# Report

Entrepreneurship and Elections 2024



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Road to 2024: Entrepreneurship and Elections was curated in partnership with Workshop17 to hold a voluntary space for entrepreneurs to engage on the 2024 elections manifestos with the various contesting political parties. The intention of the convenings was to facilitate an entrepreneurial ecosystem of political solutions in South Africa. This gave an opportunity for Workshop17 members to understand the various election manifestos emanating from the diverse political parties. The primary goal of the report is to provide entrepreneurs in South Africa with insights into the intersections between entrepreneurship and elections, empowering them to make informed voting decisions.

The purpose of the Entrepreneurship and Elections Report is to present the summary of the discussions, debates, and reflections that emanated from the four convenings in Sandton, Rosebank, Paarl, and Newlands between February and March 2024. With the elections coming up on the 29th of May 2024, it is crucial that entrepreneurs are informed as they cast their votes to the political parties of their choice.

The structure of the convenings was apolitical, enabling debates amongst the politicians and for entrepreneurs to scrutinize their political manifesto. The impact achieved was the opportunity for entrepreneurs to directly ask politicians questions related to; socio-political dynamics, political economy, and policies towards small, micro, and medium enterprises amongst others.

These convenings were conceived as a platform to draw entrepreneurs closer to the realm of politics, providing them an avenue to articulate their needs and aspirations within the economic and social landscape, and fostering an environment conducive to their growth and prosperity. Additionally, it served as an opportunity for political leaders to bridge the existing disconnect, elucidate their values, and expound upon the implications of their manifestos for the entrepreneurial community, thereby fostering transparency and mutual understanding.

Undoubtedly, South African politics influences and impacts small and growing businesses considerably. Similarly, the government through any political arrangement has the constitutional obligation to create a conducive environment for businesses to flourish and contribute towards an established tax regime. Thus, this space of conversations has enabled the Workshop17 entrepreneurial ecosystem to engage, reflect, and co-create new solutions.

The intersectionality between entrepreneurship and elections is imperative as a definite 'political will' that creates an entrepreneurial environment that is safe, profitable, and competitive. Workshop17 as a responsible corporate citizen in partnership with its member, Huruma Bantfu seeks to make this a reality in light of the 2024 elections.

Against the backdrop of South Africa's unemployment rate, a staggering 32.1% as of the beginning of the year, showcasing an increase from 31.9% in the preceding quarter and resulting in a surge of unemployed persons to 7.9 million, entrepreneurship emerges as a vital pillar holding the country together. This prompts a crucial inquiry into how entrepreneurs can flourish in an environment marked by rampant crime, government corruption, electricity shortages, and deficient infrastructure. The report aims to unravel the strategies entrepreneurs list in overcoming some of these challenges, enabling them to not only succeed but also contribute organically to employment generation and foster opportunities through the multiplier effect.

This collaborative partnership cultivated an environment conducive to critical thinking and facilitated discourse on the intersection between entrepreneurship and elections. The aim was to gain insights into how each political manifesto addresses the challenges and potentials embedded in entrepreneurship within the South African context.



# 2. ENTREPRENEURS STAND AS INDESPENSIBALE STAKEHOLDERS FOR ANY POLITICAL PARTY ASPIRING TO GOVERN

The entrepreneurial landscape in South Africa is setback by formidable challenges. However, amidst the economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are discernible signs of increased entrepreneurial activity, with more small businesses progressing beyond the startup stage. A research report authored by Angus Bowmaker-Falconer, a research fellow at Stellenbosch Business School, and Natanya Meyer, an associate professor in the SARChI Chair for Entrepreneurship Education at the University of Johannesburg, sheds light on South Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

While the supportive environment for entrepreneurship rates is lower than global averages, positive signals are evident in increased early-stage entrepreneurial activity and rising rates among women and young people. Early-stage entrepreneurial activity, representing the percentage of adults initiating or managing a new business, surged to 17.5% in 2021, up from 10.8% in 2019. Entrepreneurs stand as indispensable stakeholders for any political party aspiring to govern. Nevertheless, considerable efforts are required to fortify the enabling environment and streamline business operations, unlocking the full potential of entrepreneurs to contribute to economic growth and job creation significantly.

