

### **Self-employment solution to unemployment, poverty**

Too many South Africans still wrestle against the affects of poverty as unemployment rates increase, while a significant number who are employed also struggle to make ends meet due to low paying jobs mostly in the informal sector where job security is scarce and there are little or no benefits. However, the country remains committed to halving poverty and unemployment at the close of 2010, despite the global economic downturn, which has cost South Africa 200 000 jobs so far this year.

The reality of lifting citizens above the poverty line however, lies in the active return to independence and freedom from the need to rely wholly on external systems for survival. First, individuals need to reclaim their ability to take responsibility for their own lives and the welfare of their family; the general public has over time been educated and trained to integrate increased dependencies, which runs counter to their natural instincts for self-control and self-sufficiency.

## **Two/**

According to Theresa Lütge-Smith, author of ‘Only 50 Steps to Start Your Own Business’, the belief that poverty and lack of jobs will somehow be eradicated by some inexplicable magic wand is yet another example of our dependency on external systems for our continued existence. “Many people today live from crisis to crisis—unemployment, shortage of food, uncontrollable fuel prices, disease, shortage of energy resources, financial crises, serious environmental problems, increasing poverty, social insecurity--and without protest accept limitation and decline,” says Lütge-Smith.

In each of us there is an idea that can be developed into a self-employment opportunity. Examples include paying attention to complaints about existing products or services, identifying something missing in your town or city, developing a hobby into a business, turning your home or land into a money earner, or exploring social entrepreneurship through community upliftment. According to the author, “By validating ideas and converting them into money, an alternative road can be taken in contrast with the traditional money economy, to explore the enormous potential to effectively deal with the country’s ecological, social and economic challenges and to pave the way for a productive human-worthy future.”

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### **Three/**

The two types of employment—entrepreneurship and job-creation—should be actively promoted to solve the problem of unemployment and poverty in the country. Focus areas to grow small businesses include the car, chemical, metal fabrication, tourism, clothing and textile industries, as well as agriculture, public services like health and education, and diverse enterprises to improve food security.

The consistent development of an entrepreneurial culture in South Africa means that a globally-competitive economy can grow to serve the interest of all peoples' progress; and respect for the ecosystem, life and nature, while forming the backbone of a sustainable, peaceful society. Step one in the book 'Only 50 Steps to Start Your Own Business' includes exercises to generate and evaluate ideas for a micro or small business startup, followed by important stages such as writing a comprehensive business plan, sourcing finance, training, branding and image building, direct mail campaigns, customer relationship management, and taxes up to Step 50 that deals with planning a grand opening for the new enterprise.

#### **Four/**

The book also covers practical guidelines on employee-managed healthcare, sources of direct help and advice, business profiles and youth self-employment, plus several self-study tutorials including professional selling, public speaking, financial management, public relations, low-cost marketing techniques, and basic business writing.

At the start of 2010 new graduates, school-leavers, and youth need to be encouraged to start micro or small businesses, which will in turn create jobs for ordinary people. Clearly South Africa needs more wealth—more jobs, more businesses, more trade within domestic and global markets, higher levels of productivity and increased skills training to develop an entrepreneurial ethos in the country. The publication, which provides in-depth information on the burgeoning informal Street Vendor Trade in South Africa and guidelines on ‘Sowing the Seeds to Make Africa Bloom’, can be ordered from Biz Culture ([www.bizculture.co.za](http://www.bizculture.co.za)). A list of the 50 steps to start your own business may be viewed online.

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#### **For more information contact:**

Theresa Lütge-Smith

14 William Cock Road

Port Alfred (Eastern Cape)

Tel/Fax: + 27 (0) 46 624 2793; C: 072 207 1287

[theresa@imagnet.co.za](mailto:theresa@imagnet.co.za)

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