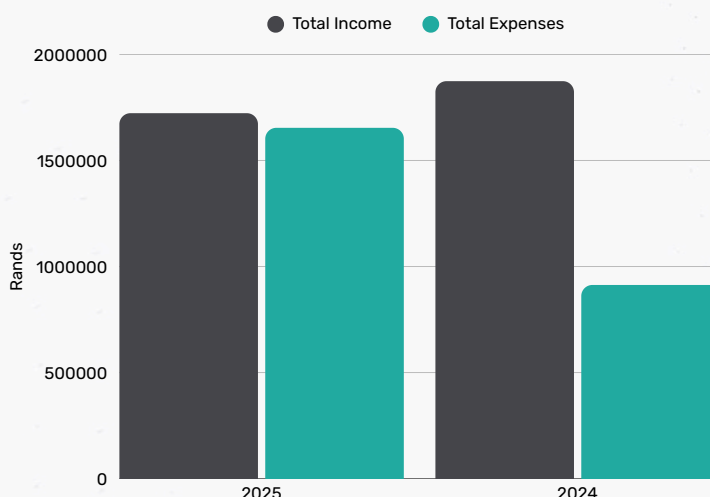
These campaigns will highlight success stories and beneficiary testimonials, aiming to build greater public understanding and support for the Trust's mission through both digital and traditional media channels.

These efforts will continue to amplify ABT's reach, reinforcing its role as a leader in education and skills development in South Africa.

Financial Report

Aurelian Beneficial Trust - 2025 Financial Overview

Income and Expenses Overview : 2025 and 2024

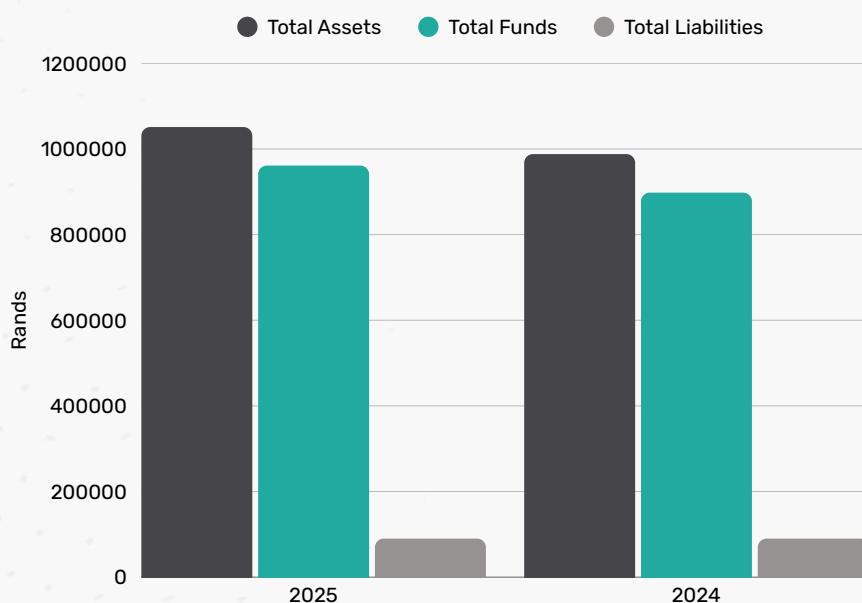


Total income for the 2025 financial year was R1,723,000, slightly lower than the R1,874,000 recorded in 2024. This year-on-year movement reflects the funding structure of the Trust's activities. In 2024, additional funds had been received to meet an unexpected VAT adjustment on a supplier invoice for a key project. By comparison, 2025 income reflected the expected program and operational requirements for the period, without any top-up being required.

Total expenses rose to R1,654,000 in 2025, up from R913,000 in the prior year. This increase was primarily driven by the final payment toward a significant project that had only been partially disbursed in the prior period. In 2024, only a deposit was paid; the remaining balance was settled in 2025 in line with the project's delivery phase. Operational costs also saw a modest increase, supporting the Trust's expanding engagement and reporting requirements.

The Trust remains deeply appreciative of its funding partners, whose continued support makes these outcomes possible. As demand for its work continues to grow, the Trust is also open to expanding its funding base to enable broader delivery and long-term impact.

Financial Position Overview : 2025 and 2024



While ABT's income and expense profile highlights the flow of funds through the Trust, it is equally important to consider the balance sheet perspective.

Total assets increased slightly year-on-year, reflecting the timing of program-related funds held temporarily for delivery, in particular for the Fort Cox Workshop Project. The movement in assets is driven primarily by the flow of program funds received and invested pending disbursement in accordance with the project schedule. This is consistent with the Trust's role in managing program funding efficiently and ensuring resources are deployed in line with delivery milestones.

Funds also increased slightly year-on-year, aligned to the timing of program-related receipts and disbursements. The Trust ensures that funds received for specific programs are appropriately managed and allocated, with year-on-year movements reflecting the natural cycle of income receipt and program spend. This disciplined approach to managing flow-through funding supports transparency and alignment with the Trust's mission.

Total liabilities remained stable between 2024 and 2025, underscoring the Trust's commitment to maintaining a sound and balanced financial structure.

Taken together, the year-on-year movements in ABT's financial position reflect a responsive and transparent approach to managing program-related funding and operational stability. The Trust remains well positioned to steward these resources responsibly and to sustain its contribution to education and skills development in partnership with its current and future supporters.

DONORS, PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS





072 777 4086
info@aureliantrust.co.za



Aurelian Beneficial Trust