

NYDA welcomes age restrictions on free housing

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) has welcomed the age restriction of 35 set by the Human Settlements Minister Lindiwe Sisulu for access to free public housing.



NYDA Executive Chairman Yershen Pillay believes the YouthBuild programme that trains young people to build houses will have a meaningful impact in increasing the number of houses built for poor communities in South Africa. Image: [HRDC](#)

"Allowing youth below the age of 35 to have access to free housing will only create further dependency and negate efforts at national development or building a productive youth population," NYDA Executive Chairman Yershen Pillay said.

Sisulu said that people under the age of 40 would not qualify to receive free public housing from the government.

"The Minister is correct to argue that priority must be given to the elderly but priority should also be given to the creation of opportunities for youth," Pillay said.

The Department of Human Settlements has started its YouthBuild Infrastructure Development Programme in partnership with the NYDA. This programme involves thousands of youths across the country who are enrolled to help build and maintain community amenities and RDP houses.

YouthBuild training carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers

"These young people involved in a YouthBuild programme for one year receive certified training in brick-laying, carpentry and plumbing. Many youth exit this programme and gain employment as artisans while others start their own businesses," he said.

Pillay said the NYDA contributed R14m to the programme while the Department of Human Settlements contributed a further R16m.

Last year, 3,788 young people participated in the YouthBuild programme and in June, 76 houses were built by and handed over to the community of Lindelani in the Northern Cape.

"As the NYDA, we endorse the age restrictions on qualifying for free public housing but we call on the Ministry to invest more resources in the YouthBuild Infrastructure Development Programme where young people are building houses for themselves and receiving training as artisans," Pillay said.

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