

# NEWS JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2024



LATEST NEWS AND PROJECT WORK FROM PARTNER COMMUNITIES

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## ASIVIKELANE: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

### TSHWANE WASTE HUB: SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND HOSTELS



Above: Planact's Assistant Programme Coordinator, Bafana Tshabalala, presenting the Asivikelane Informal Settlement Waste Management Strategy in Cape Town at the Convening of all partners.

In the world of community development, there is a theory called the bottom-up approach which emphasises the importance of building communities from the inside out. In practice, it is a little more complicated than that, but its essence is clear.

Our application of the Asivikelane Waste Hub in the City of Tshwane embodies the practical implementation of the bottom-up approach, where informal settlement and hostel residents play a crucial role as key stakeholders in the solid waste management ecosystem.

Often, theories remain as theories, but this hub demonstrates that theories can indeed be realised! In August 2024, the Asivikelane Tshwane Waste Hub Stakeholders presented the Informal Settlement Waste Management Strategy to a panel of executives at the City of Tshwane.

The panel included the Environmental Group Head, Divisional Head, Directors and Members of the Mayoral Committee of Environment and Agriculture Management. The Waste strategy aims to positively impact policies regarding sustainable waste management in informal settlements in the City of Tshwane. This will lead to the allocation of dedicated budgets for waste management in these spatially un-proclaimed areas.

The success of the Tshwane Waste Hub is dependent on collaborative partnerships with officials in the City of Tshwane and their willingness to engage. It is also based on key stakeholders in all elements of the waste cycle. There remains room for new partners to join the Hub as the Waste Strategy develops.

→ **Read more:** <https://www.planact.org.za/asivikelane-tshwane-hub-sustainable-waste-management-strategy-for-informal-settlements/>



## ASIVIKELANE: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

### JOBURG SANITATION HUB: ADVOCACY FOR THE ERADICATION OF DILAPIDATED VIP TOILETS AND UNUSABLE VIPS



*Sanitation Hub Poster expressing the objectives of the Asivekelane Sanitation Hub to address the systemic solutions to maintaining and repairing the VIP toilets in informal settlements.*

Municipalities are responsible for ensuring that informal settlement residents have access to basic sanitation, which is a crucial part of service delivery.

In the City of Johannesburg, the Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets are considered the basic standard of sanitation, that the city aims to provide to its residents as an interim form of sanitation.

Despite its name, the only thing distinguishing a Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine from a basic pit latrine is the presence of a ventilation pipe and a sturdier structure. The ventilation pipe helps to trap flies and regulate odours.

Although VIP toilets are commonly used, there is currently no specific policy outlining the lifespan of these facilities. This includes details on the duration of their use, methods for repairing and maintaining the structure, assigning responsibilities for their upkeep, and decommissioning procedures at the end of their lifespan.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that informal settlement residents have access to dignified and safe sanitation facilities.

VIP toilets are often dilapidated and broken, and therefore not functional and some VIPs have been in use long past their lifespan. Another reason is that residents are not provided with the necessary education to ensure that their VIPs are used correctly and that they can maintain the top structure.

In practice Johannesburg Water takes responsibility for desludging these toilets, but repairing and maintaining the top structure and the pit itself is the responsibility of the residents who use these toilets.

The Asivekelane initiative partners, acknowledge the difficulty of the responsibility to maintain the VIP toilets between the municipality and the residents. In practice, the City views pit emptying as part of its maintenance work while the repairs to the structure itself remain the residents' responsibility.

Our Sanitation Hub brings different stakeholders together to focus on finding systemic solutions to repairs and maintenance of VIP toilets in the City of Johannesburg.



**Read more:** <https://www.planact.org.za/asivikelane-sanitation-hub-eradicating-vip-toilets-in-informal-settlements/>



**WATCH  
HERE** >>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnsCPQtn2Y4>

Watch an inspiring video featuring Planact's Programme Coordinator, Shumani Luruli.

The video puts a spotlight on the issue of service delivery and highlights the disparities in services provided to communities, largely in informal services and those in more affluent areas. Communities face challenges including access to water, sanitation, and the infrastructure to manage solid waste.

Over time, a campaign emerged known as Asivikelane, which was a response to the serious service gaps experienced by informal settlement residents.

Data collection emerged as an impactful methodology and pathway to open dialogue with government officials. This has been bolstered by research on service delivery captured in monthly reports shared with city officials.

Monitoring service delivery opened the conversation on budgetary allocations for informal settlements, which are not always clear. Communities raised concerns about financing for their areas with the call to match the allocations to data collected which highlights the gaps and where budgets should be directed. Planact, its partners and communities advocate for Municipalities to 'plan directly for informal settlements' to close the service delivery shortfalls.