Despite a supportive environment for entrepreneurship rating below global averages, the report underscores the potential for entrepreneurs to play a pivotal role in economic growth and job creation. As this report unfolds, we delve into the nuances of the entrepreneurial landscape, dissecting challenges, opportunities, and potential pathways for collaborative enhancement as outlined by the participants.

Entrepreneurs as stakeholders for political parties represent a crucial intersection between the private sector and governance, where both entities have a vested interest in fostering economic growth, job creation, and societal advancement. Recognizing entrepreneurs as stakeholders implies acknowledging their role in driving innovation, generating employment, and contributing to overall prosperity.

For political parties, engaging with entrepreneurs offers an opportunity to tap into a diverse pool of expertise, ideas, and resources that can inform policy development and implementation. By understanding the needs and challenges faced by entrepreneurs, political parties can tailor their agendas and manifestos to create a more conducive environment for business growth and entrepreneurship. This may involve crafting policies that reduce regulatory burdens, provide access to funding and resources, and foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs can serve as advocates and ambassadors for political parties, leveraging their networks and influence to garner support and promote policies that align with their interests. In return, political parties can provide platforms for entrepreneurs to voice their concerns, participate in decision-making processes, and shape the direction of economic policy.

In terms of potential pathways for collaborative enhancement, there are several avenues that political parties and entrepreneurs can explore:

- **Policy Co-Creation:** Political parties can collaborate with entrepreneurs to co-create policies that address the needs and challenges of the business community. This may involve establishing advisory boards or task forces comprised of entrepreneurs to provide input and feedback on policy proposals.
- Capacity Building: Political parties can support entrepreneurs through capacity-building initiatives, such as training programs, mentorship opportunities, and access to networks and resources. By investing in the development of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, political parties can help entrepreneurs succeed and thrive in a competitive business environment.
- Advocacy and Representation: Entrepreneurs can advocate for policies that support entrepreneurship and economic growth, while political parties can act as allies and champions for the business community. Through joint advocacy efforts, entrepreneurs and political parties can amplify their voices and influence policy decisions at local, national, and international levels.
- Economic Development Initiatives: Political parties can collaborate with entrepreneurs to drive economic development initiatives, such as promoting local business development, attracting investment, and creating job opportunities. By working together, political parties and entrepreneurs can leverage their respective strengths and resources to stimulate economic growth and prosperity.

Overall, the collaboration between entrepreneurs and political parties holds immense potential for driving positive change and advancing shared goals of economic development, job creation, and societal progress. By working together, these stakeholders can leverage their collective expertise and resources to create a more vibrant and inclusive economy for all.



## 3. POLITICAL MANIFESTO FOR ENTREPRENEURS

# **AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

The ANC's manifesto focuses on addressing the persisting inequalities within the economy. A central theme is the commitment to leveling the playing fields, particularly for black entrepreneurs both pre- and post-apartheid. The party highlights the importance of effective competition regulation and recognizes the significance of the initiatives and partnerships undertaken by the Department of Small Business Development in supporting entrepreneurship in the country.

A key aspect of the ANC's manifesto involves promoting the participation of women and rural businesses, with a specific focus on nurturing the township economy. Access to finance is deemed crucial, and the party seeks to investigate a multifaceted approach to deal with protection fees and business extortion syndicates across South African communities.

The manifesto delves into fostering innovative ideas within the township environment, aligning with the principles of the Freedom Charter. The ANC advocates for a mixed economy and the provision of public goods, emphasizing the role of a developmental state.

Land reform is a prominent feature, with a focus on the removal of the Land Act and the encouragement of running agricultural businesses. The party critically examines historical structures within the economy and highlights the need to shift ownership patterns, where currently less than 3% are owned by black individuals.

Looking forward, the ANC's manifesto launch is still yet to occur, and it is expected to further detail its plans and policies in addressing economic inequalities, promoting entrepreneurship, and reshaping ownership dynamics. Additionally, the proposal to turn local libraries into entrepreneurship hubs signifies a holistic approach to empowering communities and fostering economic growth.



