

We may be young, but we are not ignorant

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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Clara Hansen graduated with her LLB Cum Laude from the University of Pretoria before going on to specialise in Environmental Law and completing her Masters through Wits University.



Clara Hansen, Candidate Attorney, Baker McKenzie

In honour of Youth Month, Hansen chatted to us about its significance to her, and her wishes for the children of the future.

Tell us a bit about yourself and why you decided to get into law?

I am an extrovert with a passion for working and interacting with people. I have a love of reading, learning and history. My father motivated me to pursue a career in law and despite my initial hesitancy and dislike of certain law subjects, my interest and passion for the field only grew, and by the end of my six years of study I could not imagine myself doing anything else. A career in law has granted me the opportunity to learn and read, to meet fantastic people and learn from them and their experiences, and exposed me to challenging situations and exciting adventures. The field of law has provided me with a platform to pursue all my passions and to develop new interests.

What is the significance of Youth Day to you, as a young attorney?

Youth Day commemorates the Soweto Uprising, the day on which thousands of students protested the discriminatory language policies in schools and the quality of their education. This is the day that pays tribute to students who lost their lives in the pursuit of a better future, and recognises the role that the youth played in the liberation of South Africa. Even though we live in an era of democracy, the war against systemic discrimination and injustice is not yet won, the country is still facing numerous challenges such as unemployment, poverty, crime, lack of education and a crumbling infrastructure. The celebration of Youth Day reminds me of the role that I and future youths play in the development and progress of South Africa. I am reminded of my role as an individual, to use the privilege of a good education and a job at an international firm as a stepping stone to help those who are in need, and to use the education and skills I have gained to contribute to the progress of the country.

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▣ **What do you feel is the most important right children have today?**

Amongst the numerous rights of children, the right to education is an essential building block to a child's future, quality of life and well-being in later years. In South Africa, around 29% of children are illiterate, which impacts their social and economic circumstances and their ability to work towards improved futures. Access to education has the potential to enable children to exploit their similarities, identify common goals and appreciate the strength in diversity. The education of the country's future youths is one step closer to bridging the divide between the discriminatory past and a transformed future.



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▣ **Name one thing you would change for today's youth...**

Today's youths are faced with the consequences of the older generations actions catching up in the form of climate change, the horrors of war and displacement, coronavirus and the social media revolution, to name a few. The loudest voices behind movements fighting climate change, protesting gender-based violence, mental health and the refugee crises belong to members of the younger generation. The main thing I would like to change would be to have the youth and their concerns taken seriously, as they are fighting for a better tomorrow and are not attached to the historical structures upon which older generations built their wealth and influence. The world is still predominantly run by older men, who argue that age breeds wisdom, but as we look at the current state of the country and the world today, it can be argued that such a statement is not true. I would change the way youths are perceived, change the assumption that with youth comes ignorance and naivety, and hope that such a change would prevent the concerns of today's youth falling on deaf ears.

▣ **Pass on one piece of advice given to you by an elder...**

The following wise words from Rick Warren were shared with me, *"Remember how far you've come, not how far you have to go. You are not where you want to be, but neither are you where you used to be."*

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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