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**To** : Media  
**From** : Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality  
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## **MAP RESPONDS TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL DIRECTIVE OF PRIORITIZING EDUCATION**

On Operation Hlasela 180 Days Program, January the 16<sup>th</sup> January 20178, Maluti A Phofung Executive Mayor Cllr Vusimusi William Tshabalala accompanied by Members of Mayoral Committee, Councillors, government sector departments and local stakeholders met with more than 5000 prospective first year students, matriculates, undergraduates and MAP Bursary Beneficiaries who assembled at Multipurpose Hall in Phuthaditjhaba, the key drive was to financially aid underprivileged youth to advance their studies and accelerate the National Development Plan Vision 2030 as the weapon to achieve economic transformation. At the zenith of building an academically liberated generation it was an opportune time for youth intending to enrol at institutions of higher learning to motivate them to be architects of their future to alleviate poverty. Since the establishment of the bursary initiative by the municipality in 2014 had an intake of 455 students to the value of R60 million and has produced 13 graduates.

The municipality has played a significant role in advancing the legacy of education through the conglomerate with Provincial Government, Pastors and I Can Foundation under the leadership of Dr David Molapo and Dr Mamiki Molapo and has contributed profusely to the Maluti A Phofung's 2017 National Senior Certificate results. "It is not a coincidence that we are second in the Province because we have worked tirelessly and had a mandate with the Department of Education to make sure that matric class of 2017 came out tops and got maximum Bachelors. That's a clear indication that education in our Province becomes a priority as government" ,expounded the Executive Mayor Cllr Tshabalala.

With the cognizance and conception that the Freedom Charter states that higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit; Tshabalala thus gave the unsuccessful students the second chance and emphasized that he will set up a team that will monitor all students which are studying with municipal bursaries across the country to make sure that they do not misuse the taxpayers money.



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With MAP having relationship with more than 15 Institutions, many students organizations deliberated on challenges about the shortage of student intake for this academic year because of the free education announcement but; Lehlohonolo Mokoaledi, Regional Secretary of COSAS Thabo Mofutsanyana explained “many people misinterpreted the President concept of free higher education, free education is to study with bursaries and we are unhappy with the limited spaces that students avail at the universities and rejects our students thereof. We will continue to assist our student financially to make sure that they get a right to learn in the higher education in partnership with SASCO’s campaign called ‘Right to Learn’ so we going to meet local stakeholders before we go to the universities to give us clarity recommendations”.

Apart from working hand in hand with the local stakeholders, the municipality has put all systems in place to assist students who have experienced challenges and evaluate aspects of its goals, also to implement the bursary policy and make sure that student comply. “In order to obtain the municipality bursary one has evaluate the outcome of their previous academic year results, proof of income, certified copies as well as motivation letter among other things because this we want to do things differently, we are going to sustained the effort to modify behavioursof our students in all the universities; we want pass nothing else” said the mayor. “ke leboha haholo Majoro kaho mpha monyetla, mme ke tshepisa ho sebeta ka thata hore ke seke ka senya tjehelete ya masepala” said a 20 years old B.Ed. student Sizakele Msibi from Prefect Farm also a former learner at Manthatasi Secondary in Tseseng, expressing her gratitude towards the Mayor for affording her the opportunity to further her studies at the University of the Free State, Qwa Qwa Campus. To combat youth unemployment rate, Tshabalala appointed Mamello as a political researcher being one of the top performing bursary beneficiary.

**By: Masilo Malakwane**