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Planact News Journal 1st Quarter 2026

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From the Director's Desk

Planact welcomes the release of the Gauteng City Region Economic Growth and Development Plan (GCR-EGDP) 2025 - 2030 in March 2026 that highlights the systemic weaknesses that continue to plague the region. These include spatial inequality, poverty, inequality and labour exclusion, poor economic growth and joblessness, climate change and infrastructure vulnerability, limited entrepreneurship and small business development.

Planact's programmatic areas and projects, as highlighted in this journal, are alive to these realities and designed to make meaningful contributions to addressing these deep-seated structural problems. These initiatives range from our work on civic education, active citizenry, public participation and strengthening meaningful engagement between communities and local government. The importance of partners and building broad-based support across these initiatives is an ongoing priority.

We are working to address some of the serious aspects of a changing climate through a data and science-driven indoor heat mapping campaign with highly engaged community participation, designed to mitigate and identify appropriate adaptation responses to build more resilient communities in informal settlements. In this effort, we are supported by Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO) and the Belgian Development Agency Enabel.

We recognise that in dealing with climate change, we must move away from a reliance on fossil fuels and make serious strides towards mitigation efforts and adaptation responses, to take deliberate measures towards embedding a low-carbon economy. While this shift will have implications for employment and all sectors, it must be managed so that its outcomes are just and fair. The shift is taking place in cities, which will play an important role in this transition that must advance climate resilience, socio-economic inclusion and equity.

Informal settlements cannot be left behind, and informal settlement upgrading should be an urgent national development priority. It is for this reason that Planact is focusing on research to understand the impact and effectiveness of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme, and the results of this work are finding expression in an advocacy campaign that is being developed.

Planact, through its SEF programme, recognises the important contribution public employment programmes are making towards building lives and livelihoods through its contribution to creating employment avenues, education and skills building, social value for the community and opportunities to grow the local economy.

Planact's Asivikelane campaign has a clear methodology of creating Hubs that bring together stakeholders, including Metropolitan municipalities, to drive impact in key areas such as sanitation and solid waste management. The Hubs follow systematic approaches through co-creating solutions and joint strategy development to address service delivery challenges experienced by informal settlement communities.

Planact is pleased to note that the revised White Paper on Local Government, soon to be gazetted, adopts a partnering approach with an emphasis on shared problem statements and priorities. It seeks to shift to building relationships, mapping stakeholders, identifying joint actions, delivering through partnerships with clear roles, regular engagement, transparent communication and accountability to raise levels of trust and make a more meaningful impact. We look forward to its final adoption and any shifting and related legislation as required.

Planact is keenly preparing its programme of activities ahead of the local government elections and seeks to focus on youth engagement and participation while building a shared understanding of the importance of protecting and continuing to build a strong and vibrant democracy based on good governance.

Symposium on advancing Water Efficient Sanitation Solutions 30 - 31 July 2026



Access to dignified sanitation in informal settlements is a critical part of service delivery that municipalities are responsible for. In Johannesburg, Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets are meant to be a temporary solution to give residents access to basic sanitation. But on the ground, the reality is more complicated. While the city installs these toilets, there is no clear plan for how long they should last, how they should be repaired, or who is ultimately responsible for maintaining them.

This gap leaves residents carrying the burden. When a toilet breaks, it's often up to the very people using it, many with limited resources, to fix and maintain it. The City of Johannesburg Water only steps in to empty the pits, but not to repair the structures themselves. The City attributes the growing urban migration population to the substantial expansion of informal settlements, which they say, in turn creates a capacity problem to manage sanitation needs.

The reality on the ground and the cited capacity challenges prompt the adoption and development of alternative sanitation solutions.

Planact in partnership with the City of Johannesburg, Department of Water and Sanitation, Water Research Commission (WRC), Water Partnership Office (WPO), and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), will host a symposium focused on exploring and advancing pathways for the scaling of water-efficient sanitation systems in South Africa.

Some of the objectives of the symposium include:
- To showcase existing alternative sanitation systems implemented in South Africa.
- To evaluate the effectiveness, challenges, and lessons learned from these systems.
- To facilitate dialogue among stakeholders on best practices, innovations, and policy frameworks.
- To identify opportunities for scaling up sustainable and dignified sanitation solutions in the City of Johannesburg.
- To promote participatory approaches in sanitation planning.

The symposium will be a significant platform that brings together government, innovators, researchers, and communities to advance the scaling of sustainable, water-efficient sanitation solutions, while strengthening collaboration and knowledge exchange across the sanitation sector.