## PLANACT CHALLENGES MUNICIPALITIES TO DEVELOP INDICATORS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



Mr Makwela presenting at the Gauteng Public Participation Forum

*“Without indicators for public participation, every meeting with a register can pass as public participation.”*

These were sentiments expressed by Planact’s Senior Programme Coordinator, Mike Makwela, at a Gauteng Public Participation Forum organised by the Public Participation Directorate at the Gauteng Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (GCoGTA) on 21 August 2024.

During his presentation at the Forum, Mr Makwela challenged officials responsible for championing public participation to create indicators to measure their performance.

Public participation is the foundation of South Africa’s form of government characterised by consensus democracy. The government is constitutionally obliged to include the public in its affairs. Municipalities are a sphere of government legally constituted by the political institutions, regulations, laws and norms governing the municipal administration and the community in their jurisdiction. Therefore, all parties must be part of the decision-making process at the local government level but this has not been the case over the past decades.

‘Section 42 of the Municipal Systems Act provides for community involvement. Why is this not happening? Municipalities must allow communities to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets for the municipality,’ he said.

As part of his recommendation, Mr Makwela proposed the following:

- ▶ Budget allocations for public participation
- ▶ Investment in human resources to build capacity in public participation units.
- ▶ Public participation is to be made an all-year-round activity.
- ▶ Public participation is contested.
- ▶ Each Municipality must develop its public participation indicators

Under the theme, Work, Learn, Test, Innovate, and Act in unison to add Development value to Delivery through Public Participation, provincial and local municipal officials acknowledged that protests, anger, disengagement or court challenges are indicators of impediments to fully recognising public participation.

The Gauteng CoGTA committed to developing a plan of action for implementing effective public participation measures in partnership with municipalities and civil society organisations such as Planact.

## **LANGAVILLE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT RESIDENTS’ HOPE FOR FLUSHING TOILETS GOES DOWN THE DRAIN**

*By Siphwe Segodi*



*Langaville community outside chemical toilet conducting physical checks in the 2018 Sanitation Social Audit.*

Our advocacy for clean water and dignified sanitation in informal settlements in the City of Ekurhuleni (CoE) continues.

The community of Langaville forms part of the Ekurhuleni Informal Settlement Movement. This is a Cluster of Community Agency made up of informal settlements communities in the CoE, which have a strategic partnership with Planact.

Recently, the hopes of the 750 households in the Langaville informal settlement in Tsakane, City of Ekurhuleni, were crushed after losing a court case against the City of Ekurhuleni. The residents were seeking to have the area rezoned for residential use and to have access to adequate sanitation facilities in the forms of flushing toilets. This loss will have effected beyond Langaville

Planact supported the case and strengthened the advocacy efforts for improved sanitation across the municipality. At one point, Planact set up a projector in a hall to facilitate access to online court proceedings for the residents. The judgement is a setback, however, the campaign for dignified sanitation will continue through alternative strategies and tactics.

Currently, the Langaville community uses chemical toilets, a short-term measure provided by the CoE as a minimum municipal requirement for sanitation but residents have complained about the harm they are placing on the health of communities.

Planact’s [scaled-up social audit on sanitation](#) in all ten informal settlements in the CoE in 2018 found strong evidence of insufficient monitoring of the delivery of the service by the Ekurhuleni Water and Sanitation Operations Department.

Moreover, an [amaBhungane investigation](#) revealed that the Ekurhuleni metro spent a staggering R1.9 billion on chemical toilets over three financial years from 2017 to 2019.

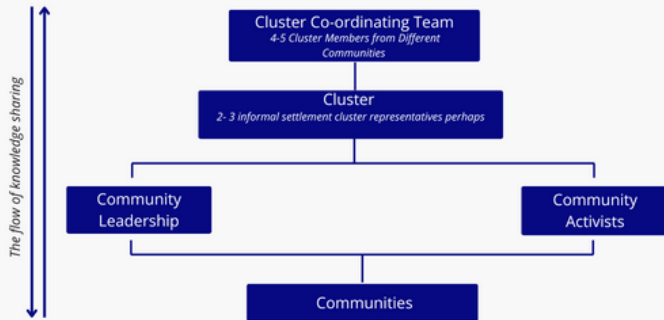
 **Read more:** <https://www.planact.org.za/asivikelane-tshwane-hub-sustainable-waste-management-strategy-for-informal-settlements/>



## CLUSTERS OF COMMUNITY AGENCY BRINGING CHANGE TO INFORMAL SETTLEMENT RESIDENTS

By Kiara Britton

### Planact | Clusters of Community Agency | Structure



Clusters of Community Agency structure

Planact has been instrumental in the development of a model that brought together informal settlement communities to form what is termed Clusters of Community Agency (CCA).

