

# EDUCATION & HEALTH DISCUSSION PAPER

Towards an programmatica genda

Discussion paper prepared for the 24<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the ANC Youth League,  
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## INTRODUCTION

1. All over the world, there is a growing consensus that youth development policy and practice is best realised through the promotion of access to quality education and health. Even the participation of youth in sports, recreation, arts and culture can only be possible and meaningful if the basics of education and health are attended to.
2. Therefore, it can be concluded that the area of public policy that affects the vast number of youths is education and health.
3. If the Youth League is to succeed in championing a progressive Youth Agenda, it must occupy the forward trenches in the public policy space to ensure access to quality education and health for all.
4. In previous congresses, the ANCYL adopted resolutions on education and health however; there is nothing to show in terms of implementation. For instance, the 22nd & 23rd congresses adopted more programmatic resolutions with the expectation that structures of the ANCYL would action them rather than having further theoretical discussions about identifying and characterising problems in education and health. To the extent that this does not advance the political programme of the organisation, it is not worth repeating and therefore must be corrected.
5. As a base and without citing, this paper acknowledges all the resolutions of the previous national congresses and implores the organisation to desist from regurgitating discussions we have had before. The proposal is that, these previous discussions must be utilised as a basis of our programme for implementation.
6. This paper attempts to make a case for education & health to anchor youth development in South Africa just like elsewhere in the world and taking further the rationale of the 52nd National Conference resolution of the ANC to make education and health national priorities.

7. The 24th National Congress takes place before the 53rd National Conference of the ANC which will be preceded by the National Policy Conference which further affords the ANCYL an historic opportunity to argue for change in focus on the youth agenda so that ultimately, youth development will essentially but not exclusively be about education and health.
8. Whereas the paper briefly reflects on crucial areas in health and education which require policy change, in the main, the paper proposes an implementation programme.

## **OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

9. The 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC adopted an unprecedented resolution of making education & health a national priority for the next five years. This was based on the consciousness that the two are the main pillars of social transformation and key drivers of economic growth.
10. South Africa is faced with dropping life expectancy which was quoted to be 51.1 in 2008 and currently is at 49.4 that is 20% below the world average which is standing at 67.7. This is mainly due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is currently ravaging the country.
11. Just over 70% of the 49,320 150 persons are less than 40 years of age. The above facts make South Africa a “young country” with the majority of its population being youth. In some quarters it is viewed as an “arc of instability” although it also represents a potential for future economic development only if they (young people) are educated, healthy and skilled.
12. This therefore, makes youth development a crucial societal programme in the struggle to change the quality of life of the majority of our people.
13. On education; spending remains high on South Africa's priorities with allocation of more than R189-billion to the sector for 2011/12, up by 9.7 percent over 2010/11.
14. Of this money, about R8.3-billion for the Department of Basic Education to tackle the challenge of school infrastructure, while R1-billion goes to the Funza Lushaka teacher bursaries and bursaries for top students in natural science. This demonstrates to commitment of the state to deal with challenges of infrastructure and access.
15. In terms of the latest available statistics, in 2007 South Africa had 14 167 086 pupils and students enrolled in all sectors of the education system, attending 35 231 educational institutions and served by 452 971 teachers and lecturers.

16. In total we have, 26 065 ordinary schools and 9 163 other education institutions – namely, special schools, early childhood development (ECD) sites, public adult basic education and training (ABET) centres, public further education and training (FET) institutions, and public higher education (HE) institutions.
17. Of the total enrolled pupils, 12 048 821 (85%) were in public schools and 352 396 (2.5%) were in independent schools. Of the pupils in other institutions, 761 087 (5.4%) were in public HE institutions, 320 679 (2.3%) were in public FET institutions, 292 734 (2.1%) were in public ABET centres, 289 312 (2%) were in ECD centres, and 102 057 (0.7%) were in special schools.
18. The total of 26 065 ordinary schools comprised 15 358 primary schools, with 6 316 064 pupils and 191 199 teachers; 5 670 secondary schools, with 3 831 937 pupils and 128 183 teachers; and 5 037 combined and intermediate schools, with 2 253 216 pupils and 74 843 teachers.
19. And finally, Other educational facilities included 2 278 ABET centres, 50 public FET institutions, 4 800 ECD centres and 21 HE institutions.
20. This is by no measure a critical analysis of the statistics and trends nor is it an appraisal of the education and health sectors/systems. It is just a brief overview of the status quo.