Asivikelane's sustainable waste management strategy Featured in Tshwane Annual Report

The recognition of the Asivikelane campaign in the City of Tshwane's 2024–2025 Annual Report marks an important milestone for community-driven accountability and collaborative service delivery.

It reflects what municipalities are legally and constitutionally mandated to be: responsive institutions that work in partnership with the communities they serve.

For Planact, the International Budget Partnership of South Africa and 1 to1 Agency of Engagement, this recognition affirms what residents in informal settlements have long known: when communities are meaningfully involved, better outcomes are possible.

"The support provided by this campaign not only includes waste management handling matters but also training and capacity building on understanding government systems in totality…," the 2024/25 Tshwane Annual report reads.

A Partnership Rooted in Community Reality

Across informal settlements, residents continue to face persistent challenges with waste management, illegal dumping, and inadequate municipal services.

In response, the Asivikelane campaign developed a comprehensive strategy in partnership with the City of Tshwane Environment Management Department aimed at strengthening waste management in underserved areas.

Asivikelane emerged as a critical partner, not simply as an implementer, but as a bridge between communities and government.

The strategy that was recently approved by the council ensured that the City of Tshwane (CoT) and informal settlement residents (including informal waste pickers) will work together to monitor and improve the City's current waste management processes.

Through multi-stakeholder collaboration, the Asivikelane campaign has supported:

• Door-to-door awareness campaigns promoting the 5Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Refuse).
• Composting initiatives.
• Upcycling.
• Rehabilitation of dumpsites.
• Community education on sustainable waste management practices.
• Strengthened engagement between residents and municipal officials.

By highlighting the Asivikelane work in its annual report, the City of Tshwane affirms that participatory governance and community-led monitoring is crucial for enhancing service delivery.

Beyond Waste Management in Tshwane

The Asivikelane multi-stakeholder approach goes beyond technical waste interventions.

By strengthening community organisation and understanding of government systems, the campaign helps residents to engage more effectively on a range of service delivery issues.

In Tshwane, this has included support linked to broader community well-being concerns, such as:

- Safety around communal infrastructure.
- Improved communication channels with the municipality.
- Access to community support services.
- Health and wellness of residents
- Addressed unemployment through Social Employment Fund (SEF).

This holistic approach reflects Planact's long-standing commitment to deepening participatory governance and making towns and cities work for people.

The Recognition Is a big milestone, not the finish line

While the feature in the City's annual report is encouraging, significant challenges remain in many informal settlements. Sustained progress will depend on:

- Continued municipal responsiveness
- Ongoing investment in community partnerships
- Consistent monitoring of service delivery
- Sustainable funding model/framework for the strategy

Planact and the Asivikelane partners remain committed to working alongside communities and municipalities to ensure that recognition translates into lasting, measurable improvements on the ground.

Go to page 87 to read about our Asivikelane campaign in Tshwane Annual Report - https://www.tshwane.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/22.-The-Consolidated-Audited-Annual-Report-for-CoT-2024-2025.pdf

Composting, a practical example of the Waste strategy in Tshwane.

With the lessons that Choba and Phomolong have learned from the Kameeldrift composting workshop in the City of Tshwane, they have also started to implement this initiative in their respective communities using the same methodology that was used in Kameeldrift. Below are pictures showcasing the implementation of the waste strategy.





Choba community showcasing composting initiatives





Phomolong community showcasing waste picking and sorting initiatives

Community-led solutions: Constructing VIP toilet backslabs in Lawley Station.

Sanitation Hub







Sanitation champions in Lawley Station, south of Johannesburg, are constructing and fixing Ventilated Improved Pit toilet (VIP) back slabs with improvised materials. Municipal infrastructure in communities such as Lawley Station has been neglected by the City of Johannesburg for many years, and as a result, it becomes unsafe and more difficult to clean due to the presence of solid waste in these types of toilets.

The safe sanitation struggles of Lawley Station are not unique. Urban municipalities often struggle to provide permanent sanitation to informal settlements, relying on temporary solutions like chemical toilets and VIP latrines. These types of toilets often come with issues such as high maintenance costs, poor maintenance, and community rejection, yet they remain in place and become the only long-term solutions, despite their shortcomings.

Studies show that over 40% of informal settlements in metros experience sanitation infrastructure failure within two years, making the improvisation by our Asivikelane champions not exceptional, but routine.

Since the training of sanitation champions by Corobrik - a leading manufacturer of clay paving and face bricks - over 15 back slabs have been constructed. There is now a high demand from residents to also receive new VIP back slabs. The current service provider workers are also happy with the new back slabs; they compliment the good work by the team which has made their desludging work easier.