Representatives:

Hon Cameron Dugmore Leader of the Opposition in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature [Newlands, Cape Town]

Hon Nobulumko Nkondlo Member of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature [Newlands, Cape Town]

# **ACTION SA**

ActionSA outlines a vision focused on creating an enabling environment for the economy through thoughtful policies aimed at fostering sustainable business practices. Their commitment to global competitiveness is evident in proposals for infrastructure investment to facilitate exports and attract direct foreign investment.

Recognizing the need for labor laws reform, ActionSA aims to address the strong influence of trade unions on businesses and increase the capacity for job creation. The proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act and reduction in the power of trade unions underscore their dedication to shaping a more flexible and dynamic labor market. Introducing the Opportunity Fund, a ring-fenced and independently secured lending initiative, demonstrates a strategic approach to economic development.

ActionSA advocates for tax breaks and seeks to address the departure of skilled black professionals by implementing measures such as reinstating a service year and providing pathways to citizenship for foreign investors. Additionally, their platform addresses challenges like the decay of the post office, promoting the utilization of unused land for mixed-income residential infrastructure, and tackling issues related to land reform, the Mining Charter, and competition with cartels. ActionSA also envisions expanding trade in the African region and provides incentives for impactful investments in line with its comprehensive approach to economic and social development.



### Representatives:

**Mr Herman Mashaba** National Leader [Sandton, Gauteng]

Mrs Angela Sobey
Western Cape Provincial
Chairperson [Rosebank,
Gauteng]

Mr Andrew Clayton Western Cape Provincial Coordinator [Paarl, Cape Town]

Mr Matthew George Western Cape Youth Coordinator [Newlands, Cape Town]

# **BUILD ONE SA**

BOSA's political manifesto, unveiled during an entrepreneurship and elections convening, reflects a comprehensive strategy for economic and social development. Their commitment to job creation recognizes its pivotal role in fostering economic prosperity and reducing unemployment. Prioritizing equitable access to opportunities, BOSA aims to address disparities in essential services, education, and healthcare, fostering a leveled playing field for all citizens.

The party advocates for regional development through the establishment of economic zones, creating conducive environments for businesses, attracting investments, and stimulating economic growth in specific regions. BOSA emphasizes the need to formalize entrepreneurial activities within communities, supporting small businesses and streamlining regulatory processes to foster local entrepreneurship.

Comprehensive business support, both financial and non-financial, is a cornerstone of BOSA's approach, including initiatives to facilitate funding access, implement mentorship programs, and provide training resources for business growth. They further promote engagement with impact investors, aligning economic development with positive social and environmental outcomes.

Addressing the necessity of a secure business environment, BOSA acknowledges challenges related to crime, regulatory stability, and the creation of a conducive business climate. Their commitment to tackling unemployment is encapsulated in a specific "Jobs Plan," likely comprising targeted initiatives in key sectors. Rejecting the indignity of poverty, BOSA's vision is underpinned by the National Development Plan, guiding their efforts to analyze challenges within communities comprehensively. They aim to elevate living standards, enhance education access, and improve healthcare services.

BOSA's stance against complacency emphasizes continuous improvement. Their dedication to inclusive development is evident in initiatives like Township Economic Zones. They champion the cause for young people, recognizing their fight for opportunities and advocating for space creation for growth and contribution to collective progress. Overall, BOSA's multifaceted manifesto strives for holistic social and economic transformation.



Representatives:

Mr Kwandile Sikhosana Western Cape Provincial Coordinator [Paarl, Cape Town]

Mr Arthur Mexico
Western Cape Youth
Coordinator [Newlands,
Cape Town]

# **DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE**

During the event, the Democratic Alliance (DA) consistently emphasized the significance of effective governance and the role of the state in delivering essential services to citizens. Their emphasis on "doing the job of the state" underscores a dedication to fostering efficient and accountable government practices. Additionally, they highlighted the importance of a robust and resilient private sector as the foundation for economic growth, illustrating their commitment to building upon a thriving business environment.