## HEALTH

### Reproductive Health

21. The Reproductive Health Awareness Programme puts forward programme proposals which address key reproductive challenges for both males and females. This programme includes the following:
  - a. HIV/AIDS Awareness campaign
  - b. Sexual Transmitted Infections
  - c. Hygiene
  - d. Teenage Pregnancy

## EDUCATION

## Basic Education

22. The ANC and Youth League have made a commitment to making our schools work, placing more emphasis on the foundation phases, which were found to be crucial in the development of functional individuals in the economy and key to developing the basic cognitive capacity of learners.
23. Given the fact that the set of programmes and projects outlined in the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Congress Resolutions still remain relevant, the discussion will focus on implementation in order to practically advance intensive learning and teaching in our schools. In this regard, the following programmes are proposed:
  - Campaign for Eradication of Mud Schools
  - Promotion of career guidance
  - Mentorship programmes
  - Alumni Associations
  - Literacy Campaign- Siya Geleza
  - Extra Tuition for Grade 10-12

## Higher Education & Skills development

24. The ANCYL should lead a campaign to call for a national audit of all available student bursaries and scholarships both in government and the private sector, including foreign scholarships available for South African students. This should be done with the aim of increasing the available funds in NSFAS or establishing a new student financial aid scheme/body.
25. The ANCYL should encourage young entrepreneurs to participate in the higher education economy particularly through the establishment of second-hand bookshops for selling affordable books, alternative catering services and accommodation.
26. The ANCYL should campaign for the improvement of the quality of student life, particularly in historically black universities.
27. Organisationally, the Youth League should re-establish a national department that will be responsible for skills development within the organisation by offering scholarships and bursaries to deserving members of the ANCYL. This will positively impact on strengthening the organisation as a platform that prepares young people for meaningful roles in the public service, the private sector and in society as a whole.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

28. As mentioned earlier, the trend of recycling and repackaging old resolutions in new language and phrases and consequently create the impression that this represents progress, should not be allowed in the forthcoming congress. In addition to this trend is the tendency to handover our programmes to government for implementation making the ANCYL a stagnant and 'programmeless' organisation.
29. The implementation strategy proposed herein may have implications for the structures and functions of the organisation as they stand currently and consequently lead to a structural review.
30. Essentially, the ANCYL should strengthen its internal organisational capacity and further contribute to job creation and skills development and at the same time, continue to be an advocating, campaigning, implementing and proactive organisation.
31. The first proposal entails the ANCYL establishing various NGOs/NPOs per major programme as implementing agencies accountable to the organisation. These NGOs should be run by skilled and competent individuals who will employ Youth League members for skills development and they should have the capacity to generate funding independently to sustain themselves.
32. The second proposal would be to establish a National Department of Programmes & Projects which will employ skilled and competent individual with expertise to implement and manage projects/programmes.
33. The organisation has the option to combine both proposals to strengthen internal implementation capacity and work with fraternal NGOs and organisations to implement programmes beneficial to the youth.

## POLICY PROPOSALS

34. This is the last part of the document dealing with issues and programmes that will require fundamental policy shift. These proposals must be debated with the aim of making a meaningful contribution in the forthcoming ANC Policy Conference in 2012.

## HEALTH

### Male circumcision

35. Male circumcision has been found to decrease the incidence of HIV transmission. [8]. It therefore makes sense that the ANCYL must campaign for medical male circumcision to be included in the national HIV/AIDS preventative policy and strategy. This campaign/position should encourage all young men to circumcise and for those who practice traditional initiation, safety regulations by the state should be strengthened and strictly applied and monitored.