Read more about Asivikelane's insights, which highlight solutions to improve sanitation and address the lack of municipal planning for permanent infrastructure on *https://asivikelane.org/category/sanitation/*

660 wall mounted solar lights in the Cities of Cape Town and Tshwane

Planact, in partnership with the People's Environment Planning (PEP), a Cape-based NPO,is embarking on an initiative to promote sustainable energy solutions, specifically solar lighting, in Hammanskraal, City of Tshwane, integrating the solar lighting project into a broader local development and informal settlement upgrading agenda. Solar lighting can be regarded as an incremental infrastructure upgrade that should be recognised as an element in the larger context of settlement improvements over time.

Planact and PEP have been supported in the project by the generous assistance of LEDVANCE, a leading global lighting manufacturer providing advanced LED luminaires and intelligent lighting solutions. 660 lights were secured, and now the project will be rolled out in two locations and provinces, with 330 lights bound for the Cape and 330 for Hammanskraal.

Hammanskraal was identified as the appropriate site, as Planact had participated in the GIZ Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme between 2023 and 2024, and this area was the activation location. Planact's role in Hammanskraal, in the programme, was designed to empower community members, develop comprehensive mapping with crime hot spots, develop a precinct safety plan for Hammanskraal, as well as a community reference group to carry the plan forward and deliver sustainable safety solutions. The group remains active, and with their knowledge and Planact's prior experience, offers an ideal starting point for a lighting project pilot. The lighting project will serve to further strengthen approaches that promote the active participation of the community in crime prevention through security prevention infrastructure upgrades.

PEP started by installing 200 lights in four settlements in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape. Today, approximately 4500 solar lights have been installed across seven informal settlements in Khayelitsha, showing the potential for scale. PEP brings experience and a proven methodology that has garnered strong community support and buy-in. The hallmarks of the project are co-design, bottom-up solutions and technological innovation.

This project will meaningfully engage communities so their knowledge and experience in identifying problems and solutions can be leveraged. By working with informal settlement residents, the Tshwane security sector, local experts and urban planning graduates, collective design approaches, and identifying suitable and appropriate lighting locations, with community insights, the safety of all can be improved.

Lighting units are installed by community members employed in the project to create employment opportunities and pathways to establish community investment and ownership, ensuring maintenance of the lighting systems. The project creates opportunities for community empowerment and training to develop skills and earn qualifications through accredited programmes.

Local economic activity, including downstream activities, is also expected to flow from the project. This includes maintenance, installation, sourcing, sales, and including the possibility for the creation of social enterprises.

Read more about LightUP here -
https://lnkd.in/dzgEsm87

Long Road to Electrification for Railway in Ekurhuleni

by Siphiwe Segodi

The community of Tsakane Ext 21 informal settlement, also called Railway, will soon reduce household fossil fuel use. The news arrived as a promise in "black and white." On 22 March 2026, at a public meeting held in Railway informal settlement, Tsakane Extension 21, the MMC for Human Settlements in Ekurhuleni, Cllr Nsizwa Mekgwe, also the ward councillor, confirmed that the community would soon be electrified.

For a settlement that has lived in the shadow of uncertainty for nearly three decades, the announcement marked more than a mere infrastructure upgrade. It was a powerful affirmation of dignity, coming just a day after Human Rights Day. The moment carried a symbolism that was not lost on residents: access to safe, reliable energy is not a luxury, but a right.

Railway's story, however, is not one of sudden transformation. It is a story shaped over the years through organising, setbacks, learning, and persistence. Established in 1997 and now home to approximately 809 households, the settlement has long existed on the margins of formal planning.

When Planact began working with the community in 2018, conditions reflected the entrenched inequities faced by many informal settlements: limited access to sanitation, with only a handful of chemical toilets; two ablution blocks serving hundreds; a single communal water tap; no waste removal services; and no electricity. Residents relied on fossil fuels for cooking and lighting, an everyday reality that came with significant health and safety risks.

At the time, there was little optimism. Community members had been told they would eventually be relocated because the land was privately owned, yet years passed without clarity or progress. This uncertainty bred a deep sense of despair over plans announced but never realised.

It was within this context that Railway became part of a broader, collective effort. In 2018, the community joined nine other informal settlements across Ekurhuleni in the Scaled-Up Sanitation Social Audit, conducted in partnership with Planact. More than a technical exercise, the audit became a catalyst for mobilisation. It laid the groundwork for what has since evolved into a coalition of over 20 informal settlement communities across the municipality, an organised platform advocating for improved services, accountability, and inclusion in local governance processes.

