

TALK TO US



600 000 informal settlement residents to receive improved sanitation after Ekurhuleni Metro acknowledges social audit recommendations

An estimated ten million South Africans still do not have access to sanitation facilities. Government contracts out most basic services provided to informal settlements in South African cities, including sanitation, to private companies.

Subsequent to the social audit that Planact implemented in partnership with the International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP South Africa) and the Social Audit Network (SAN), as well as 13 informal settlement communities in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, recommendations have been taken into account in the specifications for the new contract:

“Appointment of service providers for the hiring, delivery and maintenance of chemical toilets within City of Ekurhuleni, on an as and when required basis from 01 July 2019 until 30 June 2022.” (<https://bit.ly/2NmNt8i>)

This new contract will be implemented in 119 informal settlements. Planact and the communities believe that effective execution of the tender has the potential to dramatically improve sanitation provision to 600 000 informal settlement residents who are currently languishing in poor sanitation conditions.

The new specification requires that:

1. Sanitation chemical for odour and disinfection for the waste drum and cleaning purposes must be laboratory tested and a test certificate will be requested from the acceptable bidders
2. Portable toilet for disabled should be easily accessible, must be spacious enough and built in bars for users to grab and hold during transfers.



Aerial view showing toilets distribution in Mkhancwa Informal Settlement in KwaThema, City of Ekurhuleni.

This community driven social audit involved 20 000 informal settlement residents, 157 community volunteers, and seven ward councillors. Collaborating with the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan’s Water and Sanitation Department contributed significantly to the success of the process and the subsequent incorporation of the recommendations into the new contract. A team from the Auditor General’s office observed the process.

How sure can we be that this will really happen?

In its efforts to improve implementation of the new contract, Planact, SAN, and IBP South Africa have built a strong and growing network of informal settlement residents, ward councillors and key actors in Ekurhuleni. The network will monitor the new contract and is driven by community members themselves. This makes the network more sustainable and scale-able, as can be seen from the fact that communities and ward councillors have already applied the monitoring skills towards other services like housing and pedestrian footbridges.

What is even more impressive is that residents have not just improved services, but they have also unblocked the procurement systems that provide these services. While this makes these improvements more sustainable, it also shows that community driven campaigns can go beyond localised service delivery improvements and improve broader government service delivery systems.

WATCH **Planact South Africa**

Length: 17 mins

Link: <https://youtu.be/00vHNfKcN0>

Video Name: Informal Settlements monitor portable toilets service delivery in Ekurhuleni

About: This video documents a journey of 13 informal settlement communities in the City of Ekurhuleni who simultaneously conducted a community-led process of engaging government about poor services, in this case, the provision and maintenance of portable toilets.

Community-led social audits to influence municipal audit planning, Auditor General, Kimi Makwetu



Left: Auditor General, Mr Kimi Makwetu, Planact Programme Coordinator, Ms Shumani Luruli and International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBPSA) 's Director, Mr Albert Van Zyl

The Auditor General believes that voices of ordinary citizens will reduce irregular spending by municipalities thus improving municipal audit outcomes. This means that wasteful expenditure by South Africa's municipalities will be minimised as the Auditor General welcomes a methodology that has been successfully piloted capturing the lived experiences of communities who are the beneficiaries of municipal services.

Through community driven monitoring of municipal budgets and service delivery reports, the Auditor General, Kimi Makwetu hopes to get the views of the communities who are not necessarily decision makers in the institutions, but the people on the receiving end of all these services that the auditor general's office is trying to scrutinize.

“For a very long time, an audit has always had these limitations where our focus is largely on the executive management of an institution. It gets to a point where we think it's probably just a compliance matter because the Municipal Systems Act requires it to be done. However, I think we've always been yearning for giving substance and meaning to municipal reports. The social audit component comes in handy because it's much closer to the experience is of the ordinary people.” said Makwetu earlier this year in an exclusive interview with Planact and IBPSA.

Planact will continue advocating institutionalisation of social audits in South Africa to improve the living conditions of marginalised communities.

Reflecting on the Auditor General's statement, Planact's Programme Coordinator responsible for the implementation of social audits projects, Shumani Luruli says, “Planact will have to extend the social audit work to more communities because participation would be significant if more communities adopt the use of social audits as the methodology reveals the problems they are faced with on the ground which the Auditor General wants to hear about.”

