

A reader asks Minister of Sport and Recreation Fikile Mbalula for funding for township clubs in order to develop South African talent

|| PHOTO:
LUCKY
NXUMALO



Open letter to Sports Minister Mbalula

Hudson Nxumalo, Alexandra Trampoline Club chairperson via email

Dear Minister

Township clubs are dying! Why? I am writing to you on behalf

of the Alexandra Trampoline Club, which is a grassroots transformation and development initiative (from entry level up to and including international participation) located in Alexandra township, north of Johannesburg. It also serves the disadvantaged community of South Hills.

As a township club founded in March 2000, we have first-hand experience of the challenges facing township clubs.

Every year our gymnasts qualify for international events, but are not afforded the opportunity to participate.

The South African Gymnastics Federation does not receive adequate funding to give our gymnasts the chance to compete at international competitions.

When our financially disadvantaged township club gymnasts qualify and are selected to compete internationally, they cannot afford entry fees, flights, accommodation and clothing to participate.

We respectfully suggest that adequate funding be allocated to a "Township Club Trust Fund" specifically for financially disadvantaged township club participants who qualify to compete at international events.

A living wage for township club coaches should also be introduced.

We respectfully suggest that as our national federations are the drivers of transformation in their respective sports, they be allocated sufficient funding for the sole purpose of remunerating coaches based at registered and active clubs located in townships.

This will not only encourage development and ensure the continued existence of township clubs, but will also motivate coaches to open more clubs in more townships, ensuring transformation and contributing to job creation.

Adequate funding allocated to active township clubs will resolve many factors affecting transformation, thereby encouraging and motivating self-improvement, development and growth, which will have a positive impact on the pace and quality of development and transformation in sport.

The continued existence of township clubs cannot be left to chance, Minister Mbalula. Budgets for the township clubs, their coaches and their members would assist financially to develop them.

Every child is a potential Protea, sport administrator or judge or even a national coach, but without coaches, they cannot reach their potential.

The National Sports Plan says: "No country can expect to achieve and sustain success at the elite level without a strong participation base in the community, because that is where every champion has their beginning."