### Teenage pregnancy

36. This has been a perennial societal problem that has recently reached alarming proportions in our country. This occurs in the backdrop of high levels of poverty, unemployment and HIV infection rates. This calls for the government to introduce a programme that will combine both abstinence from sex and mandatory initiation into contraception for all adolescent girls from the age of twelve.

37. This can be enhanced by the introduction of school clinics or more youth friendly clinics.

### Provision of Free Sanitary Towels

38. An integral part of the Reproductive Health Awareness Programme should be the provision of free sanitary towels to school going girls and young women. There are studies that have shown an improved quality of life of girls with the provision of free sanitary towels. This drive could be coupled with the provision of contraception to young girls.

39. This campaign also raises a concern about the ablution services in our schools for girls, especially as it relates to disposing of soiled sanitary towels.

### Vaccines

40. Vaccinations have historically played a role in preventing the spread of infectious diseases and consequently reduce mortality rates significantly. Since the introduction of the extended programmes of immunization in most countries, a number of diseases such as TB, Hepatitis, Measles, Rubella have declined.

41. Recently we have seen an increase in the incidence of cervical cancer in our country which is caused by human papilloma virus (HPV). It is also known that

cervical cancer is preventable through screening programmes such as Pap smears. The advent of vaccines against HPV makes possible for the country to introduce mandatory vaccination of all adolescents both girls and boys as part of prevention.

#### Substance Abuse

42. Alcohol has been implicated in all pandemics that face South Africa today including among others; HIV/AIDS, violent accidents and lifestyle diseases and so on.
43. In the past, the ANCYL adopted several resolutions about substance abuse especially alcohol abuse; unfortunately nothing programmatic has been achieved.
44. The 24<sup>th</sup> National Congress should reaffirm all the resolutions on alcohol, drugs and substance abuse for implementation in particular, the resolutions that speak to the banning of alcohol advertising in all media platforms, regulation of alcohol trade, distribution and consumption as well as the adjustment of the age limit from 18 to 21.

#### Legalisation of sex trade

45. The majority of people linked to sex trade are young people either as facilitators or traders. In part, young girls and women are dominant due to the patriarchal nature of society.
46. The ANCYL should debate the idea of legalisation of sex trade looking at all the pros and cons. Others argue that because it is human trafficking and stands at odd with the very essence of humanity, it should neither be practiced nor legalised. Whereas others argue that legalisation will help health authorities to deal with and control the spread of sexual transmitted infections and that a regulated sex industry will provide protection of sex workers from abuse and victimisation.
47. The ANCYL must take a clear policy position on this matter and guide society.

#### Termination of pregnancy (TOP)

48. The ANCYL appreciates the positive outcomes resulting from the enactment of the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996, which led to declining occurrences of complications and deaths as a result of backstreet abortions. This act legalises termination of pregnancy under certain circumstances like when the pregnancy is under 12 weeks gestation, it may be performed by a trained

medical doctor or professional nurse in an accredited institution. (Or when the pregnancy is under 20 weeks gestation only when two medical doctors in a designated hospital both concur on the validity of the request made to terminate).

49. These services still remain very limited because of shortage of resources as well as staff. The unwelcoming and at times hostile reception girls and young women experience when they consult for termination of pregnancy in public health institutions, is abhorrent and must be corrected. This kind of attitude has led in part, to a lot of bogus traditional healers and medical practitioners taking advantage of vulnerable girls and young women by performing terminations in unsafe environments and sometimes using dangerous herbs or drugs.
50. The ANCYL should call for the expansion of youth friendly TOP services especially in public health institutions combined with professional counselling and sexual health talk and a loud call for the ban of advertisements of traditional or health practitioners who offer TOP services without appropriate accreditation in all newspapers and elsewhere in the public domain.
51. There must be a dedicated government-led programme to expose, close down education and health institutions and practitioners that practice illegally. The law must be enforced in this regard.

#### Gynaecological Services

52. The ANCYL notes that the above services are not accessible to all women especially young women because of the shortage of specialist gynaecologists in the country and in the public health services. Further notes the exorbitant consulting fees charged by gynaecologists in the private sector making these services inaccessible to poor women hence the ANCYL proposes that gynaecologists' services be made accessible to all women.

