

Bestmed initiates empowerment project to fight unemployment

Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan recently mentioned that the Employment Tax Incentive Bill is a step towards reversing the high levels of youth unemployment. He also cited that South Africa has some of the highest rates of unemployment in the world, with the majority sitting among the youth of the country.



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The bill proposes a youth wage subsidy aimed at encouraging employers, through tax incentives, to take on young people aged from 18-29.

"We are not certain when this bill will take effect, however, we cannot ignore the realities of the youth unemployment rate, which often leads to other issues in the country. Statistics show that at least 94% of unemployed youth do not have further education; 80% have never work or been employed for more than a year. This is a huge concern to us, as an organisation, as well as the country at large, as these issues affect the economic growth of the state which impacts businesses," says Sasja la Grange, Bestmed's corporate communications manager.

In line with the organisation's strategic objectives, Bestmed in collaboration with EmpowerForce, a division of CallForce, and Just Rewards have initiated an empowerment project aimed at empowering the youth in Pretoria through job creation.

Eight candidates to receive certificates

According to La Grange, the alarming statistics around unemployment, poverty and lack of skills among South Africans, have become a sore point and, irrespective of how little the contribution is to curbing these challenges, it is a step that every organisation needs to take.

Bestmed, with its partners in this project, initiated a three-month pilot to gauge the feasibility of implementing a programme such as the empowerment project, as well as the sustainability thereof. To date, 10 candidates participated in a two-week

training and assessment programme, of which the top eight will receive a learnership contract to work in an eight-seater call centre established within the Bestmed Faerie Glen offices. The contract includes an allowance to assist with transport fees and other essentials, the ability to earn an additional commission if their targeted sales are successful, certification on completion of the two week assessment programme, as well as assistance in gaining a long-term position after the three-month pilot (either via Bestmed or the EmpowerForce a division of CallForce (Pty client base.)

"We are pleased that on 30 October 2013 eight of the candidates will be awarded certificates, at Bestmed offices in Faerie Glen, for completing this short course and beginning their journey into the corporate world," concludes la Granje.

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