What a financial needs analysis actually is

Client guide | Parallax Insurance Brokers CC | September 2026 | Johann Brand

In one line: I work out, in rands, what your family would actually receive on the day you die, the day you can no longer work, and the day you turn 65 — and what they would actually need. The distance between those two numbers is the whole point of the exercise. Most people have never seen theirs, and are wrong about it in the same six places.

1. Six questions. Almost nobody can answer all six.

The question	Why the confident answer is usually wrong
1. If you died tonight, how much cash is in your wife's account by Friday?	Not your total cover — the cash, that week. Retirement fund money is paid at the trustees' discretion and routinely takes six to twelve months. A policy with no beneficiary waits for an executor. Many families have millions on paper and nothing to bury someone with.
2. Your largest life policy — does it pay your family, or your bank?	If it was ceded when you took the bond, it pays the bank. The house gets settled and your family receives nothing from that policy. It is still listed on your schedule at full value, which is why people count it twice.
3. Whose name is on the beneficiary nomination?	On a great many policies the honest answer is nobody. Then the money falls into your estate, is frozen, and is released by the executor after the estate is wound up — while the bond and the school fees keep running.
4. Your group cover at work is three times *which* salary?	Almost always your **pensionable** salary, not what you earn. Where the pensionable figure is a third of real income, every “three times salary” benefit is three times the wrong number — and it ends the day you leave that employer.
5. At 65, what percentage of today's salary will you live on?	A fund built on a third of your income can never catch your lifestyle, no matter how well it performs. The arithmetic is fixed at the contribution, not at the return. People discover this at 60, when there is no time left to fix it.
6. Is there a signed will — and does it still say what the first five answers assume?	Every rand that is not paid to a named beneficiary is distributed by your will: the fund money once the trustees have decided, any policy with no nomination, the house, the business interest. Without a valid will the Intestate Succession rules decide who inherits, the Master of the High Court appoints the executor, and nobody has named a guardian for the children. A will written before the last policy, the bond or the second child is often as wrong as no will. It is the one document that makes the other five answers hold together, and it is the one most people have not signed.

If you had to guess at more than one of those, that is precisely the job. The analysis replaces five guesses with five measured numbers, and checks that the one document tying them together actually exists and still says what it should.

2. What gets measured, and how

Event	What I work out	The method, in plain words
Death	Cash on day one, then income for life	Bond, executor's fee (3.5% plus VAT), conveyancing, valuation, Master's fee and funeral — that is day-one cash. Then the income your family must replace, sized so the capital is never used up and remains for the children.
Permanent impairment	Every working year you would lose	Your full income from the day it happens to age 65, rising each year, valued in today's money. Not a perpetuity — after 65 your retirement money takes over, so nothing is counted twice.
Severe illness	Two years of income	Treatment, travel to specialists and recovery time, while the bond and the school fees carry on regardless. This is the benefit most portfolios simply do not have.
Retirement	The pot you need at 65	Enough to pay you three-quarters of your salary, rising with inflation, to age 90 — measured against what your fund will honestly be worth by then, not what you hope.
Education	Per child, to the level you want	Government, private, or abroad — costed in today's money and inflated to the year each child actually starts.

3. What we find (from real files, names removed)

One analysis, completed this year. A 35-year-old director, married, two children, well insured on paper and paying his premiums without fail. Five findings, none of them visible from the documents on his desk:

What he believed	What the analysis found
“My family is covered for the house.”	True — but his largest life policy was **ceded to the bank**. The bond would be settled and his family would receive **nothing** from that policy. He had been counting it as theirs for nine years.
“The policy pays my wife.”	There was **no beneficiary nominated at all**. She would have waited on an executor while the debit orders kept running.
“I have three times salary through work.”	Three times his **pensionable** salary, which was roughly a **third** of what he actually earned — and it belonged to a fund run by a family company, which he would lose the day that arrangement ended.
“I am covered if I am disabled.”	A meaningful slice of that “cover” was **his own retirement savings handed back early**, not insurance at all. Against thirty lost working years he held less than a fifth of what they were worth.
“And if I get cancer?”	**No severe illness cover on any policy.** Not reduced — absent.

