

COMMENT

# In Gauteng we must create jobs that inspire hope

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FOR THOSE of us who're employed it's easy to become blasé about the life-altering value of a job, particularly if you've never experienced the gut-wrenching cycle of a continued job search which yields nothing but disappointment after disappointment.

While a long-term job is of course first prize, even contract work, such as the kind provided through the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP), has a profound effect on a person's ability to access future employment. Besides the value placed by employers on work experience, a job builds self-respect, confidence and, above all, hope.

All of these are essential ingredients needed to overcome the current hurdles to economic participation, especially for our

youth, and those who have been denied a tertiary education.

Each South African breadwinner supports on average three family members; therefore, a job has a significant impact on families, communities and, more broadly, societies. It is for this reason that I prioritised the re-formation of the City of Tshwane's EPWP recruitment policy, making it a fairer process and giving everyone an equal opportunity to apply and benefit from the programme.

The previous system of "insiders and outsiders" prevented equal access to job opportunities; the people who benefited were usually those with "connections". Since becoming mayor I have overseen the creation of 24 463 EPWP job opportunities. That is 24 463 lives and families changed. It is my desire to ultimately see a Gauteng in which there is at least one person in each

household who has a job. This can be achieved through uplifting entrepreneurs and micro-enterprises.

However, this doesn't occur in a vacuum. As mayor, I have worked hard to create an environment for people to prosper in Tshwane by rooting out corruption, building investor confidence and attracting direct investment to the city. I also launched an inner-city rejuvenation project to improve, among other things, the cleanliness and viability of the city for entrepreneurship and further investment.

The results of these efforts have been R3.8 billion in investment, with a potential 1 850 new jobs being created soon. There are 15 new projects in the investment pipeline, worth about R2bn, which include automotive suppliers, logistics projects, aviation and hi-tech manufacturing.

The Tshwane metro is the fastest

growing economy in South Africa, with employment growth of 7.6%.

My goal is to take these lessons and roll them out on a provincial level, where over 2 million people are unemployed. We must create jobs if we are serious about changing the lives of ordinary South Africans.

Our approach, as the DA, has been to create conditions in which businesses – big and small – can start, grow and thrive. If I were a business owner, what would I need to grow my business and employ more people? Besides cutting red tape, we need effective innovation hubs, active partnerships with the private sector, and funding. As premier of Gauteng, believing a job is never just a job, the change in Tshwane would become the change experienced in all of this province.

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*Msimanga is DA Gauteng premier candidate*