

13 JUNE 2025

## **BASIC EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE PARTNER TO HOST YOUTH DIALOGUE TO SPOTLIGHT LANGUAGE JUSTICE AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

The Department of Basic Education and The University of the Western Cape have partnered with the Kagiso Trust, Room to Read, Funda Wandé, TAQA and the Trevor Noah Foundation to host an inaugural Dialogue to Spotlight Language Justice and Youth Empowerment at the University of the Western Cape.

In a country where language is not merely a tool of communication but a powerful expression of identity, heritage, and culture, the Department of Basic Education— together with the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Room to Read South Africa, TAQA, Nal’ibali, Kagiso Trust, The Trevor Noah Foundation, and Funda Wandé—will host a thought-provoking Youth Day event.

Rooted in the legacy of the 1976 Soweto Uprisings, this inaugural “Language Our Freedom” dialogue pays tribute to the past while engaging pressing questions about the role of African languages in today’s classrooms and society. This Intergenerational gathering will explore how language intersects with literacy, memory, and social exclusion, highlighting the need for justice in how we value and integrate language into South Africa’s national identity.

Set against the backdrop of the linguistically diverse Western Cape—home to languages such as Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa, Kaaps (also known as Afrikaaps) and Sesotho—the event is both timely and necessary. The region’s rich tapestry of tongues reflects its complex histories and cultural intersections. The day will feature performances and conversations with learners, hip hop artists, educators, linguists, and cultural activists—united by the belief that language is liberation. Some of the topics on the agenda are: Rethinking Language in Education Policy, MTbBE (Mother-Tongue-Based Bilingual Education) in Practice: Classroom Realities and Success Stories, Bridging Basic and Higher Education: Curriculum and Pedagogy, Youth, Identity, and Language: Reclaiming Linguistic Heritage, and Digital Infrastructure and Language Resources.

**Continues below:**

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**Elijah Mhlanga:** Head of Communications – 083 580 8275

**Lukhanyo Vangqa:** Media Liaison Officer – 066 302 1533

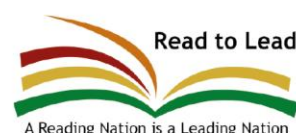
**Terence Khala:** Media Liaison Officer – 081 758 1546

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## MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND WILL BE AFFORDED INTERVIEWS AS FOLLOWS:

**Date:** Monday, 16 June 2025

**Time:** 10:00–15:00

**Venue:** Jakes Gerwel Hall, University of the Western Cape, Bellville Campus

**Format:** In-person and **Livestream** <https://bit.ly/UWCYouthDay-Language-our-Freedom>

### Notes to Editors: Key contributors at the event include:

**Dr Naledi Mbude-Mehana** is the Deputy Director-General for Transformation Programmes at the Department of Basic Education and a pioneer of Mother-Tongue Based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) – a transformative pedagogy aimed at widening epistemic access to meaningful teaching, learning, and assessment beyond Grade 3, particularly in mathematics, science, and other content subjects.

**Tsepang Khoboko**, Chief of Tech at TAQA, is passionate about creating and improving access and is able to do that through her work at TAQA. She studied a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering at the University of Cape Town, which enabled her to work as a process engineer. Khoboko's skill set includes designing and optimising processes and systems, problem-solving, and connecting with people from various walks of life. She values people, authenticity and learning, and these guide her contribution towards a vision of democratising knowledge by leveraging technology and language.

**Zolani Metu** is a Mandela Rhodes Scholar passionate about social and education reform in South Africa. He has pivoted from clinical social work and has worked in education programme development and intervention. He is Head of Programmes at Funda Wandu within the Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies South Africa (AGGP-SA). Funda Wandu is a Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) intervention that seeks to improve learning outcomes through teacher training, high-quality materials and improving the education system's capacity.

**Dr Sebolelo Mokapela**, senior lecturer in UWC's African Language Studies Department and a prominent isiXhosa scholar, has made substantial contributions to isiXhosa literary and cultural studies, translation studies, language planning and curriculum development. She is actively involved in the intellectualisation of minoritised indigenous Nguni languages, particularly isiMpondo, which was recently highlighted by the AmaMpondo Kingdom's appeal for it to become South Africa's 13th official language.

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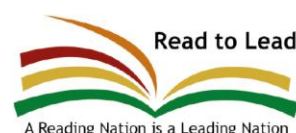
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**Prof Quentin Williams**, UWC academic and leading advocate for linguistic inclusion, has produced pathbreaking research and public scholarship on Kaaps (also known as Afrikaaps) in the academy and South Africa's cultural mainstream. His upcoming *Trilingual Dictionary of Kaaps*, set for release in September, is a milestone in recognising historically marginalised languages. He is also the founder and chairperson of the *Society virrie Advancement van Kaaps* (SAK).

The keynote address will be delivered by the Honourable **Ms Joy Maimela, National Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Basic Education**. The panel discussion, titled *Language Our Freedom*, will be moderated by Prof Elelwani Ramugondo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation, Student Affairs and Social Responsiveness at the University of Cape Town. She will be joined by Nadeema Musthan, Head of Literacy at [Room to Read South Africa](#), and Sizakele Mphatsoe, Head of Education at [Kagiso Trust](#). Ms Lorato Trok, Director of the [Nal'ibali Trust](#), will participate as a panellist.

**Media representatives are invited to attend the event. For media enquiries and RSVPs, please contact:**

Terence Khala  
Media Relations Officer  
Department of Basic Education

Or

Gasant Abarder, University of the Western Cape spokesperson  
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**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

(Catch more updates and new content on DBE TV – Channel 122 on Open view HD and on the DBE Channel on [YouTube](#))

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