

Pay Money or Don't Apply!

Story by Mantombazane Khumalo

Some matriculants are heading for their worst nightmare. When they should be setting out into the big, wide world, they are given no choice but to stay at home and do nothing. This is because whatever career they had hoped to follow, doors are closing. To follow your dreams, you have to pay! Money talks.

When you want to apply to a particular university, you have to pay money for the application and for the registration. The average application fee is R280! Imagine if you wanted to apply to ten different universities. Then what? You would need 10 times R280 – a whole month's salary for some lucky earners! That's insane! No wonder so many school leavers are sitting at home unemployed. And when that happens, some of them are pushed into prostitution or crime.

This situation seems very unfair. Our constitution says that there shall be free education for all South Africans. So why has tertiary education become so unattainable? No one has a right to take education away from anyone. We understand that universities need to charge fees, but surely they should not try and stop you before you even

begin. They should spare a thought for those of us who are suffering and are determined to better ourselves.

Bursaries are available to those who deserve them but there are Grade 12s who are doing their best but cannot afford to pay the application fee of R280. It is too much. They come from families who wonder every day where their next meal will come from. With education, that child could help her family out of poverty.

It is a tragedy that 80% of school leavers in our community stay at home doing nothing. In part, this is because they are given no choice. Fair enough, some of them do badly in their final examinations but I am sure out of that 80% at least 60% could have made it to university.

This 21st century generation is suffering. This is a wake-up call: Do something with your life! A university may be a private institution but it's time our government had a talk with them. We have a high rate of unemployment because of this and we need to appeal to the government for help. Universities need to become more accessible!

