

Happy Youth Day!!!!



Celebrating Youth Day is a great honour as it reminds us of the brave soldiers/students, who have gone to war and have fought a great fight for our freedom. Youth day is here to celebrate the class of 1976 who have paved the way for me and you and to commemorate the contribution made by South Africa's youth to the struggle against Apartheid.

This year marks the 46th anniversary of the 16 June 1976 students uprising in Soweto when young people protested against the imposition of the Afrikaans language by the Apartheid government as a medium of instruction language in all schools in South Africa. The uprising ended with many young people being brutally killed by the police of that time. In 1994, the new democratic government declared 16th June as National Youth Day and June as Youth Month. The declaration honours the contribution of the youth in the struggle for the liberation of South Africa.

When we think of youth day or youth month, the image of Hector Pieterse comes to mind. Hector Pieterse, a 12-year-old child, was among the students who were protesting, and he died fighting for his education and rights. He has since become an icon of the anti-Apartheid movement among young people.

June 16th commemorates the efforts and sacrifices made by students who died in the liberation of South African education from the Apartheid system. At this day and age, we fight for the fairness within our education system.

Besides all the negative things that are said of the youth of today can we reflect on the youth of today that have changed history and who have made a positive impact on the society of South Africa today such

as Caster Semenya, Zozibini Tunzi, and Zulaikha Patel, to mention a few.

There are many more who have contributed to South Africa and have made a great impact in the history of South Africa and should be celebrated. Even though South African youth experience high levels of unemployment, poverty and crime, it still can be combated once the government delivers on their promises and make South Africa the home that we all strive for.

No matter how we celebrate youth day on the 16th June 2022, as South Africans we should take the time to reflect on the sacrifices that were made for us so that it is possible for us to celebrate this day. And we should find ways to empower and uplift our future leaders to come.

As June 16th approaches, we must remember and honour those who have died as a result of the brutal Apartheid political system and from other types of oppression. We can do this by giving back to society. Many South Africans offer their time and money to aid impoverished children in schools and orphanages across the country on Youth Day. On June 16th, let us restore the faith of youth that has been lost by offering a helpful hand and remembering the lives lost and the efforts taken for our freedom.

How do we as the current youth commemorate the struggles and show progress?

What better way other than prioritising learning, education and enriching ourselves with scarce and critical skills?

How about making education fashionable?

Every year, various universities host graduation ceremonies to inaugurate the new graduates. Hector Pieterse and all those who fought the struggle of June 16th surely want to see progress in the education system. However, there is a high drop rate for students in higher education. Moreover, less students are willing and able to further their education.

What we have seen from today's youth is that we are fearless and make our own rules. We have learnt to unlearn and relearn from a whole new perspective that is beneficial for the evolution of the times. And thanks to the youth of '76 who have paved the way for us to live in a time that listens to the youth and slowly but surely learns and understands us. In this day and age, it is of importance for one to express themselves and we have witnessed it with how one expresses themselves from all sorts of activities from all types of industries or even having the freedom and privilege to choose what they want for their future. It is a heavy burden to see how our unemployment stats have risen, but it is within this generation we also have witnessed the rise of entrepreneurs. As Gen Zs, we are known to be the generation that is more technologically advanced and globally connected. However, higher education is still low. Even though we believe that education is not for everyone, we should go into entrepreneurship especially now in the midst of Covid-19 and the impact it already has on the unemployment rate in the country.

Youth, let us be the change that we want to see. Let us make education fashionable.