These clusters are comprised of up to 18 informal settlement communities, while in some instances they may have smaller settlement groupings located in a single municipality.

The cluster approach is designed to amplify the voices and increase the impact that a broader collective can bring to solve collective issues faced by communities in informal settlements.

This has enabled many communities to advocate for systemic change at a municipal level to achieve more impactful results instead of the issues being addressed by one community acting alone. Many of these settlements face similar challenges, which include acute water shortages and concerns over water quality, sanitation, and varied access to electricity, solid waste management and degraded environments.

The cluster approach can bring solutions that resonate with communities and create the opportunity to share lessons and experiences between communities that are aimed at resolving these issues.

This is most effectively achieved in the relationships that have been built by the clusters with their respective municipalities. This has included understanding the structure of the municipality and the key officials in departments dealing with informal settlement upgrading, human settlements, public works, planning, and infrastructure, amongst others.

Clusters have also been involved in their relevant municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes and have made submissions into the annual IDP review and budget processes.

→ Read more: <https://www.planact.org.za/clusters-of-community-agency-bringing-change-to-informal-settlement-residents/>





## MPAC AIMS TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE. IS MPAC THE ANSWER?

By Kiara Britton



Recently Planact staff and Cluster members observed Steve Tshwete Local Municipality MPAC committee meeting to understand its operations for a policy review aiming to increase public engagement. The MPAC committee reviewed accounts, addressing irregular spending like paying late fees to Eskom. Planact's involvement was well-received, promoting transparency in the process.

### WHAT IS MPAC ?

The Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) is a municipal council committee that is established in terms of Section 79A of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Act No. 03 of 2021.

The MPAC is a tool to hold accountability from the executive and municipal administration to account and ensure that there is efficient utilisation of municipal resources.

The MPAC aims to improve accountability, transparency, economical, effective and efficient use of public resources in performing municipal functions giving effect to service delivery (SALGA, 2012).

The role of the oversight committee and officials within the local government sphere is crucial to nurturing and maturing democratic institutions by exercising proper oversight of public funds and government programmes in a transparent and accountable manner.

### HOW IS MPAC CONSTITUTED ?

The MPAC is a committee that is comprised solely of councillors appointed by resolution of a full council meeting. The committee may invite representatives of the community and co-opt members of the public who are experts in their respective fields to assist and advise in the deliberations when the need arises.

The MPAC should meet four times per annum and before quarterly meetings of the municipal council or before the council meetings scheduled for the month in which the MPAC meets, to allow sufficient time to include the report of the MPAC in the agenda for each council meeting.

The chairperson of the MPAC must be appointed in terms of a council resolution and may not be an office bearer/ executive councillor in the municipality. The MPAC committee, therefore, comprises councillors from the council but excludes the mayor and mayoral committee members, speaker, chief whip, and municipal officials. The chairperson of the MPAC can be from the ruling or an opposition party, at the discretion of the municipal council.



Read more: <https://www.planact.org.za/is-mpac-the-answer-to-improve-accountability/>

1 COGTA. (2022). Municipal Public Accounts Committees Exercising Oversight on Municipal Accounts Exercising Oversight on Municipal Councils [Poster]. COGTA, Pretoria.  
2 Ibid.  
3 SALGA. (2012) Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) Enhancing Oversight in the Municipality: Practical Guide. SALGA, pp. 3-15.  
4 Ibid



### RESHAPING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BY EMPOWERING EMERGING CONTRACTORS AND SMALL-SCALE DEVELOPERS

By Itumeleng Tsotetsi

#### ADDRESSING INDUSTRY CHALLENGES



*Planact and DAG staff gathered after the four day training.*

Planact and DAG Reshaping the Construction Industry by Empowering Emerging Contractors and Small-Scale Developers.

The construction industry in South Africa has served as a pivotal engine of economic growth and job creation, particularly in Gauteng, where soaring economic migration has led to an unprecedented demand for housing. In response to this demand, small-scale rental developments in townships have emerged as a vital solution to address housing shortages.

However, emerging contractors have faced formidable barriers, including the dominance of powerful business forums, a critical skills deficit, and concerns over quality standards.

Against this background, DAG partnered with Planact to scale up the contractor, small scale rentals, and developer project into Gauteng.