Addressing infrastructure and development needs in major urban centers, particularly in the context of being the biggest city in the country, was a focal point for the DA. Recognizing the pivotal role of urban centers in the national economy, they emphasized the necessity of investing in infrastructure and development projects to support sustainable growth and prosperity.

Creating a conducive environment for businesses to flourish emerged as another key focus area for the DA. This involves reducing bureaucratic hurdles, ensuring fair competition, and establishing necessary support structures for entrepreneurs and enterprises to thrive. Furthermore, the DA reiterated their commitment to meeting fundamental needs such as education, healthcare, water, and sanitation, advocating for efficient and reliable public services as a cornerstone of their political agenda.

Lastly, the DA addressed the issue of safety, emphasizing the importance of addressing crime and ensuring a secure environment for both residents and businesses. Recognizing that public safety is crucial for economic stability and attracting investment, they underscored the need for effective measures to safeguard communities and promote a sense of security.



### Representatives:

**Clir Alex Lansdowne**Councilor City of Cape Town
[Newlands, Cape Town]

Hon Patrick Atkinson
Gauteng Provincial Legislature
[Rosebank, Johannesburg]

# **RISE MZANSI**

Rise Mzansi has articulated a multifaceted focus on key aspects for the betterment of South Africa. Their emphasis on gender diversity in politics underscores the importance of inclusive representation. The overarching goal is to reset the country, creating an enabling environment through the digitization of government and ensuring access to data. Addressing municipal governance issues, the party aims to challenge the existence of townships and advocates for new leaders who are both capable and ethical.

Rise Mzansi's commitment extends to environmental concerns, with a focus on green energy and climate transition. They recognize the need for streamlined permits for vendors to do business and advocate for an inclusive economy that addresses underlying issues leading young people to crime, including the creation of recreational spaces. Drawing attention to criminal activities, the party distinguishes between townships and urban environments, emphasizing the importance of tourism in townships and the development of a creative economy.

Rural businesses are part of their inclusive economic vision, with particular attention given to Transnet and Eskom for the efficient movement of goods. Rise Mzansi prioritizes a focus on municipalities, acknowledging peculiar governance in Cape Town and addressing challenges such as taxi strikes and extortion in townships as societal concerns.

Ultimately, their three priorities include facilitating the movement of goods, concentrating efforts on municipalities, and addressing peculiar governance in specific regions. The party calls for collective responsibility in tackling issues like extortion in townships, emphasizing the need to make it easier for people to start and maintain businesses. Rise Mzansi's comprehensive approach reflects a commitment to social inclusion, economic growth, and effective governance.

They indicated that they will set up **Opportunity Hubs** to foster innovation and economic growth,
especially in township communities, where there
are significant constraints to innovation. With
experienced professionals and partnerships with
NGOs and universities, these hubs will provide
targeted support for entrepreneurs: programs
focusing on growth sectors, design thinking,
customer value propositions, business
management fundamentals, marketing strategies,
and sales techniques.



### Representatives:

**Mrs Vuyiswa Ramokgopa**National Chairperson [Sandton, Johannesburg]

**Mr Tebogo Moalusi**Gauteng Provincial Coordinator
[Rosebank, Johannesburg]

Mr Axolile Notywala Western Cape Provincial Coordinator [Paarl and Newlands, Cape Town]

# UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The United Democratic Movement places a strong emphasis on several key areas in its manifesto, aligning with its vision for a robust and inclusive society. Acknowledging the constitutional obligation, the party underscores the importance of adhering to the principles outlined in the Constitution. Addressing land availability is a significant aspect, indicating a commitment to resolving issues related to land use and distribution.

The UDM advocates for a strategic partnership between the government and entrepreneurs, emphasizing tax incentives to stimulate economic growth and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Small businesses take center stage in their focus, highlighting the pivotal role these enterprises play in fostering economic development and job creation.

The party aims to reduce dependency on social grants, emphasizing the importance of selfsustainability. This aligns with their vision for empowering individuals and communities to become economically self-sufficient, reducing reliance on external support.