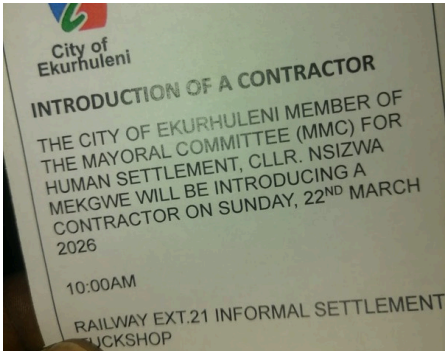
Central to this shift in building community activism was also a deliberate investment in community capacitation. Planact worked closely with Railway's leadership, not only providing technical and resource support but also improving understanding of how local government functions. This included presenting training modules and dialogue on municipal structures, relevant legislation, and key policy instruments such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budgeting processes. The aim was simple but transformative: to move the community from passive recipients of decisions to informed participants capable of engaging the state on an equal footing.

Planact provided direct support in the process of establishing the ownership of the land through the preparation of a petition to the provincial government seeking permission to conduct re-blocking.

Planact facilitated engagements between the community and the relevant municipal unit in the City of Ekurhuleni's Human Settlements Department on engagements concerning the path that the reblocking was to take, including specifications.

Railway's leadership rose to the challenge. Demonstrating both openness to learning and a determination to act, they began engaging municipal officials with greater confidence and clarity. While continuing to push for incremental improvements in basic services such as water access and sanitation, the community, supported by Planact, also pursued a more complex question: who owns the land, and what are the realistic pathways to development?

Progress was not linear. Efforts to resolve land issues, since 2019, were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, stalling momentum at a critical time. When the work resumed in June 2022, a breakthrough was achieved. The Gauteng Department of Human Settlements granted the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality "permission to use the land as a decant area for re-blocking". This decision was significant. It signalled a shift from uncertainty toward a more structured approach to in-situ upgrading for Railway residents. It could unlock access to basic services.



Pictures from Railway, Tsakane over the years in partnership with Planact











Frustration Mounts as Mkhancwa Residents Demand Clarity on Housing Promises

by Siphiwe Segodi

Planact's partnership with the community of Mkhancwa dates to 2018, when the latter joined nine other informal settlement communities to conduct the Scaled-Up Sanitation Social Audit across various regions in the City of Ekurhuleni (CoE). Mkhancwa became part of Planact's CoE cluster since then, which advocates for access to adequate delivery of basic services and housing with Planact's support

Early in 2026, Mkhancwa informal settlement residents voiced mounting frustration over long-standing housing promises during a CoE Human Settlements Oversight Committee meeting.
The meeting aimed to provide a platform for residents to raise concerns directly with municipal leadership and collectively chart a way forward.

In attendance were Mkhancwa community representatives, Ward 82 Councillor Buitendacht, members of the Oversight Committee, CoE Human Settlements Department officials and Planact staff

Two Decades of Uncertainty

Leading the Mkhancwa community delegation, Mr Vusimuzi Mngomezulu outlined two primary concerns.
The first dates to 2004, when the municipality reportedly committed to securing alternative land for residents after it emerged that portions of the settlement are privately owned.
The second relates to the status of a proposed relocation to the Brakpan Old Location mega-housing project.
"In both instances, there has been no visible progress," Mngomezulu told the Committee.

The informal settlement has long partnered with Planact through capacity building, in understanding structure and systems of a municipality and pertinent processes and mechanisms of engagement with municipal officials. Planact also provide technical support to communities.

Disputed Housing Lists and Allegations of Bias

Another community representative, Ms Duduzile Skhosana, said residents had acted in good faith following advice allegedly given in 2022 by the then MMC for Housing, Cllr Madihlaba, to compile a list of qualifying housing subsidy beneficiaries.

Skhosana said community leaders conducted a door-to-door process prioritising elderly residents and people living with disabilities. This followed what she described as a municipal claim that only four Mkhancwa residents appeared on the official Housing Subsidy Scheme database.
"According to the list we compiled, there were far more qualifying people," she said.

Despite assurances that the four qualifying beneficiaries would be prioritised for relocation, Skhosana said five years had passed without action. She further alleged that individuals perceived to be closer to the Ward Councillor were benefiting from housing opportunities, leaving others behind.

"The people that we voted into office together with the Councillor leave us behind while benefitting from projects," she said. -allegations that the Ward Councillor strongly disputed.

Councillor Buitendacht strongly rejected the allegations.

