No Afrikaans, no cake
AfriForum Youth campaigns to save language as a medium of instruction

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IF YOU don’t speak Afrikaans you can’t buy cake at any of the campus booths being set up nationwide by civil rights group AfriForum Youth.

The “ban” is part of the group’s #RedAfrikaans [save Afrikaans] campaign, intended to highlight the need for the retention of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at universities.

“We will launch events such as the affirmative action cake sale to illustrate the unfairness of the [universities] language policy,” said AfriForum Youth spokesman Ian Cameron. “Cake will be sold only to Afrikaans-speakers.”

The debate about the use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction at some universities gained momentum in November when the University of Stellenbosch announced the language would be dropped as a primary language of instruction.

Critics of the use of Afrikaans claim it racially excludes students, whereas its defenders argue that the constitution guarantees everyone mother-tongue education.

Launching the campaign in Pretoria yesterday, Cameron urged parents of Afrikaans-speaking students not to pay tuition fees and strangle universities financially.

He said AfriForum Youth members would demonstrate on campuses and the group would litigate if necessary to stop universities scrapping Afrikaans.

He said students would defend themselves if attacked by those calling for Afrikaans to be scrapped, and that Afrikaans had become a punchbag for people pursuing political agendas.

North West University spokesman Louis Jacobs said the institution had spoken to AfriForum Youth about the issue and “our door is always open”. The university would use its standard debt collection methods if fees were not paid.

Pretoria University spokesman Anna-Retha Bouwer said a report on a review of language policy was being studied.

The Higher Education Transformation Network said: “Our view is that most students understand English and it will be good if we all move towards English as the main language of instruction.”

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