

The education system does not prepare the youth to solve South Africa's problems

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I see Youth Month as an opportunity to understand our past, acknowledge the present and most importantly own our future.

- The Soweto Uprising was a sequence of protests led by black students in South Africa that started in the morning of 16 June 1976 in opposition to the Bantu Education Act which was designed to keep black students in their place of assumed inferiority and to prepare them for menial, low-wage labour.
- The aim was to disrupt the system setting them up for perpetual poverty.

From this history I've drawn that: "a government controls its people by not educating them, giving them a poor quality education or a facade of knowledge and skills attainment through unconducive environments for teaching and learning, all which entrenches dependency and perpetual poverty."

The unfortunate reality is that 44 years later in post-apartheid South Africa, and the worthy cause of disrupting an unjust education and skills development system is far from over and very prevalent as we speak today because it is a huge role player in our socio-economic challenges. It is still a system that produces outcomes of poverty and pockets of excellence.

There can be no doubt that the legacy of colonialism and apartheid continues to dictate our life stories. The circumstances of our birth still dictate our success. However, 26 years into our democratic dispensation and despite spending one-fifth of the country's budget on education, the majority of children in South Africa are poor and will receive an education that is considered amongst the very worst in the world.

The reality is that if you were to have the misfortune of being a poor child growing up in South Africa, you would most likely be one of the 50% of Grade 1 pupils who will never live to write a matric examination. You will most certainly be one of the 80% of children who would receive an education that is amongst the very worst in the world – an education that will consign you to a lifetime of poverty.

If through sheer grit and determination you manage to beat these odds of poor school infrastructure, unresponsive syllabus/curriculum, poor quality teaching, survive crossing rivers or not dying in a pit toilet - and still manage to write and pass a matric examination, chances are

you would be part of the 75% of matriculants without a bachelor's pass, with slim chances of accessing an institution of higher learning.

Without a decent education, any form of economic empowerment for South Africans will remain elusive.

TVETs and Universities have to inherit 10 to 12-year problems created by the basic education system.

Our Universities and TVETS flounder due to outdated curriculums which are not relevant for industries, the jobs market or entrepreneurship; and over saturated courses with few critical courses and dilapidated infrastructure.

If there are no ruptures in the current education system we will continue to produce graduates with outdated skills brought about by an incoherent curriculum, over-saturated courses, poor quality skills development. They will not be able to compete in the jobs market nor will they be equipped to solve our country's problems; maximise the potential of our resources and become innovators and entrepreneurs.

Thousands young people will be left in debt with no skills to show for it, let alone a certificate or academic record in hand.

I have no doubt that the government will continue to blame all of this on colonialism and apartheid, rightfully so. However, we must come to learn that whilst colonialism and apartheid placed young black South Africans in a state of economic disempowerment, it's the government of the day that has kept them there.

As a result of such a dismal education system:

- Over 10 million South Africans are unemployed;
- Over 3 million Youth are Not in Education, Employment or Training; and
- 60% of young people are unemployed.

Therefore, in order for us to maximise socio-economic opportunities and curb the rising youth unemployment statistics we need to:

- Change the philosophy to develop a syllabus or curriculum based on the following: a) What South African problems do we need to solve? b) What skills do we need to maximise the potential on the resources we have?
- Have 4 streams of education which are Theory, Technical Skills, Innovation and Entrepreneurship with a strong life skills component.
- Massive infrastructural development not just to catch up, but buildings of the future because the budget is there but needs to be used efficiently with consistent maintenance.
- Vigorously develop quality educators for these streams of education.
- A new Curriculum/Syllabus is more important than ever and its consistent monitoring thereof.

- A multi-model approach to learning must be localised to carve skills relevant for each locality.
- Preserve and build on the pockets of excellence!

“I being poor having nothing but my dreams, I spread my dreams beneath your feet, therefore thread carefully because you thread on my dreams.”

#TheYouthHustleContinues