Residents also criticised what they described as a lack of communication from the Ward Councillor, including the failure to convene meetings or respond to emails. In response, Buitendacht stated that his vehicle had previously been burned in the community, raising safety concerns about holding meetings in the area. The issue of unanswered emails remained unresolved during the session.

Demarcation Concerns

Community representative Simphiwe Mokoena raised concerns about rumours that Mkhancwa may fall under Ward 105 following new municipal demarcations. Residents fear this could affect their beneficiary status in the Brakpan Old Location project. Committee Chairperson Cllr Siphumule Ntombela clarified that ward demarcation falls under the Municipal Demarcation Board and is outside the Committee's mandate. However, he indicated that the development should not negatively affect the community's beneficiary status.

A part of this article was published in the Brakpan Herald, a local community newspaper covering stories in Mkhancwa in February 2026, here *https://www.citizen.co.za/brakpan-herald/news-headlines/2026/02/27/demarcation-rumours-spark-housing-protest/*.

continued from page 11

Frustration Mounts as Mkhancwa Residents Demand Clarity on Housing Promises

Committee Dynamics Questioned

During deliberations, councillors largely focused on responding to criticisms directed at the Ward Councillor. Some attendees perceived this as a defence of the councillor rather than an impartial interrogation of the issues raised.

Several councillors cautioned against acts of violence, including the burning of vehicles and destruction of property, stressing that such actions undermine community engagement. At times, the discussion shifted toward explaining municipal processes and structures, turning parts of the meeting into what resembled an educational session.

While informative, some participants questioned whether the Oversight Committee forum was the appropriate platform for such engagement.

Upgrading Plans and Land Acquisition

Planact used the opportunity to enquire about progress on the Department's 2021 Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) plans for Mkhancwa. Official documents confirm that the settlement falls under Category A of the UISP, which qualifies it for in-situ upgrading.

However, parts of the land are reportedly unsuitable for development due to wetland conditions and the presence of a railway line. These constraints complicate reblocking and electrification efforts.

The Acting Head of Department presented a map outlining current plans. Mkhancwa is linked to the Ergoroad project, where 12 properties have been identified for possible acquisition. A budget adjustment submission has been made to purchase the land, subject to approval. Upgrading of the settlement is contingent on securing this land.

Regarding relocation, officials reported that bulk infrastructure is currently being implemented at the Brakpan Old Location project, which is expected to accommodate approximately 6,777 households. Other informal settlements earmarked to benefit include Brakpan North and Never-Never.

The four Mkhancwa residents previously identified as qualifying beneficiaries have reportedly been prioritised in the Helderwyk mega-housing project, a provincial initiative. The Committee chairperson queried whether more residents could be included. Department officials indicated they have limited control over provincial projects but are open to engaging relevant authorities. They added that qualifying residents have been incorporated into migration plans linked to Brakpan Old Location.

Awaiting Concrete Timelines

The meeting concluded with a commitment to possible further engagements, either through the Oversight Committee or direct discussions between community representatives and the Department.

For Mkhancwa residents, however, the central concern remains unchanged: after more than two decades of promises, they are still waiting for tangible progress and clear timelines on their housing future.

By Tamzin Hudson

Climate Change and Data Governance in Mountain City, Johannesburg

In April, Planact convened community leaders in the settlement of Mountain City in the City of Johannesburg to discuss the impact climate change is having on towns and cities. Climate change is driving higher levels of heat, with projections that by 2050, the number of hot days will increase six-fold. This poses challenges for cities and municipalities in terms of its impact on health, economic stability, productivity, and infrastructure resilience.

For this site visit, Planact was joined by Roadshow Marketing, which will be conducting an activation in the settlement to provide community members with information about the effects of heat exposure, mitigation measures, practices to reduce exposure, and where to seek assistance.

This work forms part of an initiative to develop a Heat Action Plan for the Gauteng City Region, which includes emergency response activities and long-term interventions such as urban cooling strategies.

This project aligns with Planact's indoor heat mapping project across two settlements in the City Of Ekurhuleni and the City Of Tshwane, where the collection of robust data on the relationship between heat and building characteristics is being done. Poor insulation, a lack of ventilation, and insufficient green space can significantly raise indoor temperatures above outdoor levels with health implications.

Planact recognises that addressing the impacts of climate change, including rising heat levels, will require more agile governance responses, cross-sectoral collaboration, and strong early warning and communication systems.

