

NEWS JOURNAL

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2024 has been another busy and exciting year at Planact.

As the year draws to a close, we look back at the series of voter education workshops we hosted which contributed to a consensus democracy in the form of a coalition government – a first in South Africa!

We witnessed first hand that it is possible for citizens to work and engage with government through our Asivikelane Hubs in the City of Tshwane and Johannesburg. While more engagements still need to be done in the City of Johannesburg's sanitation hub, we are delighted that the Tshwane Waste Hub is advancing the adoption of the sustainable waste management strategy for informal settlements and hostels by Council.

We worked hard to expand our cluster of community approach to the North West Province. A total of six founding communities are on board to engage their local municipalities on improving service delivery. The cluster approach is our proven methodology that it allows various communities facing similar challenges to collectively advocate for systemic change at the municipal level. This strategy leads to more significant outcomes compared to individual communities tackling issues in isolation.

We also continued the partnership with the Industrial Development Fund (IDC) through the Social Employment Fund. This partnership has allowed us to harness the power of working for common good. For instance, a total of 64,5% of social employment participants employed under Planact, alone, are women. This is more than half of the 1000 participants employed by Planact, from low-income communities, across the Gauteng Province. Planact is one of the 37 Strategic Implementing Partners and 1500 community-based organisations, which has contributed to over 117,000 jobs as part of this broad initiative in support of jobs and livelihoods.

Lastly, 2025 is our 40th anniversary. The essence of Planact's impact remains rooted in making towns and cities work for people! We plan to celebrate the momentous achievement of being in operation for 40 years through highlighting Planact's contributions to South Africa's local government transformation trajectory on specific themes leading up to the main event scheduled for November 2025.

We look forward to future engagements with you.

May the holiday season bring you peace and a well-deserved rest. We'll see you in the new year.

ASIVEKELANE CLOSES ON A HIGH NOTE AT THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON ANIT-CORRUPTION

The role of civil society in national dialogues has never been more important!

Mondli Msani, our Asivikelane Community Facilitator from Thembelihle informal settlement in the City of Johannesburg, emphasised the need for a credible, transparent procurement system in local government.

He was part of a panel at the National Dialogue on Anti-Corruption with the Public Affairs Research Institute, the Auditor General of South Africa and the National Treasury reflecting on the national anti-corruption strategy.

The Anti-corruption strategy sets out six pillars that include:

- ▶ active citizenry.
- ▶ advancing professionalisation.
- ▶ enhancing governance, oversight and accountability.
- ▶ improving the integrity, transparency and credibility of the public procurement system.
- ▶ strengthening the resourcing, and coordination of anti-corruption agencies.
- ▶ Protecting vulnerable sectors that are most prone to corruption

These pillars are also key areas which Planact has sought to advance in its work since 1985.



Left: Planact's Programme Coordinator, Shumani Luruli signed a pledge for a corruption-free South Africa.

The pledge is, *"I pledge to act with integrity in all my dealings – in thought and in action – and always act in the best interest of my country."*

The national dialogue was held from 9 to 10 December 2024 and hosted by the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC), the Public Service Commission (PSC) and partners.



Above: Anti-corruption pledge

ASIVIKELANE WASTE HUB: TSHWANE MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT

We are delighted to report that Planact's and its partners' Sustainable Waste Management Strategy for Informal Settlements and Hostels has been validated and is currently going through municipal processes for adoption into policy.

The aim of the waste management strategy is to engage with municipal officials from the waste management department in the City of Tshwane to formulate a sustainable waste management strategy for informal settlements.

The successful outcome of this strategy demonstrates that participatory governance can be achieved when there is shared accountability and collaborative co-creation among communities, civil society organisations, and the municipality.