**Read more:** <https://www.planact.org.za/reshaping-the-construction-industry-by-empowering-emerging-contractors-and-small-scale-developers/>



*Contractors post graduation ceremony on the last day of the Contractors and Small-Scale Developers training at Planact.*



## HAMMANSKRAAL ENTERS A NEW ERA THROUGH PRECINCT-BASED SAFETY INTERVENTIONS HERALDING A NEW APPROACH TO SAFETY MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

*By Tamzin Hudson and Thandeka Bosman*



*Hammanskraal community members attending the Hammanskraal Safety Plan launch.*

Faced with concerning and entrenched safety challenges in Hammanskraal, there was a need to rethink traditional approaches to safety and security.

Planact and Mbumba Development Services took proactive steps to address safety issues through a project titled "Designing and Applying Precinct-Based Safety Interventions" in Hammanskraal's Central Business District (CBD), in the City of Tshwane (CoT).

The Urban Safety Reference Group which includes the South African Cities Network, and the GIZ-Inclusive Crime and Violence Prevention Programme provided support to the project, designed to complement the Tshwane and National Treasury City Support Programme in Hammanskraal.

It takes a broader lens on issues of security in the context of rapid urbanisation and the fragmented nature of South Africa's urban form, allied with the need to strengthen multi-scale governance and embed reforms.

The project focused on creating a comprehensive safety strategy through extensive community engagement and a co-design process. This approach aimed to gather valuable community insights to frame a holistic, precinct-based safety intervention.

Integral to the project's success was the development of a Situation Analysis of Safety in the Hammanskraal CBD. This evaluation, with a strong stakeholder engagement process of constituency discussions, was a key success factor.

Engagements included consultations with the Community Policing Forums (CPFs) of Hammanskraal and Temba, hawkers and traders' organisations, the taxi association, the office of the councillor, and CBOs engaged in health and substance abuse among other role players. This further enabled the development of hotspot mapping, which was a key project deliverable.

Planact facilitated community dialogues and meetings to identify security issues and build a strong commitment to the process. Community consultations were a central part of the process of identifying community leaders to constitute a Reference Group.

Approximately twelve members from the community, including the constituency groups that Planact had previously interviewed in the stakeholder mapping process made up the core group, which became the drivers of the ensuing process.



**Read more:** <https://www.planact.org.za/hammanskraal-enters-a-new-era-through-precinct-based-safety-interventions-heralding-a-new-approach-to-safety-management-in-south-africa/>



### VIDEO: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT – SHAUNITA'S STORY

By Itumeleng Tsotetsi

WATCH  
HERE



<https://youtu.be/UGAYBCxGxQM?si=0RYCwmDJOk1gQDFi>



#### BACKGROUND

In the heart of Bertrams, Johannesburg, Shaunita Pace faced a life fraught with challenges. At the age of 28, Shaunita struggled with joblessness, a pervasive issue affecting an estimated 8.4 million South Africans.

Personal crises compounded the financial strain of unemployment: her brother's severe drug addiction and her mother's deteriorating health left her in a constant state of fear and uncertainty.

"There was a time we wouldn't know if she was going to make it through the night," Shaunita recalls, reflecting on the profound emotional and difficult circumstances she endured.

#### IMPACT

Shaunita's life began to change when she received an opportunity to join the Social Employment Fund (SEF) project through Planact. The SEF project is designed to create employment opportunities and foster community development across various thematic areas towards community upliftment. For Shaunita, this opportunity was not just a job; it was a lifeline that promised to restore her confidence and purpose.

Shaunita's involvement in the SEF project marked a turning point. As one of 1,000 participants working across different areas like community safety, recycling, food security, and more, Shaunita found renewed purpose and self-esteem.

She notes, "I have gained my confidence back. I feel like a normal person again. I'm not depressed or sad anymore."

Her transformation extended to her family. Her brother, who had battled a five-year drug addiction, found a new purpose through the project. He has been clean for nine months, contributing positively to the community and steering clear of past negative influences. This stability and support from the SEF project helped bring Shaunita's family back from the brink of collapse.



Read more: <https://www.planact.org.za/the-impact-of-social-employment-shaunitas-story/>



## RECOGNISING FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT



SEF Project Manager Linda Zondi in green

This National Women's Day, we celebrated women making a difference in the Social Employment Fund (SEF) project, exemplified by Linda Zondi, a project manager for SEF at Planact.

Planact is not a 'do good feel good' organisation, we work on eliminating the exclusion of vulnerable communities in local government processes to improve the living conditions and alleviate poverty. Linda's work on the SEF project showcases her dedication to this mission.

Reflecting on National Women's Day, Linda says, "*Imbokodo holds it where it's hot, where it's sharp, showing how strong women are.*"

For her, the day symbolises women's strength and resilience amid glaring social challenges.