The UDM proposes a unique approach to immigration by suggesting the matching of immigrants with local partners in business. This collaborative strategy aims to integrate immigrants into the local business landscape, fostering mutual growth and cooperation.

Overall, the UDM's manifesto reflects a commitment to constitutional principles, economic empowerment through strategic partnerships, and a focus on small businesses as catalysts for sustainable development. Their approach to immigration also demonstrates an interest in fostering inclusive economic participation.



UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

Representative:

Cllr Bongani Maqungwana Deputy Secretary General

### 4. EMERGING SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES FROM ENTREPRENEURS

### **LOW TRUST IN THE ANC:**

There is a prevailing sentiment of low trust in the ruling party, the ANC, possibly stemming from perceived shortcomings and challenges, including issues of corruption within the government highlighted by the Zondo Commission.

### **CORRUPTION CONCERNS:**

Entrepreneurs expressed concern about the extent of corruption within the government. The efficacy of commissions, such as the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture, corruption, and fraud, is questioned for not fully addressing the magnitude of the problem.

### **ETHICS COMMITTEE IMPACT:**

Despite the existence of an Ethics Committee providing leadership and guidance, its impact in combating corruption and ethical violations is perceived to be minimal or insufficient. Thus, making it difficult to execute consequence management for those found guilty of unethical behavior.

### **INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES:**

Entrepreneurs stressed the need for robust internal processes of accountability within political parties and government structures to ensure transparency and address issues promptly.

### **STEP ASIDE RULE:**

The ANC's "step aside" rule, requiring members charged with corruption or serious crimes to voluntarily remove themselves from party and government activities, or face suspension, is acknowledged as a mechanism to address issues of corruption within the leadership.

### **LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES:**

The challenges of being in leadership positions are highlighted, suggesting that holding such roles may come with inherent difficulties, possibly related to the complexities of governance and public expectations.

### **MOBILITY AS OPPORTUNITY:**

The concept of mobility as a space of opportunity is introduced, emphasizing the need for improved transport systems to facilitate the movement of the working class and those seeking opportunities. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to use mobility as a means of finding innovative solutions.

### **SPATIAL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC VALUE IN TOWNSHIPS:**

Concerns about spatial planning keeping people away from economic opportunities, particularly in cities where living expenses are high, are raised. The need to bring economic value into townships is emphasized to address these spatial inequalities.

### TRICKLE-DOWN ECONOMIC REDRESS:

The concept of trickle-down economic redress is mentioned, indicating a desire for economic policies that ensure benefits reach all levels of society, particularly in historically disadvantaged areas.

### **INFORMAL ECONOMY CHALLENGES:**

Entrepreneurs discuss the challenges faced by informal businesses, including perceptions of poverty and harassment by authorities. The need for permits to legitimize and protect vendors in their operations is emphasized.

### **DEPENDENCY CULTURE:**

The conversation points to a culture of dependency that needs to be addressed, highlighting the importance of supporting and encouraging small township businesses to thrive independently. Sustainability beyond government social relief grants.

### **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS:**

A prevailing need for stronger public-private partnerships with stricter risk mitigation strategies is identified, acknowledging the potential benefits for informal businesses.

### INTER-AFRICAN TRADE [AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA]

The importance of Inter-African trade and integration was brought up, emphasizing the potential long-term benefits of doing business with developing countries or across provincial boundaries.

### **LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION:**

Leadership strategies, especially in the age of social media, are discussed. It is suggested that leaders work constructively with communication strategists to simplify information and ensure effective communication with the public.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

The need for governments to listen to communities and invest in bulk infrastructure with inclusive indicators is highlighted, addressing concerns related to transport, climate change, and productivity loss.

### **VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND TRAUMA SERVICES:**

Strategies for violence prevention, including convening mothers affected by violence and providing psychological services for community trauma, are proposed as essential components of community well-being.

### **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYABILITY:**

The focus on creating meaningful job opportunities for citizens is emphasized, acknowledging the impact of unemployment on community safety and well-being. The fear of businesses in townships is discussed in terms of job creation, affordability, and payment for employment.