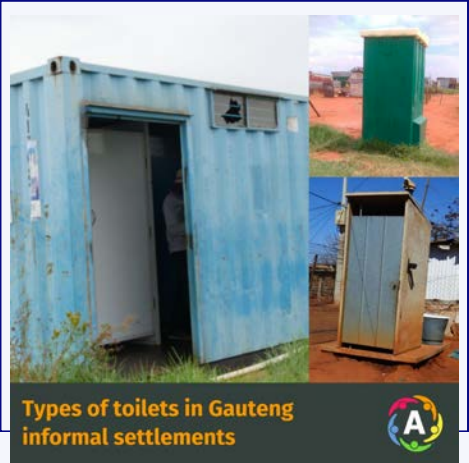
Above: Itereleng Waste collection route



Above: Asivikelane Building Blocks Strategy

Asivikelane
advocates for dignified,
safe
& accessible **toilets** for
informal settlement
residents across South
Africa

#Asivikelane #ToiletsAPlaceofPeace #WorldToiletDay
#AsivikelaneWorldToiletDay



Types of toilets in Gauteng informal settlements



In November 2024, we joined the United Nations to observe World Toilet Day.

Our Asivikelane campaign highlighted the urgent need for safe and dignified sanitation in South Africa's informal settlements.

Over 14 million South Africans across more than 2,700 informal settlements still struggle to access clean, safe, and hygienic toilets. Despite 30 years of democracy, we still have communities with inadequate or no sanitation alternatives.

Asivikelane emphasises the need for targeted solutions to ensure that all communities have access to safe sanitation. Informal settlement communities are ready to collaborate with the government to accelerate service delivery. As end-users, residents are best positioned to help identify effective solutions.

The aim of our Asivikelane Sanitation Hub in the City of Johannesburg is to eradicate VIPs that are dangerous and unusable and to fix and maintain the VIPs that are usable and fixable.

In 2024, several meetings were held with critical stakeholders such as Joburg Water, City of Johannesburg Environmental and Infrastructure Department (EISD), Human Settlements department and PIKITUP to work towards a sustainable sanitation solutions. The conversation is on-going.

VOTER EDUCATION AND AWARENESS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE IEC



In the run-up to the elections, Planact, as part of its civic education outreach, convened a series of voter education workshops in the City of Joburg, the City of Tshwane and the municipality of Emalahleni to strengthen their knowledge on election-related matters.

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and partners made presentations on elections covering topics such as: who qualified to vote, the three ballot paper system, the Section 24A special voter provisions, voting day processes, counting and results collation, the code of conduct as well as the important role of observers.

The talks and lively discussions made for a rich learning experience.

These brought about a deeper understanding of the role of the IEC as a neutral electoral body in charge of managing elections and an institution governed by legislation under Chapter 9 of the Constitution.

The workshops were designed to promote meaningful participation to positively influence electoral processes and outcomes and support informed decision-making so that the elections take on real meaning. Emphasis was placed on the “right to vote”, while acknowledging that elections should be viewed as a step towards enhancing democracy. However, they do not inherently ensure good governance, which is a more challenging and intricate standard to meet.

Participants understood that good governance stems from shared accountability and it relies on essential pillars such as transparency, accountability, and a strong commitment to serving the interests of the people.



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

PLANACT’S NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTION OBSERVER MISSION



In May 2024, Planact assigned 41 observers to multiple voting stations across the provinces of Gauteng and Mpumalanga to monitor the 2024 National and Provincial Elections (NPE).

Observers were recruited through a strategic partnership with informal settlement communities in Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces where Clusters of Community Agency leadership forums have been established.

An emphasis was placed on recruiting women and youth to the Observer Mission to present an opportunity for these categories of people to take part in this democratic process.



GET THE REPORT ON PLANACT’S WEBSITE HERE: <https://www.planact.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Planact-Report-on-National-and-Provincial-Elections-9-JULY-2024.pdf>.

CLUSTERS OF COMMUNITY AGENCY APPROACH EXPANDS TO RUSTENBURG



Planact has expanded its engagement with informal settlements in Rustenburg, located in the North West province.

As a result of these efforts, the Cluster of Community Agency approach has expanded to include six informal settlement communities, increasing the organisation's presence in the province.

The Rustenburg Cluster emerged from a request for assistance by concerned residents who had witnessed the success of the cluster approach in the City of Ekurhuleni, in the Gauteng Province. They learned about the successes in Ekurhuleni through their visits with family members to Ekurhuleni.

Prior to providing support, in 2023, Planact visited different communities in Rustenburg and established that there are serious service delivery challenges which can be tackled through collaboration with the municipality.