"Listening to the stories of other women whose lives have been changed by the SEF Project, evolving from single, jobless individuals to empowered working mothers supporting their families, is truly inspiring," she recounts, highlighting the project's profound impact, particularly in informal settlements.

Linda advocates for the year-round empowerment of women.

"Women should be supported, encouraged, empowered, and celebrated every day, not just on one day out of 365," she says, emphasising the need for the continuous recognition of women's achievements.

*"Women are doing a lot to empower and upskill fellow women through various programmes. We may not reach all of them at once, but each step we take goes a long way."*

Linda's dedication to uplifting women aligns with Planact's objective to connect marginalised communities with local economic opportunities. The SEF project enables communities to be integrated into government development schemes, and private and public ventures to foster the fair distribution of resources and opportunities. It exemplifies how targeted social employment initiatives can significantly impact vulnerable women's lives.

Linda is hopeful that such social employment projects have the potential to effect positive community transformation.



### SHARING MY EXPERIENCE AS A PLANACT COMMUNITY FACILITATOR

*by Itumeleng Tsotetsi*

Planact's work in partner communities would not be possible without the major role played by representatives from each community. They are Planact's extension in their respective community – also known as Community Facilitators. We profile one of the former community facilitators who is now an intern at Planact – Itumeleng Tsotetsi.

Being a community facilitator is about being the voice of the community and working alongside other leaders to drive meaningful change. It's not a one-person job; it requires teamwork and collaboration.

Being a community facilitator demands love, strength, the ability to engage with diverse groups of people, and, most importantly, confidence paired with humility. This role has transformed me, teaching me invaluable lessons along the way. My journey to becoming a community facilitator was a natural progression, fuelled by my curiosity and desire to address community issues.

I wasn't born or raised in an informal settlement, but life circumstances led me to move into one. This experience gave me a new perspective on life. At first, I was puzzled by litter on the streets, running water, and the overall uncleanliness of these areas. I wondered if people just didn't care.

However, after moving to Somalia Park, my perspective changed. I realized that informal settlements are often the lowest priority for the municipality. My curiosity and determination to understand what was happening led me to become more vocal about these issues.

I've always been inquisitive, especially when it comes to basic services, and this role as a community facilitator has allowed me to channel that curiosity into making a difference.

To be effective, I had to learn to be "noisy" in a strategic way—asking the right questions and navigating conversations with the intent of gathering essential information. The Asivikelane training helped me to develop the skill of conducting strategic research and understanding how to approach different people and situations to get the information needed.

I also learnt that being a community facilitator is not about confrontation or conflict with contractors, municipal officials, or community leaders. It's about building trust and forming relationships. When you earn people's trust, they become more open and willing to share insights that are crucial for community development.

Of course, not everyone will be on your side, and that's something I've come to accept—especially when it comes to working with councillors. But even in those challenges, there's an opportunity to grow and learn.

Being a community facilitator is not all sweet and rosy. Some leaders supported and worked with me, but others felt threatened, fearing that I wanted to take their jobs or disrupt their positions by asking sensitive questions that community members were not supposed to ask. The scary and dangerous part of this work was being told to stop what I was doing. At times, I was offered small projects to keep me quiet or was recruited into political parties. Despite these pressures, I never lost sight of why I became a community facilitator. My only goal was to understand why things were the way they were in the settlement I lived in.



Join us for a webinar 'Igniting Community Voices in Local Government' Exploring Avenues Through Which Participatory Democracy Can Be Realised, 3 October 10:00 to 12:00, Maths Centre 28 Juta Street Braamfontein and Online via Zoom

**CLICK HERE**



**REGISTER BY 27 SEPTEMBER TO ATTEND IN-PERSON OR ONLINE**

**Join us**  
IN EXPLORING AVENUES THROUGH WHICH  
PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY CAN BE REALISED

## IGNITING COMMUNITY VOICES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
Thursday | 03 October, 2024 | 9:30 AM

<b>HOST:</b> Planact	<b>VENUE:</b> Maths Centre Building	<b>ADDRESS:</b> 28 Juta Street, Braamfontein
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**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

<b>Professor Heidi Brooks</b> Wits School of Governance	<b>Professor Joleen Kotze</b> Human Sciences Research Council
<b>Mmabatho Mongae</b> , Good Governance Africa	<b>Thato Masiangoako</b> Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)

*Parking available at the Maths Centre*  
**RSVP to attend in-person or online by 27 September, 2024**

**Find RSVP form link below**

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## ENGAGE WITH US

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