### **INVESTMENT IN INNOVATION:**

The call for government investment in supporting innovation, especially in emerging fields like artificial intelligence, is recognized as crucial for preparing for the economies of tomorrow.

### **ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS:**

Entrepreneurs noted there's no blueprint for entrepreneurial success and suggest focusing on alternative pathways, acknowledging that diverse approaches may be needed for success in various contexts.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

- Derisk investing in start-ups
- · Wesgro measurement of black business empowered
- · Possible end of AGOA in South Africa
- · Wine sales in the continent from the Western Cape
- · Unitary government' in South Africa
- · Interest in sales trade missions facilitated
- · Closing the deal abroad
- · National stability, crime prevention mechanism in communities
- · People with the know-how
- How do we know crime?
- · People who still have a future in the country meet generational leaders
- Do the businesses have competition?

These emerging issues underscore the complexity of the challenges facing communities and the importance of a multifaceted and inclusive approach to address them.

# 5. WHAT ENTREPRENEURS ASKED POLITICIANS

Policy certainty	Signs of a maturing democracy
Economic growth and job creation	Rural and Township Economy
Accountability to their manifestos and actions	Enabling and capacitating the 'informal' economy
Unlocking cross-border opportunities for South Africa entrepreneurs	Poverty eradication and real economic empowerment
Job Growth Through Supporting SME Supporting Innovative and invention	Crime and corruption
Equality and Structural Racism	Equitable access to markets and market opportunities
Prioritizing women and black entrepreneurs through enabling tax incentives, VAT exemptions, and flexible financing options	Safety, roads, basic services, youth unemployment
Openness about their policy and funding interests	Ending corruption; progressive tax policies to boost civil society and closing the gaps in partnering for service provision
Focus on creating a conducive environment for innovation, easing regulatory burdens, and providing targeted support for startups to stimulate economic dynamism	Youth empowerment through Small- Growing Business support programs and policies

Improving South Africa's reputation abroad to attract foreign investment	Pro-business, free market, capitalist mindset shift to create more jobs and grow this economy
Robust Enterprise and Supplier Development and grant funding policies	Re-enabling the currently handicapped business environment
Transparency of how funds are utilized	Privatization of State-Owned Enterprises
The upward mobility of youth and women in our country	Formalizing the township economy
Solve the energy crisis and encourage job creation	Strategic investment in the early childhood care & education sectors
Creating an environment for ease of doing business	Funding for the LGBTQQIP2SA community that isn't centered around arts and culture only
Rebuild the trust with the private sector	Developing and maintaining infrastructure that enables and makes it easier for businesses to invest in the Townships
Ensuring AI creates jobs and does not remove them	Connecting public and large private sector institutions and funding mechanisms with micro-enterprise to empower and expose this vital



### 6. WAY FORWARD BEYOND ELECTIONS

The insightful engagement at Workshop 17, where the intersection of entrepreneurship and elections was explored, revealed distinct strengths and focal points of various political parties. Huruma Bantfu recognizes each party's unique strengths and mandates, and a novel suggestion emerges: to allow political parties to lead in areas aligned with their core competencies.

The Democratic Alliance (DA), with its emphasis on digital innovation, could take the lead in the innovation space. The United Democratic Movement (UDM), rooted in township realities, could effectively spearhead township initiatives. The African National Congress (ANC), renowned for policy creation and safety focus, could continue in that realm. ActionSA, positioned as implementors, might drive practical approaches for policy execution. Rise Mzansi, specializing in transportation and infrastructure, could take charge of comprehensive infrastructure development. Lastly, BOSA, championing trade and collaboration, could play a pivotal role in fostering inter-Africa and inter-provincial trade.

This innovative approach proposes a system where each party contributes its strengths, working collaboratively towards a shared vision for a greater South Africa. By harnessing the unique capabilities of each political entity, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and effective political landscape, ultimately striving towards the common goal of a prosperous and united nation. This shift in perspective encourages a reimagining of politics, emphasizing co-creation and cooperation for the collective betterment of our beloved country, South Africa.





# SANDILE TSHABALALA He/Him

Co-Founder





sandile@hurumabantfu.com

www.hurumabantfu.com





