



Social
Employment
Fund
Work for the common good

Rallying South Africa towards the Common Good



The Social Employment Fund is a fresh and innovative way of harnessing the power of cross-sector partnerships within South Africa. The Fund puts the unemployed, particularly youth, to work through civil-society partners. This work serves communities, solves problems and activates self-worth within our South African brothers and sisters.



PRESIDENTIAL
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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Our What.

In a South African context, there is no shortage of work to be done to address social barriers and access to employment and economic opportunities. The fund supports the considerable creativity, institutional capabilities and broader initiatives that engage people in work that unlocks opportunities while equally benefitting communities.

Participation in work not only provides much-needed income through stipends, it also gives people entry-level work readiness skills and the confidence, courage and enthusiasm to seek work opportunities. These are vital for participants' chances of getting a job in the wider labour market – but also enhance their chances of becoming self-employed or starting an enterprise.

To date, **over 117 000 people** have participated in and benefitted from the SEF across the country.



This includes **65% youth** and a **70% women workforce.**

65% of the work is in rural and peri-urban areas.



The Fund, managed by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) works with 37 Strategic Implementing Partners (SIPs), each operating in a variety of thematic areas such as Community Health and Caregiving, Gender-Based Violence, Digital Inclusion, Food security and nutrition, Education, Early Childhood Development, Greening and Environment, Placemaking, and Arts and Culture.

Community Level Impact	Example of Impact to date	Importance of Impact
 <p>Health and Caregiving</p>	<p>20 913 patients tracked and assisted with taking their chronic medication. This work also involves educating patients about the importance of regularly taking medication and a healthy lifestyle.</p>	<p>Maintaining a regular medicinal routine improves personal physical and mental well-being. This work also reduces the community's strain on the public health system.</p>
 <p>Education</p>	<p>2 689 592 learners are receiving critical educational support including after-hours academic tutoring; improving literacy and reading for meaning as well as participating in sports.</p>	<p>The reading and literacy interventions are critical where 81% of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language.</p>
 <p>Food Security and Nutrition</p>	<p>At least 3 262 community kitchen gardens have been established and are currently maintained. The produce is used by the communities or grouped together for sale with the proceeds put back into the community.</p>	<p>Stats SA reports that at least 11.6% of local households experience hunger. Introducing basic gardening helps with self-sufficiency and encourages local entrepreneurship.</p>

The SIPs in turn partner with **over 1100 community organisations, networks and structures that create real, tangible, and measurable economic change within communities.**

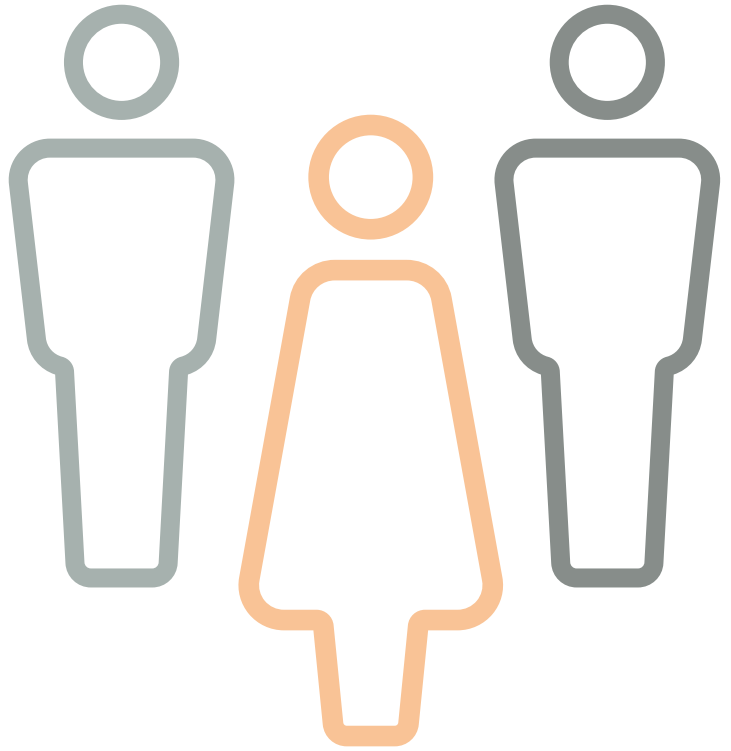
Community Level Impact	Example of Impact to date	Importance of Impact
 <p>Arts and Culture</p>	<p>328 938 school children and young people reached through art programmes increasing interest in other programmes such as technology and theatre.</p>	<p>Research shows that where Arts and Craft are encouraged at school level, learners are less likely to drop out. Results in STEM subjects are also known to increase.</p>
 <p>Action against GBV</p>	<p>Over 177 719 survivors of GBV have been supported with paralegal support, counselling and guidance on how to navigate the system for justice and recourse.</p>	<p>South Africa has instances of GBV which are five times higher than the global average.</p>
 <p>Placemaking</p>	<p>At least 676 informal settlements have been profiled. This includes repairing and monitoring of public utilities; enumeration to provide household numbers; conducting household surveys.</p>	<p>Placemaking helps to improve the living conditions of those most at risk.</p>
 <p>Greening and Environment</p>	<p>21 623 283 square metres of alien invasive vegetation was cleared.</p>	<p>Integrating and promoting the use of vegetation, green spaces and sustainable practices to secure the environment for the future.</p>

