

Survey shows EFF's policies appeal to youth
By Khuthala Nandipha
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At least 38% of South African youth feel the Economic Freedom Fighters' key policies will win them support, according to a survey.

The survey of 2 339 respondents, between the ages of 18 and 34, conducted by consumer insights company Pondering Panda showed that Malema's land reform policy and the elimination of borders in Southern Africa are key to EFF's success among young people.

The EFF's land reform policy, whereby all land in South Africa would be taken by the state without compensation and then licensed to individuals, was supported by 37% of young South Africans. Meanwhile, a staggering 49% said they did not support this policy. The support for the policy was strongest among young black South Africans.

The second policy by the EFF proposes to have national borders between South Africa and its immediate neighbours, like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland eliminated. According to Panda, 32% of the respondents supported this motion while 52% felt it was unnecessary.

Shirley Wakefield, spokesperson for Pondering Panda said, "Although opposition to the EFF's land and border reform policies still significantly outweighs support for them, what this survey shows us is that they are far from marginal ideas. Young South Africans want change, and other parties should look carefully at the alternatives they will be offering them."

Political analyst Daniel Silke warned that such surveys do not reflect whether the youth would vote or if they would vote according to the support of such policies. "This could just be a case of emotional resonance to popular policies."

He argued that this is to be expected as the EFF is unashamedly a populist movement that catches attention across society with Malema having always been seen as a radical revolutionary. "His style of politics is attractive in theory because it projects radical anti-establishment of the world. Young people are frustrated, so they will be drawn to such," he explained.

Strong support

Silke is convinced that once the election campaigning kicks off, young people are more likely to go for an experienced party over a party whose policies resonate with them.

The EFF's strongest support came from three provinces; Free State (56%), Limpopo (47%), and Mpumalanga (45%).

The party, since its formation, has been highly placed by political analysts with reference to next year's elections. With judgment still pending from his corruption charges, the general feeling is that they won't harm his popularity as long as he stays out of jail.

However, according to a City Press report, ANC Youth League national task team coordinator Mzwandile Masina has rubbished Malema's chances of succeeding after he left the league's administration in shambles.

"There is about R50-million in unpaid bills. If these guys can't administer the youth league properly, I want to see what they can do organisationally," he said.

In a similar survey by Panda, with 3 585 respondents, more than one in four young South Africans said they would vote for a political party led by Malema. The respondents believed Malema would do well in service delivery, housing provision and education and 15% thought he would create more jobs.

Malema launched his party last month with former ANC Youth League spokesperson Floyd Shivambu and sushi-king-turned-revolutionary Kenny Kunene, as official members of the party. The expelled ANC Youth

League leader has claimed the group would create radical change, while the current political system would only result in entrenching poverty.

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