



SASE TOGETHER WITH STUDENTS MARCHED TO DHET FOR NSEAS ISSUES

By **Mandhlazi Rodger**

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Students from various universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges gathered in Pretoria to stage a March. Their destination was

the Department of Higher Education and Training, where they aimed to draw attention to the persistent delays and funding shortfalls in the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Led by

student organizations the South African Students Federation and other school political structures, the students were vocal about their frustrations.

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WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

"Journalism is what we need to make democracy work." – Walter Cronkite



By Chris Mcinga

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Youth Month is always a mixed bag for us at Student Living. While it's meant to honour the legacy of June 16, we're constantly reminded of how little has changed. Political parties host events and make promises, but the realities on the ground tell a different story: ongoing NSFAS issues, student accommodation struggles, campus crime, and gender-based violence continue to plague young people. AYouth voter turnout is

dropping, and trust in pro-youth politics is wearing thin. So, in this edition, we've chosen to focus on key moments that reveal both the cracks and glimmers of hope.

We cover the SASF-led student march to the Department of Higher Education over NSFAS frustrations, and Deputy President Paul Mashatile's statement calling youth unemployment a moral emergency. It's a chilling reminder that over half of our working-age population is

under 34, yet unemployment among youth sits at 32.9%

On the brighter side, Ford South Africa donated a Ranger to Ribane-Laka School of Specialisation, giving learners real-world mechanical training. And independent publishers met in Boksburg to shape the R114 million Digital News Transformation Fund, a promising step for local media.

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Student Living South Africa, a MeD8 Media publication, fully supports media freedom as a key part of the right to freedom of expression guaranteed in Section 16 of the South African Constitution. We believe that students and all citizens have the right to receive and share information, ideas, and opinions freely. This is essential for informed decision-making, active citizenship, and growing a deeper understanding between people in our country.

Freedom of expression supports and protects other rights that are necessary for a democratic society where everyone enjoys equality, dignity, and freedom. As a publication that serves the youth and student community, we understand the responsibility we carry in keeping our readers informed, empowered and connected to the world around them. We pledge to report the truth and to always strive for accuracy, fairness, and balance in our journalism. We will investigate and expose abuses of power – whether political, social, commercial or economic – with courage and an unwavering commitment to the truth. We will remain independent, and not serve any interest group other than our readers and the broader student community across South Africa. We take seriously our role as a watchdog, especially for those who may not have a voice, and we will always reflect a diversity of opinions and experiences in the content we publish. We are committed to upholding the values of the Constitution and will follow the South African Press Code in all our work.

This pledge is our commitment to ethical journalism, in service of a more informed, active and united youth.

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Mashatile Calls Youth Unemployment a “Moral Emergency” at Youth Day Event 2025



By **Rodger Mandhlazi**



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Deputy President Paul Mashatile didn't mince his words at this year's Youth Day commemoration in Potchefstroom, North West — calling South Africa's soaring unemployment rate a “moral emergency” that demands urgent action from government, business, and society at large.

Addressing the crowd, Mashatile shone a spotlight on the hard truth: young people aged **15 to 34 make up over half of South Africa's working-age population, but their unemployment rate stands at 32.9%.** And when you include discouraged job seekers — those who've given up looking for work — that figure jumps to a shocking 43.1%, according to Stats SA.

“More than half of young people between 18 and 34 are unemployed — that's one of the highest levels we've ever

seen,” Mashatile said.

He also raised concerns about the 3.8 million young South Africans who are not in education, employment, or training — often referred to as the NEET group. Young women, he noted, are slightly more affected than their male peers.

Time to Think Differently

Mashatile called for a multi-pronged approach to tackle the youth jobs crisis, urging young people to embrace entrepreneurship and shift away from the idea that traditional jobs are the only path forward.

“Young people need to see themselves as job creators, not just job seekers,” he said.

He pointed to government partnerships with organisations like Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, which aim to fix the disconnect between the skills young

people have and what the job market actually needs.

Skills for the Future

The 2025 Youth Day theme — “Skills for a Changing World: Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation” — couldn't be more relevant. Mashatile said equipping young people with the right skills for a rapidly changing world is essential for building a more inclusive and resilient economy.

“Whether it's starting a small business or adapting to the digital economy, we need to future-proof our youth,” he said.

As the country remembers the bravery of the 1976 generation, Mashatile's message to today's youth is clear: the fight for economic freedom is far from over — but with the right tools, it's a battle they can win.

SASF TOGETHER WITH STUDENTS MARCHED TO DHET FOR NSFAS ISSUES



By **Mandhlazi Rodger**

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Students from various universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges gathered in Pretoria to stage a March. Their destination was the Department of Higher Education and Training, where they aimed to draw attention to the persistent delays and funding shortfalls in the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Led by student organizations the South African Students Federation and other school political structures, the students were vocal about their frustrations. They demanded immediate action to address the outstanding allowances and to take steps to prevent further cuts in funding.

