

## Khanya College Celebrates 40 Years of Education for Liberation

By Karibu Staff

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This year, Khanya College is celebrating 40 years of commitment to education for liberation. Khanya College was established in 1986 at the height of the struggle against apartheid, and the College emerged as a direct response to apartheid education and class oppression. From its inception, Khanya positioned itself as part of the resistance movement, working alongside students, workers, communities, and social movements fighting for equality and justice.

Comrade Maria Van Driel, the Director of Khanya College, explained that the College's 40-year history reflects continuity in organising and struggle, both in South Africa and internationally. Comrade Van Driel noted that, more than 30 years into South Africa's democracy, many of the aspirations of the liberation struggle remain unfulfilled.

Highlighting that young people continue to drop out of school, access to university remains limited, there is a lack of proper housing, unemployment remains high, wages are low, and poverty continues to be one of the country's greatest challenges.

The Khanya Director explained that South Africa today is no longer divided simply along black and white lines, but along class lines, between rich and poor. The majority of poor people are black, while ownership of wealth remains largely concentrated in white hands, although a small black elite has also emerged.

Comrade Van Driel further pointed out that frustration among working-class communities is often misdirected toward African migrants. Migrants are not "taking jobs," but are working hard and creating opportunities. A lack of political education, comrade Van Driel emphasised, leaves many people vulnerable to capitalist narratives that divide rather than unite the working class.

This is why Khanya's orientation remains relevant: working together with working-class organisations, communities, and activists to advance education for liberation.

In its early years, Khanya focused on supporting black students who were excluded from tertiary education. From 1986 to 1997, the College offered academic programmes that created pathways to higher education. These programmes reflected Khanya's education that is grounded in organising, activism, and a strong sense of collective responsibility.

Comrade van Driel also highlighted that Khanya celebrates this milestone at a moment when the country also commemorates 50 years since the 1976 Soweto Uprising, when students took to the streets to resist apartheid education. Five decades later, the education system remains in deep crisis. Students continue to struggle to access tertiary education, rising fees remain a major barrier, and the public education system is under severe strain.

The 40th anniversary also comes at a time when South Africa and the international community must renew their commitment to organising, particularly in a time of war, deepening inequality, violence against women, and the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

In this context, Khanya's 40th celebration is both reflective and forward-looking, rooted in the shared understanding that another world is possible.

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