The six founding communities, including those visited prior, have pledged to collaborate in amplifying the voices of informal settlements for better living conditions in the Rustenburg Local Municipality are Tshenolong, Enkanini, Paardekraal-Plot 14, Boitekong Ext 2, Boitekong Ext 14, and Damooi.



READ MORE: <https://www.planact.org.za/planact-expands-the-cluster-approach-to-north-west-province/>

LAUNCH TO HAMMANSKRAAL SAFETY PLAN



Hammanskraal, in the northern part of the City of Tshwane, continues to face persistent challenges with criminal activity, which resulted in the need to reassess and reevaluate conventional safety and security methods and practices.

Planact and Mbumba Development Services embarked on a project called “designing and applying precinct-based safety Interventions” in Hammanskraal’s Central Business District, in the City of Tshwane.

The project focused on creating a comprehensive safety strategy through extensive community engagement and a co-design process.

Planact facilitated community dialogues and meetings to identify security issues and build a strong commitment to the process. A reference group was established during the project and it played a key role in the official launch of the Hammanskraal CBD Safety Plan and safety activation interventions with the Tshwane Metro Police Department. The Metro Department was instrumental throughout the project and particularly in sustaining the activation activities, which culminated in a community event at the Mandela Village Hall in Hammanskraal.



READ MORE HERE: <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/>

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT: SEMINARS



Planact hosted two hybrid seminars in a series of three in October 2024. The aim of the seminars was to explore the avenues through which participatory democracy can be realised.

The first seminar, *Igniting Community Voices in Local Government*, focused on the academic perspectives and featured speakers from the Wits School of Governance, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Good Governance Africa (GGA), and the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI).

The speakers presented topics relating to participatory democracy processes. Citizen participation promotes education, autonomy, problem-solving skills, deliberation, and consensus-building, and it was a catalyst to the agency of citizens to tackle poverty.

Participatory democracy advances the potential to a legitimate and effective government. A more active citizenry, and a more responsible state strengthens transparency and accountability. It addresses power relations and advance social justice and procedural processes that lead to substantive outcomes. It was, however, also recognised that there is a gap between the aspirations for participation and why it is not delivering to its full potential.

The second seminar, titled *Participatory Democracy at Local Government: Where to Next?* unpacked the dynamics of participation, community, power dynamics, civic engagement and the realities to reach participatory democracy from perspectives of local government actors. The speakers, including from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) presented the legislative frameworks that govern participatory processes and are core to South Africa’s democratic dispensation.

A presentation was made on the Asset-based community development (ABCD) method by CoGTA (Gauteng), which grounded the discussions and provided an important dimension for approaching participation as a recognition of what communities bring to the process.

The Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI) presented the interim findings of their research under the COMPACT programme. They noted the tokenistic aspects of participation where it is regarded as a tick-box exercise and where the view of communities is neglected. The speakers further outlined the importance of building trust between communities and local government, and the necessity for local government to engage with the public to break the barriers.

Both seminars presented the opportunity for community members involved in Planact’s project work to share their lived experiences and their perspective on their experiences with engaging local government on service delivery-related issues.

Planact is excited to further engage in Participatory Democracy discussions in 2025 with the third installment of the seminar series. Look out for the upcoming Seminar Reports that will share further information on the discussions and insights from the first two seminars in collaboration with the Human Sciences Research Council!

MASCOM POTABLE WATER SOCIAL AUDIT 2024



Above: Two auditors conducting a physical verification for the water tanks in one MASCOM community.

In September 2024, Planact along with the MASCOM cluster conducted a potable water social audit in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga. The aim of the social audit was to collect data and evidence on the quality of potable water provision to informal settlements in the Local Municipality.

The social audit began with a three-day training event conducted by Planact in Emalahleni, which was dedicated to training the trainers and the auditors who were drawn from the various communities within the cluster.