In an interview with Student Living SA, SASF President Keamogetswe Masike stated that their mandate is one,

emphasizing their desire for fairness in NSFAS Distributions. "Ours is very simple, we demand the attention of the Minister, we need her to address the issues faced by our students, historical debts, unpaid resident and allowances", SASF President Keamogetswe Masike.

The students highlighted that the delayed release of NSFAS funds had left many struggling to meet basic needs like accommodation, food, and transportation. This financial strain was not only affecting their academic performance but also pushing some to the brink of dropping out.

"If it was not for my trying grandmother, I would have dropped out immediately when NSFAS defunded me, I had no funding since June 2024 June", Sihle Makakwa a Student at TUT.

Keamogetswe Masike emphasized the plight of eligible students who remained unfunded or had their allowances wrongly cut off. He called on Minister Nobuhle Nkabane to allocate a significant portion of the department's budget to cover tuition shortfalls and meet approved appeals.

The students submitted a list of demands to the department's chief director, Thivhudziwi Vele, who assured them of a response. They are seeking reforms within NSFAS and a face-to-face meeting with Minister Nkabane to discuss their grievances. The protest underscored the urgent need for effective solutions to the NSFAS funding crisis, ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed academically.

By **Zanele Makola**

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Ford South Africa has reaffirmed its commitment to education and skills development by donating a Ford Ranger to the Ribane-Laka Maths, Science and ICT School of Specialisation in Mamelodi. This is the second Ranger donated to the school, providing students with hands-on experience to refine their mechanical engineering skills and prepare for careers in the automotive industry.

The Ribane-Laka School, which benefited from a R148 million investment by the Gauteng government, stands as a beacon of innovation, specialising in automotive and electronics training to meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The donated Ford Ranger will serve as a practical

learning tool for students, enabling them to acquire essential skills in engine repair and other critical aspects of the automotive trade as part of the school's specialised curriculum. This contribution aligns with Ford's ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between education and industry.

The initiative helps equip students with the capabilities required to support job creation and economic growth in South Africa, through partnerships such as the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ). Ford's broader commitment to skills development also includes a 2020 programme through which the company pledged to donate 240 engines—valued at R7.8 million—to technical institutions across the country.

“We are proud to support Ribane-Laka’s mission to empower young minds with practical, industry-relevant skills,” said a Ford South Africa representative. “This Ranger will give students a real-world platform to develop their mechanical engineering expertise and build brighter futures,” he added.

The donation highlights the importance of public-private partnerships in fostering education that responds to the needs of a rapidly evolving economy.

As Ribane-Laka students work under the hood of the Ford Ranger, they are not only learning mechanics—they are gearing up to become the next generation of South African automotive innovators.

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HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

FATALLY STABBED SECONDARY SCHOOL



A GRADE 11 LEARNER WAS FATALLY STABBED OUTSIDE LESEDI SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MAMELODI

By **Zanele Makola**

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A Grade 11 learner was fatally stabbed outside Lesedi Secondary School in Mamelodi East on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, shortly after completing his final midterm exam.

Nineteen-year-old Lethabo Mokonyane Matula was attacked while boarding scholar transport near the school gates in the informal settlement. His death has sent shockwaves through the local community and reignited public concern over school safety and violence among learners.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) confirmed that two Grade 12 learners, both aged 19, have been arrested in connection with the stabbing. According to preliminary investigations, the incident may be linked to a past bullying dispute involving the victim—a matter his family believed had long been resolved.

“This is a devastating loss,” said Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane, who condemned the killing in the strongest terms.

“Schools must remain sanctuaries for learning, not scenes of brutality.”

In the aftermath, the Gauteng Department of Education has dispatched psychologists and members of its school safety unit to support traumatised learners, staff, and the Matula family.

The suspects appeared in the Bronkhorstspuit Magistrate’s Court on Friday, June 20, 2025, where they faced murder charges. The case has been postponed to June 27 for further investigation.

As law enforcement and education authorities examine the circumstances surrounding the tragedy, the community continues to mourn the life of a young man whose future was cut short.

“This tragedy is a wake-up call,” said a local community leader. “We need to ensure our children are safe not just in classrooms, but from the moment they step onto school grounds.”



Publishers Gather to Shape R114 Million Digital News Fund

By **Chris Mcinga**

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Independent and small-scale publishers from across Gauteng gathered at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg for a pivotal consultation on the new Digital News Transformation Fund — a R114 million initiative by Google and the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) aimed at supporting community media over the next three years.

Facilitated by Tshikululu Social Investments, the session was led by Leanne Kunz, head of the fund, who described it as a first step toward strengthening public interest journalism through digital tools and sustainable business models.

While attendance was modest and mostly male — highlighting ongoing resource and gender challenges — the dialogue was lively and solution-focused. AIP Chair Anetta Mangxaba encouraged open discussion, with publishers sharing the financial pressures they face and exploring alternatives to ad-based revenue, including partnerships and shared sales services.

Technology and access to digital tools were key themes. While platforms like WordPress, Canva, and CapCut are widely used, their cost remains a barrier. Publishers called for bulk purchasing or voucher systems to improve

affordability. There was also a strong demand for SEO and digital skills training to improve story visibility online.

