

TSOZHANG BATJHA!

EDITORIAL

This edition highlights the power of young people’s voices as they speak out on the real issues facing their communities. From the crisis in Stilfontein to poor infrastructure in schools, young writers express what many experience daily, poverty, inequality, and a lack of support.

The debate on the government’s decision to “smoke out” illegal miners raised deep questions about justice, survival, and the right to life. It reminds us that behind every policy are people with real struggles, trying to survive in difficult conditions.

Youth also reflect on the theme of the JBF ‘Rebuild Communities, Solidarity & Friendships’ and the disappearance of ubuntu and friendship in their communities, pointing to a breakdown in care, trust and solidarity. Their writing also shows how poor learning conditions and unsafe schools make education harder to access. This newsletter is a platform for youth to tell their stories and challenge injustice.



Stilfontein Debate

Mining Crisis
By Tsepo Mohale
Sakha Ilizwe Art Centre

During the first study group of the year, we had a debate on the Stilfontein mine crisis and the statement made by Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, who said the government would “smoke out” the *zama zamas* following their refusal to leave the illegal mining site in November 2024.

The debate was exciting, and I agree with the government’s decision to

“smoke” the people out of the mine, because they refused to come out voluntarily.

People should not blame the government for the crisis at Stilfontein. The illegal miners were scared to come out because they knew what they were doing was wrong. They were aware that the mine was closed and that digging for minerals there was illegal. The government never instructed them to remain underground for such a long time. However, on the other hand, I do blame the government for taking the gold from the illegal miners, knowing very well that the mine was closed.



To Smoke Them Out or Not? By Zanele Chauke

I disagree. Everyone deserves the right to life. No one should decide whether someone lives or dies. The people who went inside the mine made the best decisions based on their circumstances.

I think the government should have assisted the miners by rescuing them safely out of the mine, because what they went through was not what they deserved – no one deserves to die in the dark. The reason people went inside the Stilfontein mine is hunger, and we should not blame those who went digging “illegally.”

Yes, it is illegal to trespass onto property without permission, but the government should be blamed for the people who went to the abandoned mine and ended up without food or water. My position is based on this question: if there were jobs in this country, would women and children have gone down there to dig for gold?

What I Think By Dimakatso Modise Imbumba Young Solutions

The Stilfontein crisis created a lively and educational debate about illegal mining in South Africa. The debate also showed us how much we care about our country and the people who live in it.

What the government did to the Stilfontein illegal miners was very wrong – leaving people to die underground like that. Those miners knew what they

were doing might have been wrong, but they were working for their families.

If you see President Ramaphosa’s mansion, cars, big swimming pools, and the food he eats, while many people in South Africa do not have those luxuries or even basic necessities. They are suffering. They do not have houses, access to affordable food, or nice clothes.

The government should have given those people the opportunity to live. I think the government was wrong, and they should have helped the miners.

Rebuilding Friendships and Communities

Building Ubuntu and Friendships By Kim May PUSH EXT 1

Ubuntu is when people love each other and show kindness and care for one another. It is also when you are honest and trustworthy.

Friendship is when you two or more people love one another in a relationship of companions. Sometimes we can also be best friends, and that relationship is honest, caring and trustworthy relationship. This is because at first the two people were only friends and then they saw that they can be honest, caring, loving and trustworthy with each other, that they love each other as brothers and sisters and they then take the next step in their friendship.

These days we don’t have honest friendships; all our friends are just fake. They gossip about one another and they even reveal each other’s secrets when they are fighting. Sometimes in life you need to choose your friends wisely and be very careful because people we call friends are not always true.

Ubuntu By Mpho Moiloa Rena Le Lona

Ubuntu means ‘botho’ and ‘umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’, which can be translated as humanity and that we find humanity through valuing other people and treating them with respect and care. Having ubuntu can make people love you, it means you are not heartless or selfish because you will need others to help you one day.

Having ubuntu can help you make friends. If you are going through something, you will have people with you. If you have a good heart people will love you a lot.



Lack of Support in Communities

By Rotondwa Mashau

PUSH EXT 1

Ubuntu means a lot to me, like supporting, caring and being kind to others. In my community, ubuntu does not exist anymore. People do not love each other as before, neither do they care or show support towards one another. For example, it's like I work for my family, I feed myself, you feed yourself. I want to change my community in many ways so that we can show ubuntu to each other like we did before.

I know that there are some people out there in my community that still want to show care, support kindness and love to others – in other words, they still want to show solidarity. So I think that every community should build an organisation for people who still want to support others. The government must help these organisations.

Friendship may be important to other people, but for me there are questions, because these days people say they are friends and always tell the other, "I have your back and you have mine," but to me it has not been like that. You cannot trust people out there. Other people are just there to use you, so that's why I don't believe in friends anymore.

