

Budget on Debate Vote 20: Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Speech by Nazley Sharif MP

DA Shadow Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Thank you House Chairperson

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is failing in its duty to bring about change in South Africa. The role of the Department cannot be understated when looking at the realities and experiences of women, members of the LGBT+ community, young people and especially persons with disabilities. The fact of the matter is, this government does not care about women, they do not care about young people and they definitely do not care about persons with disabilities.

This is evident in what they call their so-called APP and their budget. When this is interrogated, it is as clear as day that this Department has no clue about what is happening on the ground and the issues faced by people every single day. After four years, they have nothing to show for the work they are meant to be doing. If this is not an indication of their failure, I do not know what is. The truth of the matter is that because this Department is failing, the people in this country suffer.

The DA welcomes the change in the Department's mandate – moving back to its original mandate that better aligned with what the Department needs to do: provide leadership in key areas as well as coordinate government's response to the issues facing womxn, youth and persons with disabilities. The lack of understanding of the mandate of the Department internally, how this is operationalized, and understanding by the country at large remains one of the Department's biggest challenges. People do not know what you do, you need to get it together.

The removal of key KPIs show that the Department is still far-removed from the realities on the ground. By removing targets focused on key legislation and having targets that are literally to produce reports is not smart, it is not aligned to the needs of the people and honestly it is a waste of time. The Department is meant to lead the fight against GBVF but program two is

underfunded and the targets are only focused on report development and not on what needs to be done. The merger of Youth and Persons with Disabilities show that the Department does not take young people and persons with disabilities seriously – the lack of budget, the lack of spending and the lack of capacity speak loudly. If this Department cared, it would reflect in their annual plan and their budget. Young people in Ennerdale, in Johannesburg like many other young people across this country struggle with substance abuse, with most young people getting addicted by the young age of at least 15 years old. The Department needs to do more to provide opportunities to young people as so many young people are already despondent and cannot see any positivity to motivate them to do better for themselves, their families and their communities.

Looking at the NYDA, the DA welcomes the efforts by the NYDA to source funding through their own donor funding initiatives and agrees with the committee that the NYDA must share best practice with the Department and the CGE. The biggest challenges remain access to the NYDA and its services, young people in Ennerdale, Eldos and Saldanha for example have no idea who the NYDA is and what they do. Young people living in Ennerdale, Eldos and Saldanha and many forgotten places need access to the NYDA and must be given opportunities to enter the job market and the economy. The lack of skills development and mentorship programs available for young people in these areas and across the country remains a challenge and the NYDA must ensure that they expand their reach to all corners of the country so that there are no young people left behind. The chances of young people succeeding is so low and the Department does not have any plans to assist young people and should hang their heads in shame.

The high rates of GBVF amongst young people in Ennerdale and across the country continues unabated. Again, the Department has no plans to deal with this and their APP and the budget does not speak to the fight against GBVF. Thuthuzela Care Centers across the country are falling apart. We have seen this on DA oversights but also during committee oversights. The lack of uniformity, lack of reporting lines and no specific line item for Thuthuzela Care Centres makes it difficult to assess what is allocated for GBV specific matters let alone the budget being gender responsive. TCCs are so important because as it should be a one-stop for victims and survivors to get assistance when they have been assaulted and raped. Unfortunately, we

have seen how these TCCs are falling apart because of a lack of resources and capacity. The DA has consistently raised these issues here in Parliament and it continues to land on deaf ears.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma, you have a big task ahead of you in this new portfolio, we expect you to take the issues faced by women, youth and persons with disabilities seriously, to re-look at your APP and budget and ensure your Department submit an erratum to change your APP so it is more aligned with the needs of the people.

I thank you