AI tools, including ChatGPT, drew mixed reactions — praised for efficiency but criticised for potential ethical issues. Publishers agreed on the need for clear usage guidelines and training to adopt AI responsibly.

Beyond tools, many stressed the importance of investing in people, with calls to prioritise training and skills development over equipment. Lesego Tau, a human development practitioner, warned that without this, sustainability remains at risk.

Some logistical concerns around the fund's rollout

were raised. Kunz assured attendees that applications would open in coming months, with more details to follow. Suggestions included a national service provider database and skills audits to match funding with real needs.

Dr Kate Skinner of the AIP emphasised the importance of incorporating feedback from consultations and surveys to shape an effective, responsive fund.

Despite its small scale, the session showcased big ideas and a united effort to strengthen independent journalism in South Africa. A follow-up consultation is scheduled for the Eastern Cape on 26 June 2025.

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TUT STUDENT CHOSEN FOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

By **Zanele Makola**

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Kaitumetse Leballo, an Advanced Diploma in Economics student at the Tshwane University of Technology's Faculty of Economics and Finance, has been selected from hundreds of applications across Africa, as one of the 60 students to participate in the prestigious African Economic Scholars Programme 2025.

The programme is a project aimed at developing and supporting African students studying Economics by providing mentorship, research opportunities and a forum for engaging with economic issues impacting the continent. The programme targets final-year students and recent Economics graduates from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa.

The 23-year-old is presently participating in a virtual programme focused on research development, collaborative learning, and critical economic policy training, which began on June 15 and will end on August 3, 2025.

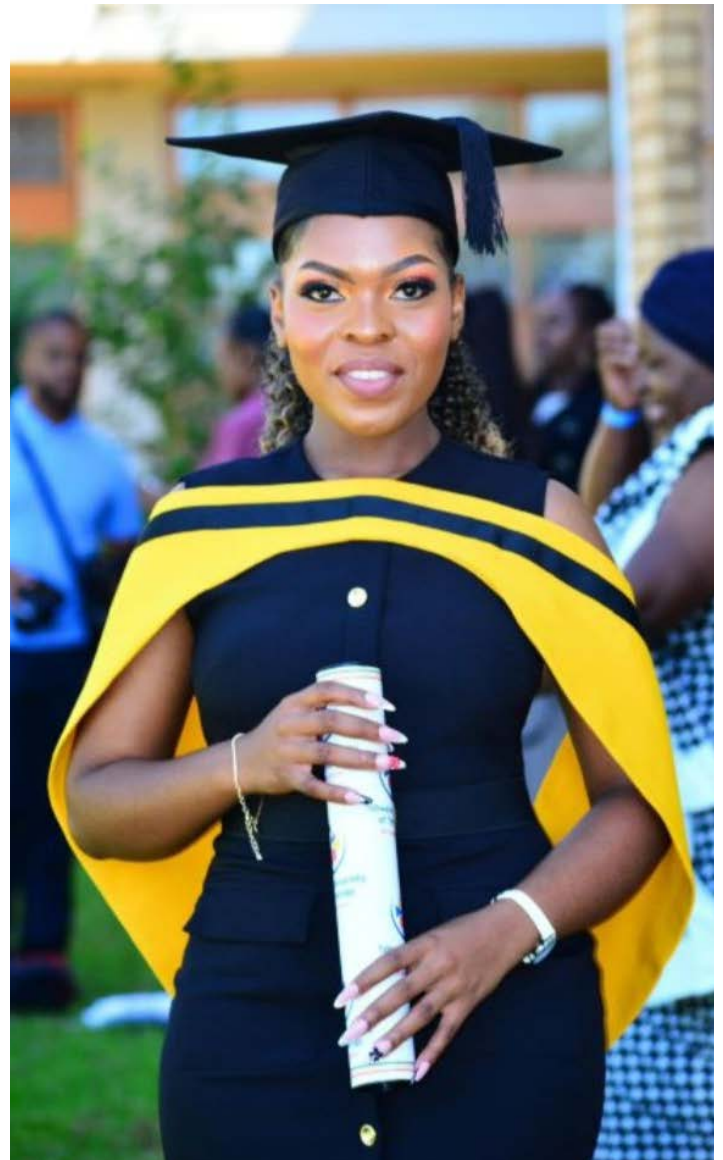
“I am going to learn and unlearn some of the misconceptions about African Economy. This programme will help improve my

skills, such as analysis, understanding and interpreting economic data and policy analysis. Moreover, it will help and guide me on how to conduct economic policy analysis,” explained Leballo.

According to Leballo, she is thrilled about the possibility to interact and network with other industry players, viewing it as an opportunity to advance her economics career. She aspires to establish connections with TUT Alumni and other industry leaders in order to advance the topic through research.

“Participating in this programme can broaden my opportunities in the job market, as it will demonstrate my commitment in economic development and analysis. I want to attend more workshops, seminars and similar programmes to gain hands-on experience and increase my chances of being highly employable in this competitive industry,” she added.

With an unemployment rate of 32,9% in South Africa, Leballo contends that acquiring pertinent skills will be advantageous for her.





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