

# **Without quality education, joblessness and poverty will persist while freedom remains elusive for South Africans**

By **Baxolile 'Bax' Nodada MP** – DA Shadow Minister of Basic Education

Sihlalo  
Malungu Abekekileyo  
Fellow South Africans,

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1994, our nation was filled with the hope and expectation of a “better life for all.”

Yet 28 years later, there is growing poverty, joblessness and chaos caused by the ANC government, a new form of oppression.

Things are getting worse EVERYDAY.

Real freedom comes from jobs, clean water and sanitation, electricity, good roads, solid houses, a good healthcare, safe communities and good education. Freedom without these, is not real freedom.

Education is a key tool that encompasses the opportunity to enable real freedom as was the dream from the generation of 1976 who fought against an inferior Bantu Education system.

It is unfathomable that we still find ourselves in a similar position despite attaining political freedom. Our education system still produces a vast majority of learners that dropout whom are under-skilled, end up jobless and join the 3,3 million youth not in education employment and skills training.

In 2021, the dropout rate of learners between grade 10 to 12 was 341 403 learners. Without education these learners will not be free, seeking to merely survive without having the necessary tools to secure adequate jobs, and truly achieve economic freedom.

Like the Bantu Education some of our schools are still made of mud, dilapidated asbestos and pit toilets.

Poor management has resulted in the delay in delivering of much needed textbooks and the forfeiture of a R200m grant meant for school infrastructure by ANC government in the Eastern Cape. This only widens the inequality gap in education especially where learners in rural and township areas are unable to take full advantage of education to get them out of poverty.

We have over 1500 underqualified teachers, which will negatively affect the delivery of quality teaching.

This education system does not foster real freedom despite access to it being a constitutional right.

The reality is, that if you are born a poor child growing up in South Africa, you would most likely be one of the 50% of grade 1 pupils who will never write a matric exam.

Most certainly you may be one of the 4 in 5 grade 4 learners who can't read or write for meaning and be part of the 80% of children who receive an education that is amongst the very worst in the world in almost all indicators – 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 infrastructure, an unresponsive curriculum, poor quality teaching, survive dying in a pit toilet and actually write and pass a matric examination, chances are you would be part of the 75% of matrics without a bachelor's pass.

If you choose to access a TVET you will surely bear the brunt of an outdated curriculum. If through hard work you manage to attain a diploma or degree you might be part of the thousands of graduates sitting at home or standing at robots looking for work.

When the ANC education system is done with you, you may be part of the 7 in every 10 South Africans without a job and have no real freedom from this broken Education system.

The classroom has the opportunity to provide a space for freedom, a space where our children can open their minds, to engage, to think critically and to remove the boundaries that seek to hold us back, and use it to change the circumstances of one's birth. The classroom, through the practice of quality teaching has the power to teach learners to confidently take advantage of opportunity, and to be a tool to end poverty despite ones background, race, gender, religion or location.

Where the DA governs; more children stay in school, school infrastructure is built and maintained despite budget cuts, quality of teaching is monitored, and more collaboration schools are built to harness skills needed for the economy.

It's time the ANC government did the same for the sake of real freedom for the future of this country whom are confined to a lifetime of poverty and joblessness.

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