#### State Owned Pharmaceutical Company

53. The 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC resolved that government should research ways and means to establish a state owned pharmaceutical company as part of the drive to reduce the costs of essential medicines.

#### Health Care Reform

54. The ANCYL welcomes that a doption of the Ten Point Plan to overhaul the health system and further notes progress made in its implementation. Below is the Ten Point Plan:



- i. Provision of Strategic leadership and creation of a social compact for better health outcomes.
- ii. Implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI).
- iii. Improving the Quality of Health Services.
- iv. Overhauling the health system and its management
- v. Improving Human Resources, Planning, Development and Management
- vi. Revitalisation of Infrastructure
- vii. Accelerate implementation of HIV AND AIDS and sexually transmitted infections national strategic plan, 2007-2011 and reduction of mortality due to TB and associated diseases
- viii. Mass mobilisation for better health for the population
- ix. Review of the Drug Policy
- x. Strengthening Research and Development

48. The implementation of the Ten Point Plan also provides a potential of creating decent jobs for young people as data capturers, technicians, community health workers and etc.

49. ANCYL further supports the emphasis on Primary Health Care (PHC) as the primary mode of delivery of health care. PHC emphasizes prevention rather curative medicine which has proven to be costly and unsustainable.

#### Traditional Medicines sectors

50. Traditional medicine is regarded as the oldest institution in the world. About 80% of South Africans reportedly consult a traditional healer at some stage in their lives. Western medicine interfaces with traditional medicine when dealing with referrals or their complications.

51. There are challenges that face the traditional medicine sector, among others, the process of training, how an individual qualifies to be a traditional practitioner, how the country regulates and registers practitioners and so on. Further information and in-depth knowledge about their medicines or herbs should be developed and researched in order to patent and facilitate registration with the Medicines Control Council.

52. The ANCYL should call for and be part of the dialogue to finalise discussions on the matter of integration and formalisation of this sector. The Youth League should partner with the traditional healer associations to educate society and expose bogus traditional healers and those who encourage ritual killings as part of their healing.

53. Further campaign burning of old women under the guise that there are witches.

## EDUCATION

### Physical Training and School Sports

54. The ANCYL should support the introduction of compulsory physical education programmes in all schools across the country. In addition, the ANCYL should call for the introduction of compulsory school sports programmes and the roll-out programme should be biased to township and rural schools. The funding mobilised by SAFA in this regard is notable and must be sustained in partnership with government.
55. These two fundamental programmes will assist in dealing with the social ills such as delinquent behaviour, substance abuse and crime that affect young people when not engaged constructively.

### Curriculum development

#### Arts, Culture and Film

56. There is little or no arts, culture and film curriculum in our township and rural schools except choral music. The ANCYL should call on the inclusion of arts, culture and film into the curriculum of our schools. Higher education must play a key role in this regard.

#### History

57. The crisis of an outdated and distorted history subject content at school level is very destructive in the struggle to represent the South African past as well as world history. The subject content of history is not suited to develop a critical and informed young South African and does not advance nation-formation and social cohesion.
58. In some instances, slavery and colonisation as backward ideas are presented in a rather problematic way and in the extreme, as human civilisation. And the struggle history of the people of South Africa is also distorted and underrepresented.
59. The ANCYL should support the call to make history a compulsory subject for all learners in our schools and further call for the revision of the subject content and support projects aimed at capturing history accurately.

## The Post-school system/sub-sector

60. In broad terms, the post-school system includes the intermediate phase FET sector, the SETAs and other training agencies and colleges, including incubation schemes and in-house industry training. The challenge of low technical skills base and a poorly designed post-school system requires urgent resolution.
61. We welcome the mooted green paper on the post-school system and the formalisation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as stated in White Paper 3 on Higher Education of 1997. The Youth League should participate in this crucial policy process.
62. The Youth League should call for better articulation of programmes so that it becomes possible for people to progress to higher qualifications and careers. This requires regulation and coordination. This may require the revision of the National Qualifications Framework to make the sector attractive and competitive internationally.
63. The post-school system must be interlinked with the school and university sub-sectors.
64. Our intervention in this sub-sector should be informed by the vision to create a single nationally coordinated education system for South Africa.