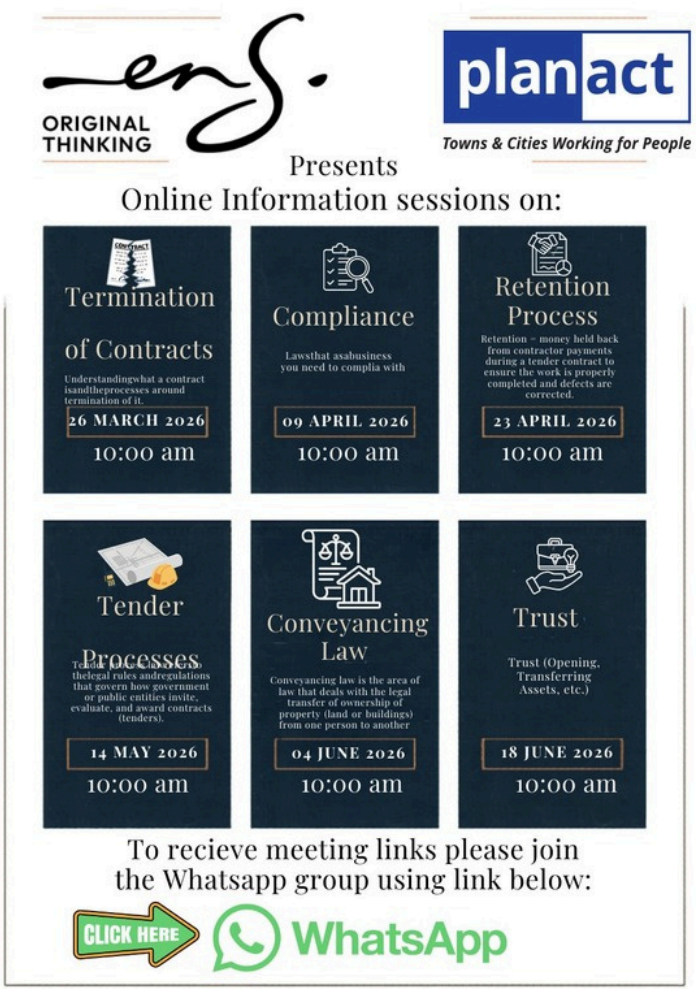
Round table on advancing livelihoods and economic development in informal settlement upgrading

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Small – Scale Rental Housing – Planact's Construction Hub

Planact in partnership with ENS Africa - Africa's largest law firm invite you to join Online Information sessions on the following topics:

- Compliance [09 April 2026]
- Retention Process [23 April 2026]
- Tender Processes [14 May 2026]
- Conveyancing Law [04 June 2026]
- Trusts [18 June 2026]

Click Here to Join the WhatsApp Group to get more information about the sessions
Click Here to Download a PDF about the information session



Contractor / Developer Training 5-day FREE Training

Small-scale contractors and developers are often the backbone of local development. They are the people building homes, creating jobs, and helping communities grow from the ground up. This training is designed to support them with practical knowledge of the regulatory requirements in the building sector, ensuring their work is not only compliant, but sustainable and safe.

By strengthening their skills and understanding, these contractors are better positioned to expand access to affordable housing while creating employment opportunities that uplift families and communities.

Register to be part of Planact's FREE Contractor / Developer Training.

Monitoring Indoor Climate Extremes with Residents and the Internet of Things (MICE RIoT)



In the first quarter of 2026, the Monitoring Indoor Climate Extremes with Residents and the Internet of Things (MICE RIoT) project got off to an energised start with community installation teams heading to the field for diagnostics tests and troubleshooting sensors that had not been providing reliable data in the two project sites.

The community installation teams have shown great initiative throughout the duration of the project; with the support of Planact, community representatives in Choba and Watville have been custodians of the 150 heat sensors placed in participants' homes since June 2025.

The community installation teams then embarked on a maintenance campaign in February, where they had to log and change batteries for more than half of the sensors in participants' homes.

The campaign was kicked off with the capacitation session, where the community scientists learned how to open, disassemble and reassemble sensors to replace the lithium-ion batteries built into the devices. This campaign continued with our community scientists doing follow-up maintenance with onsite battery changes and troubleshooting sensors.

This quarter is filled with learning and employment for both Planact and community scientists on how to navigate innovation when dealing with informality and climate resilience.

In February, members of the Planact team joined Enable and peer grantees for the final Innovation Hub Bootcamp in Dakar, Senegal. The weeklong bootcamp focused on scaling and project sustainability after the grant timeline comes to an end.

There were discussions on how grant-dependent organisations can move to a more hybrid business model amidst the increasing uncertainty in the NGO space.

