

Dear Editor:

Somewhere I read that SA is the biggest welfare state in the world. No! That can't be true. Can it?

What is true is that we have 5.5 million tax payers supporting over 13 Million welfare recipients. Over the last 16 years we have barely succeeded in lifting a proportion of our population out of poverty. The majority continue to live like they did before the government changed.

As much as we welcome the City's Expanded social package policy, we note with worry the department's registration of 570 000 individuals to receive these benefits. Of these, 256 452 are grant recipients from South African Social Agency (SASSA.) What concerns me is our poverty exit strategies. There are two: the Job Pathways program which has only placed 2500 people through a consulting company that earned 4.2 Million in the 4th quarter of 2010 and then the unsustainable EPWP program, which has only placed 7000 individuals, which is less than 1% of people exiting poverty. Is this an achievement we can be proud of?

My dear mother always says to me "go dula go a tsafatsa" (to sit and do nothing you end up getting old quickly,) so I propose to the Joburg City council that we look at ways that those receiving benefits and are dependent on the state can give back to the state. For example they could assist in grass cutting programs, cleaning of schools, help fixing some of our broken facilities and so on. People shouldn't get things for free, they learn nothing from this process. Even when work opportunities come through, it misses them because "ba tlwaetse go dula" (they are used to sitting and doing nothing.)

But the ANC led City government is just as guilty of "ba tlwaetse go dula" because they just sit back and do nothing and it shows in the lack of service delivery and crumbling infrastructure. I want to say to the Honorable Mayor please do something, our people are struggling to get by and you have the power to change this soon.

Yours sincerely,
Clr Siphon Masigo
DA Joburg