

The strength and resilience of our youth

By [Tsholanang Seakamela](#), issued by [Red & Yellow](#)

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Incredible things happen when youth unite. However, in South Africa, this journey hasn't been easy. Taking a look back from 1976, how far have we actually come?

Incredible things happen when youth unite. However, in South Africa, this journey hasn't been easy. The Soweto Uprising on 16 June 1976 saw thousands of young people mobilise to fight against the oppressive Apartheid regime that was enforcing policies discriminating against black youth.



Young leaders like Steve Biko and Tsietsi Mashinini immersed themselves in the politics of that era by debunking, engaging, and critically analysing the propaganda that the apartheid regime was espousing. The Soweto Uprising was not an event that happened in isolation. It was instigated by a number of factors, including the unequal distribution of wealth and power imbalances on the basis of race. These are similar conditions that led to the #FeesMustFall movement that started in 2015 which saw thousands of students from universities across South Africa unite against the increase in fees of higher education. With resilience, bravery and a united front, South Africa's youth made their voices heard and showed everyone that they can effect powerful change.

With the right attitude, young people can create positive social and economic systems that ignite change in the arts, technology, entrepreneurship and many other industries. This is where the importance of lifelong learning comes in. Today there are more opportunities to engage with different disciplines, making them more flexible and open-minded in the world views. If you're determined enough, it's possible for you or anyone, to make an impact and inspire change.

The founder of SpaceX and Tesla Motors, Elon Musk, became a multi-millionaire in his youth because of his drive for innovation. When your ideas are centred on addressing human problems, then you're on the right path. I recently had the good fortune of meeting Laduma Ngxokolo - globally-recognised designer and creator of knitwear brand Maxhosa. Hailing from a small Port Elizabeth township, he studied textile design and technology. He used this knowledge, together with his commitment to telling a cultural story. Subsequently, these stories have resonated with the likes of Paul Smith and Beyoncé. This is a testament to the fact that regardless of your background, education is the key to incredible progress. By making the decision to learn, we're constantly reviving our minds and therefore able to make positive contributions to our society. Remember, you can't spell youth without 'you'. It's up to us to keep striving towards a better society for everyone, to always seek out ways to help others and be conscious of the impact our everyday decisions make.

One of the best ways to empower people and a better society is through education. Corporates and educational institutions need to continue making learnerships and bursary opportunities available to ensure that diverse, next-gen voices are heard. With a solid foundation, young people can make a meaningful contribution and create an environment that promotes economic growth.

Red & Yellow is committed to transformation through education by ensuring that 10% or more students benefit from bursaries.

If you or your company would like to sponsor a bursary to these talented young students, find out more [here](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tsholanang Seakamela is part of the Red & Yellow graduate programme. She loves people and all things social. Believer and teacher, aspiring nomad and hopes to be Beyoncé's best friend one day!

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