The bootcamp also provided Planact the opportunity to share their lessons with peer organisations and learn from the experience of others working in the innovation and climate space.

An exciting development in this quarter was the release of the draft report of the findings from the analysis being carried out to assess heat stress within low-cost dwellings across Choba and Wattville.

Key to the analysis and apart from the temperature- and humidity captured by-logging sensors that transmit near-real-time data to the cloud and provide heat stress data is the focus on the building features that drive heat exposure through a statistical analysis designed to identify simple low-cost adaptation measures.

Results are demonstrating a strong relationship between building wall materials, such as brick, stone, concrete, corrugated iron and heat, including the presence or absence of ceilings. Other characteristics in the study include an analysis of outdoor temperatures and the interaction with building characteristics, as well as the surrounding environment and the presence of trees and other greening initiatives.





Choba food security receives support from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and the City of Tshwane








At Planact, we believe in engagement and collaboration as key drivers in achieving a common goal. This was clearly demonstrated at Choba, Olievenhoutbosch, where the community has embraced stakeholder engagement as a vital part of achieving sustainable outcomes.

The Social Employment Fund team in Choba, consisting of 56 members, launched a new site under the Food Security theme. They received support in the form of seedlings, compost, mulch, and pest-controlling plants, resources that are essential in promoting healthy plant growth and improving soil quality.

The day brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including Mr. Mako, the lecturer and students from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, officials from the City of Tshwane, Department of Agriculture, Ward 77 Councillor Thembeni Thabatha, a local supermarket owner, and Lebohang Modise, Founder of the Farmers Batering Food Security Movement. Their presence reflected a shared commitment to strengthening community-led initiatives.

Beyond material support, stakeholders contributed valuable knowledge and skills. The team received a hands-on demonstration from Mr. Maako, the lecturer and students on planting seedlings, equipping them with practical techniques to sustain and grow organic vegetables.

Lebohang Modise highlighted their organisation's focus on empowering women in agriculture through training and development.

Additional support from Councillor Thembeni Thabatha and a local supermarket, who provided refreshments, further demonstrated the spirit of community collaboration.

A key highlight of the initiative is the transformation of the space itself. What was once an overgrown bush has been partially cleared and developed into a productive food garden. This shift not only enhances the environment but also supports food security, skills development, and long-term sustainability.

This initiative highlights the importance of collaboration in driving meaningful change. Continued partnerships between the community, local government, educational institutions, and organisations ensure lasting impact.

Social Employment Fund Health and Wellness in Wattville, City of Ekurhuleni





Wattville is a historic township established in 1941 and is located south of Benoni within the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng.

Planact's long-standing relationship with the community and partnership initiatives towards socio-economic development made it an ideal location for the organisation to launch the Social Employment Fund (SEF) Health and Wellness intervention for the third time in a row.

The team says that the Wattville community is in 'safe hands' with the Health and Wellness team making sure of that every single day.

In a community where many vulnerable, elderly, disabled, and sick individuals often lack consistent support, the SEF Health and Wellness team is committed to caring for those most in need.

Each day begins at 7:15am, with participants clocking in until 8:00am. They then join other SEF Teams in the community - the Greening & Environment and Food Security teams, for a 10-minute daily prayer, after which they separate into their respective themes.

The Health and Wellness team meet at a church to discuss the day's plan, organise themselves into groups, and prepare for their screening process.

The Health and Wellness Team's Line of Work includes:

- Collecting medication from the clinic for the elderly.
- Cleaning for the elderly.
- Ensuring that the elderly have food, especially when neglected by their families, and that they are supported with their hygiene and cleanliness.
- Encouraging chronic patients to continue taking their medication, particularly those who have missed doses. (the word default can sound harsh/insensitive)
- Access support services for individuals struggling with substance abuse.
- Organising food parcels for the less fortunate, and
- Arranging for social workers to provide emotional and psychological support.

The team conducts screening twice a week, reaching about 250 households a month.

One day is set aside for reporting, and another for cleaning support for elderly residents.

During visits, members greet residents, introduce their work, and respectfully request consent before performing screening questions.

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CASE 1: SEF Health and Wellness in Wattville, City of Ekurhuleni

A Family Compound (Yard) in Wattville Township with Four Generations

During one of their screenings, the team came across a family compound (Yard) with four (4) generations living in conditions of deprivation. The families include elderly members who have C-forms for RDP houses yet are still living in overcrowded circumstances.

One household within this compound attracted the attention of the team. Moved by their situation, the team decided to offer a helping hand.