The training was followed by the social audit that took place over a five-day period in late September, which produced a data set of 800 households through the door-to-door campaign in the following informal settlements:

- ▶ Masakhane
- ▶ Spring Valley
- ▶ Benicon
- ▶ El Paso
- ▶ Mgewana
- ▶ Lindokuhle

The audit also incorporated a focus group with the communities that were too small for the door-to-door campaign that took place in the larger communities. These include:

- ▶ Commando Park
- ▶ Somgodla
- ▶ Kwa Jooma Farm
- ▶ 5-Shaft
- ▶ Khwezela Farm
- ▶ Magagula

This process displayed an eagerness from community members as this new tool presented the opportunity for the lived experience of community members and their water issues to be captured and shared in a tangible manner with their local authorities. This created a sense and feeling of empowerment for communities and the auditors as they were provided the means through the social audit tool to hold local authorities accountable and involved in the process of improving the quality of living in informal settlements. This process also stirred interest from many relevant organisations and academics conducting research in the relevant fields.

[Look out for more in the upcoming Planact Social Audit Report!](#)

1000 RESIDENTS ARE WORKING FOR COMMON GOOD THROUGH THE SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT FUND

In 2024, Planact together with its implementing partner, 1 to 1 Agency of Engagement entered the second round of the Social Employment Fund (SEF) in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC).

In this second round of the SEF Project, Planact's communities' livelihoods have turned for the better. Participants have begun understanding their potential and are working for the common good of their communities while building on the lessons learnt from the first round.

For instance, in Skoonplaas, the safety and security team went beyond the call of duty to guard the only remaining FNB ATM in the neighbouring shopping centre. In another instance, the food security team in Wattville is using innovative methods of growing organic vegetables in car tyres to mitigate the negative effects of wetlands on crops during the rainy season. *Look out for a case study report on all the impact stories we have recorded!*

In the last few months of 2024, Planact in partnership with specialists held several trainings for participants on the following themes:

- ▶ Digital Addressing
- ▶ Home Base Care
- ▶ Community Patrolling
- ▶ National Certificate: General Security Practices
- ▶ Environmental Health
- ▶ Plan and promote nutritional programs to improve health
- ▶ Basic Plant Production
- ▶ Water-wise Urban farming
- ▶ First Aid responders
- ▶ Environmental education and awareness
- ▶ Recycling and Upcycling

The trainings were held in partnership with Rand Water, Safe City, Google Maps, the Dynamic Development Institute, and Spiritual Chords among many other partners. They were aimed at:

- ▶ Improving the employability of the participants, as they already have experience.
- ▶ Capacitating participants on security and community safety measures.
- ▶ Improving the community's environment and living conditions.
- ▶ Educating the participants on small-scale urban farming as means to sustain their livelihoods.
- ▶ Equipping participants with first aid training during work hours.
- ▶ Educating participants on environmental health, and awareness campaigns.
- ▶ Imparting skills on upcycling.

However, this impactful project is not without challenges. Planact observed an increase in the number of volunteers, likely attributable to the high unemployment rate in the country. Unfortunately, the project can only support 1,000 participants at any given time.

Planact has also observed that while the social employment fund project achieves success, its implementation occasionally results in conflicts among the leadership structures within communities. These conflicts often arise due to differing priorities or perspectives on resource allocation and project management. Planact has always addressed these community dynamics constructively.



PLANACT IS SEEKING A QUALIFIED SERVICE PROVIDER TO CONDUCT AN IN-DEPTH RESEARCH STUDY ON THE SMALL-SCALE RENTALS SECTOR IN GAUTENG.

Key Requirements:

- Proven Experience in policy research and stakeholder engagement.
- Strong Analytical Skills for assessing policies and identifying opportunities and challenges.
- Ability to Provide Practical Insights and recommendations based on findings.

Deliverables:

- Comprehensive Report: Detailed findings from the policy analysis, challenges assessment, and opportunities exploration.
- Strategic Recommendations: Actionable recommendations for policy enhancements and support mechanisms for emerging developers.
- Presentation: A summary of key findings and recommendations to be presented to relevant stakeholders.

Interested service providers are invited to submit a proposal that includes:

Methodology: Detailed approach and methodology for the research.

Timeline: Proposed timeline for completing the research.


Budget: Detailed budget including all costs associated with the research.

Experience: Relevant experience and qualifications of the team.

References: Examples of previous similar work and client references.

DEADLINE:
15th January 2025



Submit to :

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LATEST NEWS AND PROJECT WORK FROM PARTNER COMMUNITIES

