

What do you think about youth day? Youth in 2022



As time progresses, the June 16th narrative has evolved and changed. Have we fully understood that the June 16th narrative has changed? From my perspective, June 16th has just become the one single day where young people in South Africa are remembered and celebrated. And once the day ends then reality kicks in. We are forgotten for the next 364 days. What exactly are we celebrating on June 16th? For me, the essence of June 16th has been lost. It seems like we have become complacent with our current status, because change has been spoken about for years but nothing seems to be done. Supporting structures that were meant to help the youth are left to collapse while people in power gain more power. For instance, youth unemployment is like a pandemic at the rate of 34,5%. A pandemic which we have no vaccine for.

I believe to start making progress we need to fully acknowledge that our June 16th narrative is different from the 1976 Soweto uprising on June 16th. Failing to understand the narrative shift has led to an unstable foundation for tackling today's June 16th. Our June 16th uprising comprises many uprisings. We seek equality across the entire gender spectrum and are fighting against corruption and for free education, more job opportunities for the youth, etc. This raises three questions: who is to be blamed? who should address these issues? And are these two parties working together to find solutions? Speaking from what is happening today it seems that both parties are pulling their weight but in different directions. Corruption has crippled our support system that was meant to promote youth development.

Youth programmes are created to equip the youth with necessary skills, but young people are not willing to engage with them because they do not know about such opportunities, and some don't believe it will change their situation. Focusing on who is to be blamed would be a waste of time as we are already stuck in limbo discussing this for years without much progress in implementation. As for who must address these issues, both parties need to play a role, but people leading the country should put in more effort. They are responsible for distributing the resources to the people. Let those resources be used in a meaningful way and we as the youth find ways to use the resources to tackle our own June 16th narrative.

First, redesign our education system to head towards the 4IR route. Critical subjects need to be introduced in primary and secondary schools, which this will equip young people with the necessary skills needed in the new world order. Second, use media platforms to advertise opportunities which are open to young people. Third, have open panels to discuss innovative ideas that may help create opportunities and help establish those innovative ideas come to life. We have many programmes out there that are promoting the youth. It is time we start shining light on them and giving them more resources to be sustainable.