However, the Auditor General concluded by saying that “of course we remain an independent, and an institution that will evaluate the data we get so that we mitigate the risk of being seen to be influenced by powerful forces that are organized in social audit networks. There will be those people who will have that concern because it shakes the ground.”

Planact is pushing for participation, accountability and transparency in local governance. Therefore, recognition of communities' active engagement by the Auditor General's office is a step in the right direction.



Left: The Planact and International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP-SA) teams at the Auditor General's offices in Johannesburg, 2018.

Ekurhuleni informal settlements prepare to monitor outsourced sanitation service



Over 100 community representatives gathered at Germiston Hall in March 2019 to celebrate their united voice and plan for monitoring.

Over 100 community representatives from thirteen informal settlements convened in March 2019 to celebrate the success of the social audit process last year following their commitment to the work.

Their efforts to hold the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality to account for poor sanitation services was not in vain as recommendations made were incorporated into the new tender specification for the provision of chemical toilets in informal settlements.

Some of the achievement include the following:

- For the first time, residents will know, who is responsible for cleaning and maintaining their chemical toilets and exactly when this should happen.
- Contractors will be required to provide schedule on both the front and back of each toilet door.

Why is the monitoring of sanitation service delivery in informal settlements important?

1. To protect the gains made with the social audit.
2. To ensure that there is sustainable improvement to the sanitation service.
3. Ensure that the specifications are followed as recommended and as prescribed by the tender document.
4. Through monitoring communities able to have real time evidence of deviations and are able to hold those responsible accountable.
5. Communities are also able to taking ownership and responsibility for the service they need to see in their community.



Informal Settlements Unite For Improved Community Participation



Community representatives from over 10 settlements in Emalahleni

Several communities from informal settlements across the City of Ekurhuleni and Emalahleni Local Municipality have resolved to unite in pursuit of improved community participation, and the delivery of basic services, at local government level.

This resolution has resulted in the establishment of community clusters constituted of informal settlements from both areas. The clusters are a result of working together between these communities and Planact on participatory governance and community development. The clusters are currently comprised of ten informal settlements in Ekurhuleni and nine in Emalahleni.

Both clusters have committed to work tirelessly towards attracting more informal settlements to the cause of realising improved public participation, and consequently the efficient delivery of basic services in informal settlements.

The driving force behind the formation of community clusters in the above mentioned areas is due to poor community participation as a contributing factor to the poor delivery of basic services for informal settlement communities.



A committee member presents their community challenges to the Emalahleni Cluster meeting in Witbank.

Planact sends letter of appreciation to Community Works Programme Coordinator

Planact contributes to policy formulation in South Africa



Planact team with the Fella Brothers Agricultural Cooperative in Wattville



Ward Committee members from across Gauteng at one of Planact's workshops, last year.



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Mr. Velaphi Ndaba
Community Works Programme Coordinator
Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality
4 February 2019

Mr. Ndaba

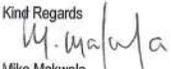
Warm greetings and hope that this letter will find you well. When I met with you early last year and I told you about the Fella Brothers Agricultural Cooperative you showed a keen interest in the project. On behalf of the Fella Brothers Agricultural Cooperative in Wattville. We would like to express my profound appreciation for making time to meet with us on the 22nd August 2018 in our project site. And thank you for listening to our presentation with keen interest about our agricultural project. We graciously appreciated your frank advices you shared with us about our project.

Subsequent to our meeting with you, you promised to assist the project and to sign it up for the CWP. And on the 6th September 2018, you took time to register the members of the Cooperative as promised. It was a long day, and true to your commitment you even went beyond the call of duty and registered all the members, in between you kept us laughing with your humour.

This year, 2019, and true to your promise, the project received the garden tools, uniform for supervisors, jojo tanks and the much deserved stipend for the Cooperative members. We attribute these new developments to your timely intervention, and we would like to express our deep felt appreciation to you. We hope that the other communities will receive similar attention afforded to our Agricultural Cooperative.

We are hopeful that this partnership will yield positive rewards for our community and our families. We are very hopeful that this project will grow in leaps and bounds with your support. We dare not disappoint you.

Continue the good work, and we wish you all the best in your endeavors to build a better future for our people.

