

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY LESEDI EXECUTIVE
MAYOR, CLLR LF MALOKA AT THE HANDOVER OF
BICYCLES– SHOVA KALULA PROGRAMME**

28 OCTOBER 2013, RATANDA COMMUNITY HALL

Honourable Speaker of Lesedi, Cllr Simon Moremi

MMCs Present

Honourable Councillors

Our esteemed Principals and Educators

Members of School Governing Bodies

Parents and Learners

Government officials

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to start by quoting our icon and former President, Tata Nelson Mandela when he said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." It is such a great pleasure to be standing before you today at an occasion aimed at contributing towards our children's education. We need to change the world to be a better place and as Tata Madiba once said it is through education that we can do that.

We are gathered here today to celebrate yet another demonstration by our ANC lead government that working together we can do and achieve more as a society. Improving the quality of education is one of the top priorities of our government.

The steady improvement of our matric pass rates is a clear indication of our commitment to education. President Zuma always reminds us of the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment troubling us as a society.

Some of the causes of these challenges are historical and it is through education and skilling our people that we will make a progress in addressing them.

Shova Kalula is a programme of the National Department of Transport and its objective is that of maximizing non-motorized transport to enable communities to access social and economic opportunities. It also seeks to promote cycling as a low cost mobility solution to low income households.

The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport also saw it fit to partner with the Department of Basic Education, Sedibeng District Municipality and Lesedi Local Municipality and roll out the programme to our schools.

The benefiting learners are those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have to walk around three kilometres to school and do not benefit from the Scholar Transport programme.

Some learners are forced to walk long distances to school, either because there is no available public transport or because their parents cannot afford it. Due to these situations some of these learners had to compromise their right to education as enshrined in the constitution.

While we may have other challenges in our schools and households the Shova Kalula programme is meant to ensure that non-attendance of schools by other learners because they stay too far from school is not one not of those challenges.

It is through education that the young people gathered here today can change the situations they are currently faced with. Your current circumstances should never determine your future. It is only your attitude that can determine your altitude. Remain committed to your studies, work hard and you will realize all your dreams to a brighter future.

My learners please take good care of these bicycles and jealously guard them to ensure that you will continue to enjoy journeys to and from school. I wish to also make a humble appeal to all our parents and guardians to ensure that these bicycles are only used by their rightful owners.

As government departments and schools present here we need to come with monitoring mechanisms to ensure that these learners keep these bicycles until they finish schooling. We received unfortunate reports that some learners who received these bicycles previously had them stolen from them on their way to and from school.

We cannot accept such criminality to continue robbing our children of their future. We need to all join hands as communities to ensure that those responsible for that are brought to book. These bicycles are unique and we can easily spot them. So when we see them being used by those who are not supposed to we must report those abusing them.

As the municipality we trained all learners who will be receiving bicycles in road safety regulations. We are appealing to all road users to be kind to these learners and share the road with them. We also extended an invitation to taxi associations to be part of this event so that they can extend this message to our taxi drivers.

Programme Director this event takes a few days after the commencement of matric exams. I therefore wish to take this opportunity and wish the Matric Class of 2013 the best of luck in their exams. My message to you is that Matric is the final class in the basic education phase and a measure of all your efforts in the past twelve or more years of your schooling.

You should look back with pride at the years you spent waking up sometimes not in the best weather conditions. Despite all the challenges you went through you managed to hold on when some of your peers dropped out along the way.

You are special because you realised that even though it might not be easy but it is really worth it. You have now reached the last hurdle in primary and secondary education. We are proud of you and know that you will make us all proud.

Let us also extend good wishes to all learners in lower grades and in tertiary institutions who will also be sitting for their end of the year examinations. We also have adults who are continuing to empower themselves through education.

To them in Sesotho we say “thuto ha e tsofallwe”, let us continue to liberate and empower ourselves through education and build a better tomorrow to all of us. The former late President of the United States of America, Mr JF Kennedy once said “The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth”.

My dear Principals present here, we really appreciate your hard work towards the empowerment of our society. Yours is a noble profession that is not always appreciated as it deserves to be.

Ladies and Gentlemen may we all put our hands together as a gesture to say thank you to all our Educators for the wonderful work they continue to do. Please extend this message to all of your colleagues who are not present here today.

Ladies and gentlemen, I conclude let me take this opportunity to remind all of you that the IEC will be having a voter registration weekend on 09 and 10 November 2013. A special message goes out to “born frees” born in 1994 who will be voting for the first time in 2014 to go out and register.

Let us all go continue to exercise our democratic rights and strengthen our democracy by registering to vote. I am very confident that all of you present here today will vote logically and correctly to protect the gains of our freedom.

I thank you