



Africa Week 2022



Letshego Nthatsi
Host for the Africa Day Dialogue

Creating a system that provides quality education for all females

Bio:

I am Letshego Nthatsi, born in Thaba Nchu, Bloemfontein. I am a hardworking young lady who is passionate about living her purpose, which is transforming people's lives by leading an inspirational life. I am an aspiring social scientist, and founder of an NGO called Her Power – an NGO that aims to empower young girls by giving them a platform to establish their talents and skills development. I am also a radio broadcaster and I use my talent to reach people and show that anything is attainable.

I am currently studying a Bachelor of Social Sciences at the University of the Free State. Studying Social Sciences has contributed to my desire to restore development in my town, to inspire growth in our residents' lives, and to improve their social conditions. I am about transformation through human development, which is related to extending people's freedom through opportunities and improving their well-being.

Abstract:

Creating a system that provides quality education to all females across races is probably the greatest development that is challenging Africa today. There is a continuing stereotypical notion that females are emotional beings who cannot lead, nor are they adequate enough to follow through in the pursuit of their goals. Gender inequality continues to reign in the academic world, where women are seen as people who will always have stumbling blocks that prevent them from successfully accomplishing their academic goals. It is important that we understand the root cause of this theory, which stems from the apartheid regime that consciously excluded women's dominance.

We battle with the culture that says a woman's priority should be to take care of the household and staying at home. We battle with society telling females that they cannot study health sciences because they are emotional beings who lack physical and psychological strength for the health science world. The institution pays little attention to black female students' problems. Let me bring it closer to home –

my mother was told by the family and her employers that she would fail dismally in pursuing her master's degree, because she would struggle to balance her domestic duties and her academic workload.

However, when my father pursued his studies, he received full support. Not only are they facing societal pressure, but black female students also experience financial struggles. Research indicates that multiple companies do not offer bursaries to female students because of the above stereotype – especially black female students, with the gender parity index for gross tertiary enrolment of females being higher than that of males by 40%. However, that index does indicate that black female students are less than white female tertiary students.

This highlights white privilege. Therefore, black females experience academic exclusion because of their financial struggles. This academic exclusion leads to psychological imbalance, and they experience mental illness. Some students go to extreme lengths, succumbing to gender-based violence; this is because they would be dependent on their romantic partners for financial support and are supposed to conform to what their partners say, regardless of how they feel. This indicates the rise in patriarchy.

However, we have seen from literature and mass female movements in our country that women have pushed through patriarchy and are fighting for what is rightfully theirs. They are dominating in educational professions and have created organisations that speak for them and vocalise their strength. They fully accomplish what they are destined for.