He was not careless and he was not badly advised. Nobody had ever added it up. The first fix on his list cost nothing and took fifteen minutes.

4. What I need from you — one email

Bring me	Why it matters
Your retirement fund benefit statement	It carries your pensionable salary, fund value, contribution rate and the group life and disability multiples. This one document usually contains the first surprise.
Every policy schedule you hold	I read them for the two things clients never look at: who the beneficiary is, and whether the policy has been ceded to a bank.
Your bond balance and house value	These set the cash your estate needs on day one, and decide whether a cession is helping you or hiding from you.
What you *really* earn per month	Total income, not the payslip figure — commission, drawings, the lot. Every number in the analysis is built on it. Sizing cover off a pensionable salary is the single most expensive mistake in this business.
Your spouse's income and work benefits	Her cover reduces what you need to buy. Leaving it out means over-insuring you and charging you for it.

That is one email with attachments — about ten minutes of your time. If you cannot find something, send what you have and I will request the rest from the insurer directly. Everything after that email is my work, not yours.

5. What comes back to you

Document	What it is for
A one-page decision summary	Your money in three pictures — if you die tomorrow, if you can never work again, and the day you turn 65. Each shown as it stands today next to how it stands with the plan. Three decisions, three tick-boxes, and only three prices on the whole page. This is the page you actually read.
The full analysis	Every calculation set out line by line in plain words, with the assumptions stated and the Namibian rules that apply. Written so that you, or your accountant, can check my arithmetic. If a number in it cannot be traced to a document, it does not go in.
A housekeeping list	The fixes that cost nothing: beneficiary nominations, stale occupation records, a cession worth revisiting as the bond comes down, wills that need signing. These are free, and I will do the paperwork.

6. What people tell me, and what the numbers say

What I hear	What the file shows
“I already have cover through work.”	It is built on your **pensionable** salary, it is paid at the **trustees' discretion**, and it **ends the day you leave that employer**. It is a foundation, not a plan — and it is the benefit people most consistently overestimate.
“I am still young. I will sort it out later.”	Premiums are priced on your age and your health *today*. This is the cheapest the same cover will ever be offered to you, and one diagnosis between now and later closes the door on parts of it permanently.
“I would rather wait until the bond is paid off.”	While the bond is running is precisely when your family is most exposed. And if a policy is ceded to the bank, it is not protecting them — it is protecting the bank. That is worth knowing now, not in fifteen years.
“There is no room in the budget.”	The analysis routinely finds money already being spent badly: a benefit sized well above the measured need, cover duplicated between a policy and a fund, or premiums on cover that pays a bank. On the file in section 3, **more than half** of the recommended monthly figure was savings in his own name — not expense.
“Can I not just increase my cover and skip this?”	Increasing the wrong benefit is exactly how people end up over-insured on life cover and carrying **no severe illness cover at all**. You cannot right-size what nobody has measured.

7. What it costs

The analysis is free and carries no obligation. I am paid a commission by the insurer only if you decide to act on it, and the analysis states plainly where I earn and what the premium buys. You are free to take the document to another broker — it is written to be checked. Premiums are formally requoted before any application, so nothing is signed on an estimate.

8. What happens next

Step	What it involves	How long
1. You send the email	Fund benefit statement and policy schedules to cover@parallaxinsure.me. Subject: **FNA**.	10 minutes
2. We talk	Your real income, your children, what you want their schooling to look like, and what you want at 65. In person or on a call.	45 minutes
3. I do the work	Every event costed, every existing policy read, every gap measured against what you already hold.	My time, not yours
4. You get the pack	The one-page summary and the full analysis, walked through with you.	Within 5 working days
5. You tick what starts	Anything from all three decisions to none of them. The free housekeeping fixes stand either way.	Your call

Start with the free one. Whatever else you decide, check tonight who is nominated as the beneficiary on your policies — and whether any of them is ceded to your bank. If the answer is “nobody” or “I am not sure”, send me the schedule and I will confirm it and lodge the nomination for you. It costs nothing, it takes fifteen minutes, and it is the single most common thing I find sitting unfixed in an otherwise good portfolio.

Johann Brand | Parallax Insurance Brokers CC | cover@parallaxinsure.me | +264 81 239 7526 | www.parallaxinsure.me