Kind Regards

Mike Makwela
Senior Programme Coordinator
Planact

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that can pride itself of having developed effective legislation governing public participation. Consequently, Planact was invited to be part of a National Steering Committee reviewing public participation and the ward committee system. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) chairs this steering committee.

The recognition of Planact as a key participant in this Steering Committee is attributed to its 30 year involvement in promoting the participation of communities in local governance processes such as the Integrated Development Planning and Municipal Budgeting.

As part of the process of contributing to the review process, Planact trained ward committees to improve their effectiveness. The capacity building workshops allowed them to explore alternative models of citizen engagement with the state drawn from different experiences.

Planact hopes to draw on its research findings and lessons learnt on participatory governance in local governance over the three decades to develop a draft guidelines that will be submitted to the Steering Committee.

Some of the ideas that will be explored further include emphasising that future legislation not be too prescriptive as there are different categories of municipalities with different capacities.



The food garden by the Fella Brothers Agricultural Cooperative

Railway extension 21 residents engage municipality, get taps



Railway Ext 21 in Tsakane, community leader, Mpho Sithole standing next to a newly installed tap

One of the signs of an empowered community is when people are in control of their own development. Railway extension 21 in Tsakane is one classic example of this description.

At the beginning of this year, nine community members secured part time employment from Lukazi Civil Construction Company, who were contracted by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality to install their own taps.

This development came after the community, led by Mpho Sithole actively engaged the Water and Sanitation department within the municipality to increase the number of taps in Railway.

Only two taps were shared by the whole community. Currently, there are five taps sparsely distributed to service a number of households and more will be installed.

Planact supports such communities who actively play a part in their own development.



A community members shows another newly installed tap in Railway ext 21.

What's In a Name? Informal Settlements name own streets



Planact with the street naming volunteer team from Skoonplaas/ Cloverfield just outside of Etwatwa in the City of Ekurhuleni.

Most people avert their eyes when they pass the sprawling shack settlements encroaching on city spaces. There are approximately 2,500 in Gauteng alone and while municipalities are constitutionally obliged to provide basic services, they do so grudgingly and usually in response to mass demonstrations.

Not so for Planact, a Johannesburg based NGO, whose mission it is to prepare disadvantaged communities to work within government structures so they can enjoy the same rights as people living in the formal housing sector. High on the list is tenure, something shack dwellers don't have.

"People living in informal settlements need to be allowed to own their shacks," says Mike Makwela, a Senior Programme Coordinator with Planact. "You can't feel secure or take pride in a home that could be demolished at any moment!"

"Informal settlements are not going to go away. They are mushrooming everywhere because poverty is increasing and people are migrating in search of economic opportunities."

The push for tenure underpins Planact's latest project which is to support informal settlers in a street naming blitz. The thinking is that if the streets have names it will be a step towards formalising the illegal establishments. Nine informal settlements in Gauteng have been selected for the venture. Among these are Thembelihle in the City of Johannesburg, Skoonplaas/Cloverfield in Etwatwa and Kameeldrift in the City of Tshwane.

[VIDEO] Accounting for Basic Services



Residents get water from a communal tap in KwaZenzele informal settlement.

Video Name: Accounting For Basic Services

Length: 8:14 mins

Link: <https://youtu.be/rxA5c5szPw>

About:

Between June 2016 and September 2018, Afesis-Corplan, the Built Environment Support Group (BESG), Isandla Institute, Planact and the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF) Southern Africa Office jointly implemented a project titled 'Accounting for basic services': tackling the inadequate use of resources by municipalities and building a rights-based approach to service delivery'.

This video highlights the work of this project.



Mr Molefe reading about accounting for basic services in KwaZenzele.

[VIDEO] Growth & Innovation of Social Audits in South Africa



Filming at Planact's offices in Johannesburg.

Video Name:

Growth and Innovation of Social Audits in South Africa

Length: 11:36 mins

Link: <https://youtu.be/NtUH9ftYUJ0>

About:

Social Audits - audits undertaken by communities on the delivery of services provided by the government - have grown and innovated all over South Africa in the last six years.

The video tells the story of how social audits in South Africa have spread to more cities, how they have been scaled up, how collaborative relationships have been developed with government and the Auditor General, and how the methodology has been applied to infrastructure and the mining sector.



A street in Wattville.

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