## Teacher development

65. As part of teacher development the ANCYL should encourage that teachers should undergo a performance based assessment where a teacher who has performed well are paid bonuses.

## Centralisation of Student Scholarship, Bursary Funds & Financial Aid

66. The student financial aid crisis in higher education has always been about access and success. The Youth League should champion the resolution of the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC which states that: "Progressively introduce free education for the poor until undergraduate level" as a long-term objective.
67. The existence of several bursary and scholarships schemes both in government and the private sector are all aimed at assisting students to access higher education and now recently further education and training but, they exist without coordination and systemic planning.

68. The research on the failure rate in higher education indicates that majority of students drop-out before they reach their final year, usually at second year level of study. The most common reason given was: "I did not have funds to pay for my studies" and, "I could not afford to spend three or four years on continuous study so I left, planning to return to my studies at a later point". [20] Based on this evidence, the ANCYL should critically engage the January 8 statement's pronouncement on full bursary offer for the final year of study.
69. The ANCYL should call for an audit of all the available scholarships and bursaries in government and the private sector with the aim of creating a single and coordinated fund for students to access higher education and further education training both within and outside the country. In addition, the mooted state mining companies should be a key source of funding.
70. The ANCYL should call for the strengthening of overseas scholarship programmes whereby students are sent abroad to study in fields/ professions which the country is in dire need of, such as engineering, IT, science etc.

#### Literacy Campaign

71. The ANCYL should develop a programme to encourage literacy in our country which involves availability and reading of books. This programme should look at changing the intellectual property rights regime in South Africa in order to increase the number of books in circulation. The high prices of books and charging of VAT combined, increases the cost of learning. The ANCYL should call for a review of book prices and abolishment of VAT on books based on a classification principle.
72. The ANCYL and COSAS should also engage in "Operation Mazibuye" which focuses on encouraging learners to return all the books and school material at the end of the academic year.

The Youth League should encourage local young writers to write books about everyday life of South Africa.

#### Language policy

73. Language is still being utilised to discriminate and exclude learners from accessing education in private and public schools. The ANCYL should remain vigilant against this kind of discrimination. Language can no longer be used as an instrument of exclusion.

## Alumni Association

74. The ANCYL should campaign for alumni associations to be included in the SA Schools Act as an essential structure of governance to constitute a functional school alongside School Governing Bodies and Representative Councils of Learners.
75. Alumni associations should play a role in bringing needed support, both financial and psychological support.

## National skills framework, apprenticeship and learnership model/ experiential learning/community service

76. There is a view that learnerships have not been beneficial in terms of imparting skills but rather have been used as cheap labour by corporate and government departments. A review of the skill development framework must be undertaken and be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders especially youth organisations.
77. The ANCYL should continue to support a call for community service for all South African graduates in order to increase the human resources capacity of state to deliver services and equally impart necessary work experience that is often required before they (graduates) are employed.

## Extra Tuition

78. Historically, the student movement has organised such programmes of extra tuition in university campuses in a form of Saturday and Winter Schools, which helped learners to pass their end of the year matriculation examination. The ANCYL with SASCO must re-establish these extra tuition classes for learners from township and rural schools using among others audiovisual aids to assist in tuition process. In the near future, the national broadcaster should introduce a permanent Learning Channel covering as much school grades as possible.

## Remuneration

79. Labour strikes continue to disrupt education and health in the public sector and the working class and poor learners suffer most. The crux of these strikes is remuneration and conditions of service. The ANCYL should call for better remuneration for teachers and health workers and further call for multi year wage/salary agreements between labour unions and government.

## PROLOGUE

The success of this discussion paper is its potential to spark heated debates amongst ourselves as ANCYL members or between ANCYL and ANC, or between the ANCYL and South Africans. It is hoped that the paper will succeed to attaining all the above but most importantly, it should urge ANCYL member into action.

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References will be provided on request.