They reached out to community members for donations and partnered with Lithandza to provide food parcels, which were distributed to the family.

The team not only requested donations from the community but also contributed from their own pocket to fix the broken windows for the family.
There are currently 28 people living in that family compound, and the team continues to hope for more assistance from those who can help.

CASE 2: SEF Health and Wellness in Wattville, City of Ekurhuleni

Restoring Dignity and Peace in the Household

In another case, the SEF Health and Wellness team met an elderly man living with his grandson, who is facing challenges related to substance use. The situation has placed a strain on the household, with concerns that the grandfather's basic needs, including food and a sense of safety, are not always being met.

The team responded with compassion, engaging the grandson in a respectful conversation about his challenges and gently exploring the factors which may have contributed to his substance use. Following this, he made the decision to seek help and presented himself at the police station, requesting assistance to access rehabilitation services.

Meanwhile, the team continues to support the elderly man by helping to ensure he has access to food and basic necessities.

During a follow-up visit recently, the elderly man shared that the situation at home has improved. His grandson no longer brings friends into the house, and a greater sense of calm has returned. He now spends his days more peacefully, often keeping himself occupied with reading.





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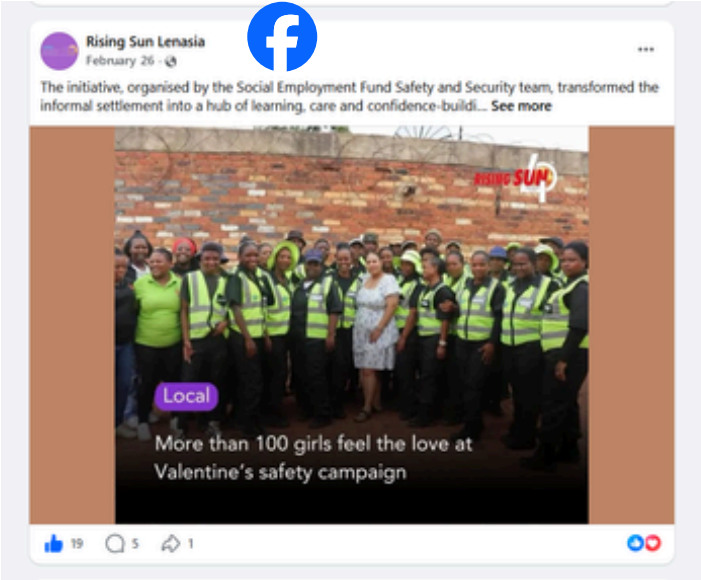
Social Employment Fund Impact stories

Lawley Station Community Safety Creates a safe space for girls – City of Johannesburg



This article was first published on the Rising Sun Lenasia, a local community newspaper covering the Lenasia area.

Rising Sun Lenasia E-Paper, February 24, 2026
https://risingsunnewspapers.co.za/epapers/rising-sun-lenasia-e-paper-february-24-2026/



More than 100 girls from Lawley Station were empowered with critical life skills during a Safe Space for Girls Awareness Campaign held on Valentine's Day.

The initiative, organised by the Social Employment Fund Safety and Security team, transformed the informal settlement into a hub of learning, care and confidence-building for girls aged 12 to 18.

The campaign focused on key issues affecting young girls, including self-love, body awareness, personal safety and protection from exploitation, risks that often increase during festive occasions such as Valentine's Day.

Through educational talks and practical demonstrations, facilitators created an open and supportive environment where participants could engage freely and ask questions. The programme aimed to equip girls with knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing, including preventing teenage pregnancy and illness.

The event saw strong community participation, with local stakeholders stepping in to support the initiative. Donations were received from Anchorville Filling Station, local shops, a neighbourhood internet café, a local scholar transport owner and the Johannesburg Institute of Social Services.

In a show of commitment and ownership, each member of the Safety and Security team also personally contributed R50 towards the success of the campaign.

At the end of the programme, participants received sanitary pads and snacks to support menstrual dignity and overall well-being.

With support from Planact and dedicated community partners, the Safe Space for Girls Awareness Campaign demonstrated the power of community-led action in protecting and uplifting vulnerable young girls in Lawley Station.

Social Employment Fund Impact stories

Destroying the 'altars of crime in Bertrams







Making community safety and urban farming a priority in Choba







About Us

Planact is a Johannesburg-based non-profit organisation established in 1985. The organisation is dedicated to empowering communities in vulnerable conditions to play an active role in local governance.

It amplifies community voices, holds municipalities accountable and promotes meaningful participation of marginalised groups in shaping local government policies, plans, and implementation processes.

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