

The ANC is not serious about the TVET sector and are determined at leaving poor students behind

By Baxolile 'Bax' Nodada MP – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

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Malungu Abekekileyo

Fellow South Africans

Molweni

Namhlanje andiyicikozi lento;

The ANC government is deliberately miseducating and under-skilling young South Africans through poor quality education that is not relevant for the job market, industry, innovation and entrepreneurship. The set up in some campus environments have buildings falling apart, no student accommodation no libraries and no access to the internet. In particular, TVET college students are not taken seriously and are often left behind by this government, and TVETs need to rise.

I speak here on behalf of TVET students who are forced to study in dilapidated buildings with no Wi-Fi, campuses with no student accommodation yet NSFAS gives half the funds for off-campus accommodation to a TVET students who are often backroom dwellers, workshops with outdated or no equipment and trade test centres which have become white elephants. The ANC government is clearly not serious about quality skills development which can only be done in a conducive learning environment that will set up young people of this country for success.

The President told the country in Feb that 9 TVET college campuses are being completed, yet, DHET has cut the budget to operationalize these campuses by half. Furthermore, 1 billion meant to address the backlog in maintenance and refurbishments for TVETs to fix buildings falling apart, dilapidated, building on-campus residences and digitise campuses starting with wifi access is being cut. This happens after **R739.39 million** of the TVET infrastructure grant was cut in the previous budget. There is no funding set aside for software in the TVET examination system which leads to the certification backlog and leaving many graduates sitting at home.

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

NSFAS is a prime example of the ANCs corruption, fraud, maladministration and running institutions down. The corruption had robbed poor students of 7.5 billion due to irregular expenditure, inclusive of

5,3 million to the VBS bank of taxpayers' money meant for poor students' tuition, accommodation, books and transport allowance to acquire education and change the circumstances of their birth.

What is more painful is that when money is needed the most it has been cut or "reprioritized". Minister Ndzimande announced that all poor students will receive devices a month ago yet 2,5 billion meant to purchase these devices for poor students to access online/remote learning has been suspended/cut/not available meaning that poor students are being left behind while many continue with remote learning I.e. UFH and VUT.

The needed Extended academic year NSFAS allowances needed are not budgeted; 4.3 billion needed for universities and 360 million for TVETs.

Minister Ndzimande ensure these funds are available to avoid students not getting their extended allowances for food, books and accommodation while the academic year is extended. NSFAS rules and guidelines shockingly indicate No learning material allowance for TVET college students. Worse the IT system has recorded 510 incidences of fraud to date despite placing the entity under administration.

Solutions

1. The Minister must Request funding for poor students' devices to access remote learning.
2. DHET and NSFAS must revisit the guidelines to make provision for TVET allowances at least for food and accommodation to be standardised as per Universities and allow students to purchase devices.
3. We welcome the overhaul of NSFAS but call that the Minister urgently expedite the process to appoint a CEO and CFO so as to better manage taxpayer's money and most importantly ensure that poor students are properly funded.
4. DHET through the TVET branch to engage Public Works/Provincial and Municipal governments for unused buildings for the purpose of extending lecture halls and student accommodation.
5. National treasury taking over functions for the Strong monitoring and evaluation to ensure the spending of the TVET infrastructure grant to maintain existing buildings.

We cannot support a budget that pays little to no attention on the quality of qualifications, infrastructure and the amount of funding invested in developing TVETs that seeks to keep poor students in a cycle of perpetual poverty without devices to access remote learning as we speak.

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

"For I being poor having nothing but my dreams, I spread my dreams beneath your feet, therefore tread carefully because you tread on my dreams."