



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MOGALE CITY, CLLR DANNY THUPANE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE GED PROGRAMME 'READING CIRCLE' HELD ON THE 11<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2023 AT DIPHALANE PRIMARY SCHOOL, MUNSIEVILLE**

Programme Director,

MEC for Education & Youth Development, Matome Chiloane

Honourable Members of the Mayoral Committee and Councillors here present,

Heads of Government Departments and your teams,

Acting Director of GED - Gauteng West District, Vusumzi Rajuile and team,

Leaders of political parties and organs of civil society,

Distinguished guests,

People of Mogale City:

On behalf of the Government of Local Unity in Mogale City I wish to express our humble appreciation at being invited to this important gathering today.

Let us begin our message this way:

Legend has it that a leader in one of the government departments had grown irritated with his colleagues coming to meetings without reading the preparatory notes before their meetings. This was the time when people used to be paid through cheques. He then advised the administration to slot each politician's pay-check in the agenda and programme of their next meeting. When the day arrived, so many of them were complaining to him about not receiving their salaries that month! You can imagine what happened when he called the meeting to order and asked those who were complaining to open their documents and to their dismay, joy and embarrassment they found the pay-checks in there?

Programme Director, this story sort of confirms the bad impression that many people hold against black people in general, and Africans in particular, where it relates to literacy and reading. There is a saying that goes: **if you want to hide something from a black person, just stick it in a book!** We are here today to tell the world that the statement is the biggest lie that was ever told.

It is not by mistake that this launch happens in Munsieville. It is one of the oldest townships in the country, after Daveyton in Ekurhuleni. This township is home to the first high school in the West Rand, and has produced countless lawyers, educators, nurses, entrepreneurs, and a host of other trailblazers. Their success can be traced to just one thing: reading, studying – or, in a word, a BOOK.

The Government of Local Unity wants to commend the provincial government for this noble effort. We need to inculcate the culture of reading at a very young age. We are aware that reading has dropped quite significantly since the advent of social media. We know that books compete with Tik-Tok, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and many other platforms. Those who develop these platforms do so because they read books about how to do it. It therefore means that even though books seem to have taken the back benches, books still drive change in the world.

We repeat today what our forefathers taught us, that '**le ojwa le sale metsi.**' We are with the department in ensuring that '**re bopa bana barona gore e nne batho setšhabeng.**' It is a responsibility that we cannot delegate to other people if we really do love our children and our nation. It is through reading that the mind develops, and it is through constant self-development that leaders will be born, made and retained. There is absolutely no substitute for reading.

MEC Chiloane, we want to inform you that we do not take capacity building of the community lightly in Mogale City. We are working with the Gauteng Provincial Government to rebuild and restore the Chamdor Training Centre into a centre of excellence.

We will be calling you to our city once again, together with other decision makers in the Gauteng Provincial Government to help us repurpose the Bosasa Juvenile Centre into our second centre of excellence. We want to take you into our dream which is shared by the Gauteng West District to turn that centre into **Mogale City Community Education and Training Academy.**

Our dream is for a multi-certification, drug rehabilitation and youth skilling and capacitation centre. We can draw thousands of young people out of the streets, provide them with skills and ensure that they are able to face the world with all its challenges.

The facility is fully equipped. There is a full library, music instruments for lessons, a computer centre and artisan training equipment. We would like to have your full support and that of the hard-working Premier Panyaza Lesufi to make this dream come true.

With these few words, we wish that the Reading Circle will grow and flourish and from it, many leaders shall emerge.

We thank you.