

Young people must choose - a failing government or an opportunity for a better future

Speech by Nazley Sharif MP, DA Shadow Minister of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities

Thank you, House Chairperson,

Young people in this country will have a choice to make sooner than later, do we continue to struggle under an uncaring government that is all talk and no action or do we ensure the delivery of a government that not only puts young people at the center of everything they do but has a track-record of providing opportunities to enter the job market and become economically active. It is without a doubt that young people in South Africa continue to live in poverty, face challenges of the rising cost of living, unemployment, and many social struggles such as substance abuse, lack of opportunities and living a life with no dignity.

If we want to talk about decisive action to transform the lives of young people then we need to talk about decisive governments that can action this and the ANC is by far the least qualified when it comes to deciding or actioning anything. This ANC government has no real tangible plans to create any opportunities for young people to find meaningful employment but can fund the luxurious lives of Ministers like its nothing. The ANC government is so weak that they think creating incompetent policies that never get implemented and without any consultation work is like putting a plaster on a gunshot wound and hoping for the best. This shows just how out of touch this government is when young people don't even know or understand these policies or interventions. The DA has and will continue to prioritize young people with real opportunities.

Almost a quarter of a million young people has lost their jobs in the first quarter of 2023, so a total of 4.9 million young people are unemployed with an increase of 1.1% in the first quarter. Through public and private sector initiatives, DA-run municipalities and in the Western Cape show a track-record of job creation, skills development and creating economic opportunities. The Western Cape created 98% of net jobs in the fourth quarter of last year while this ANC government is focused on nonsense like the racial quotas, which by the way, will not increase jobs but rather divide an already divided country on racial lines.

In the City of Cape Town, R153 million has been allocated to sports and recreational facilities because young people need to get off the streets and into spaces where they can hone their talent and be the best they can be. The City of Cape Town has prioritized assistance with substance abuse through the City's Matrix® Substance Abuse Treatment programme which has seen an 80% success rate helping many

young people get their lives back on track with over 8 200 patients screened since 2016. More action, less talk is the business of the DA.

In Mossel Bay, the DA has a dedicated budget for System Development Learnerships because we are very aware that we must be able to keep up and compete with regional and global trends to ensure that our young people are equipped with the necessary skills.

The DA in uMngeni Municipality in the last financial year prioritized young people through programs focused on assisting with tertiary funding, applications, and work readiness as well as assistance to youth entrepreneurs to assist them in growing their businesses and to equip young people with the skills and knowledge on what is available to improve their lives.

Young people between the ages of 15-24 and 25-35 remain the most vulnerable in the labour market today with the unemployment rates at 62.1% and 40.7% respectively for this last quarter. If young people are not given opportunities to get skills, to get educated, access to the markets through entrepreneurship or proper planning to complement what they are studying and what jobs they can apply for, we will be back here every year quoting these dire stats with no real change.

Young people, the choice is yours, do you want to remain stagnated under a failing ANC government or will you be willing to take a chance and vote for a government that will put you and your needs in the center of everything we do. The proof is there, we have the opportunity in the 2024 elections to kick incompetence, corruption and absolute non-caring governments out and welcome competence, integrity, professional and caring governments through the moonshot pact.

Young people in South Africa our time is now!
Let's go to the moon!

I thank you.