Conditions in Schools

Poor Infrastructure in Schools

By Gugu Thabethe

Imbumba Young Solutions

There are many problems relating to infrastructure in my school. Some classrooms are overcrowded and

overcrowding affects learning. There are also problems like broken windows, while some windows cannot open or close. When it's cold, the broken windows are covered with papers to keep out the cold. When there is loadshedding, some classrooms become very dark, this affects some learners who have eyesight problems.

The toilets are scary, and the lights are a problem. Some lights work and others don't. There are holes in the toilet roofs. The foundation phase learners are scared to go to the toilets on their own. These learners still believe in the myth of Pinky Pinky, a bad fairy that is pink in colour, who they think will get them if they go to the toilets. The state of the toilets only makes the situation worse for them.

The issues that we face as learners include receiving less attention from our teachers than we should. Some learners complain about favouritism by the teachers. Learners are not all attended to, and teachers are facing a problem when learners do not attend their classes.

Bad Conditions in Schools

By Engetelo Masinge

Uzima SA

My name is Masinge Engetelo, I'm a grade 10 at Job Ratheebe Secondary School, in my school there are about 900 learners. Before grade 10, when I first joined the school there were more than 1,000 learners. Classes are small with more than 50 learners in a class. The shortage of tables and chairs makes it hard for us to learn properly because we have to share both the chairs and tables.

Currently, there is only one toilet room for us as boys and the school has many boys. The toilets are not in a good state, they are dirty and only get cleaned after a long time. The toilets also do not have water from taps which increases the risk of getting sick.

Some classrooms have broken windows, which makes it hard for other kids to learn especially when it's cold. The learning conditions are bad because the teachers don't even look at our books.

Sometimes, our teachers fails to explain topics because some of them don't have the experience of teaching Grade 10. Our classroom has cracks and it shows it could fall at any time. Although we do have smart boards, we don't have internet connection to

use them. The learning conditions get worse at times as other teachers don't have the equipment they need to teach.

The textbooks were not delivered on time this year. The principal said they were ordered, but they were delivered three weeks after schools opened. The feeding scheme needs to be improved, the meals run out before each child has eaten. It feels like we are forced to learn in hard conditions.

Who Can Help my School? By Liyabona Ntyundwana

At my school, there are a lot of problems. The children write on the school walls, especially in the toilets, where they write terrible words such as "sex", "kiss me or you die".

The learners who are write on the walls are the ones who are failing. In my class, we are 56 learners. Some learners do not listen or hear the teacher when they explain something, but the teachers are not aware of this. In my class, there is a boy that can speak but is deaf. My maths teacher always beats the learner when he fails, not understanding that he has a disability. My class teacher does not want anyone to fail, but she also does not want to write things down to help them.

My English teacher always chooses the boy who is deaf to read stories and beats him when he can't. I feel sad for him every time.

My school yard is dirty, no one volunteers to clean it. The boys' toilets smells like pee, the toilet seats are broken and there is no door. My desk has many holes.

Who can help my school?

Teenage Pregnancy By Brent Bandile Sibindi Malvern High School

Teenage pregnancy has been an issue in recent years. Some teenage girls become pregnant through rape, unfortunately, but others sometimes engage in sex of their own will.

Because of this, the Minister said teenage girls will be forced to take contraceptives to deal with the high

rate of teenage pregnancy. I do not agree with the idea that girls at the age of twelve (12) and above should be forced to take contraceptives, because it would be violating their constitutional rights.

The question we should be asking ourselves is: why do children who are 12 and above but under eighteen have sex at all? The way the Minister is talking about contraceptives is wrong, because they would be given forcefully to girls, some children can may take advantage and go have sex but there is still a chance they could get infections or diseases.

I think parents should not force their children to take contraceptives but should sit down and talk to them about the contraceptives in a very educational way.

The government should also give out the contraceptives to the people who are sexually active, as they are children, but must remember that it can be classified as rape where a much older person is involved. The boys can help out on the teenage pregnancy thing by:

1. Not abusing young girls or taking advantage of them sexually. Older people must teach the boys this.
2. Some underage girls go to taverns and drink, when they are drunk, the boys take advantage by having sex with them, which is classified as rape, and then run away. Young boys and girls must not go to taverns and boys must be taught to never harass girls in any way.



IMPRINT

Tsohang Batjha
c/o Khanya College
5th floor, House of Movements
123 Pritchard Street
Johannesburg 2001
South Africa
Tel: +27(0)11 336-9190
Fax: +27(0)11 336-9196
Email: admin@khanyacollege.org.za
Web: www.khanyacollege.org.za