Our Why.

Social employment is an important part of the social economy strategy. It actively tackles the mass unemployment issue by supporting a wide range of social and economic interventions.

The most important component of changing the story about social employment is the value of work that is coupled with dignity and self-actualisation. The reason it matters is that to change how the social employment programmes are perceived from a “hand to mouth” to “hand to soil to growth to community”, South Africa needs a developmental agenda that centres a ‘common good’ and ‘community of care’ approach.

Through this, growth pathways to sustainable development and employment for all participants can be unlocked. Furthermore, direct contributions are made to participants’ surrounding areas through social, environmental, psychosocial and economic benefits.



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Call To Action.



Now more than ever before, South Africa needs a collaborative approach and strong partnerships to tackle unemployment by investing in innovative community interventions.

R3.5 billion in public investment has been committed to the Social Employment Fund thus far, with the private sector and donors contributing an additional R67 million to deliver change. This has allowed Strategic Implementing Partners (SIPs) to intensify impact drive and allow for greater spend on skills transfer, tools, equipment and more.

The Social Employment Fund seeks committed partners in the private sector and beyond to take this approach to the next level. The fund has robust screening, reporting and accountability systems able to meet the most stringent of audit requirements – creating a mechanism for fund management that supports these goals.

This is a game-changer funding mechanism that enables resources to do ‘double duty’: supporting social outcomes in relation to health, education, environment and many other important priorities – while eradicating unemployment in South Africa.

Let's work together!

**#SEF #SocialEmploymentFund
#workforcommongood #empoweringlives**



Social Employment Fund Case Studies

Case Study 1



Shaunita Pace: Rebuilding hope and transforming Bertrams, Johannesburg

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 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 personal transformation extended to her family. Her brother, who had battled a five-year drug addiction, found 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.

Community Impact

Bertrams, Johannesburg, reflects a complex interplay of unemployment, poverty, lack of access to education and healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive and sustained efforts from government, non-governmental organisations, and the community itself. Initiatives like the Social Employment Fund (SEF) aim to mitigate some of these issues by providing job opportunities and fostering community development.

The SEF project's influence extends beyond Shaunita's household. It has created job opportunities, restored dignity, and instilled hope within the Bertrams community. Shaunita highlights the project's broad scope, which

includes initiatives in health and wellness, operations and maintenance, and digital mapping. These programs equip community members with essential skills, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

"It has united the community in a common cause: building a better future for the next generations," Shaunita says. "Many are learning new skills through this program, and it has opened their eyes so much."

Shaunita's story exemplifies the transformative power of targeted social employment initiatives. The SEF project has not only provided financial stability but has also rekindled hope and a sense of community among its participants. Shaunita's reflection on the project's future underscores the impact it has had on her life and the lives of those around her: "It's heartbreaking to think that at some point, this project will come to an end. We all wish it could continue because it has brought so much hope and stability into our lives."

By addressing both individual and community needs, the project has been instrumental in lifting people out of poverty, restoring dignity, and fostering resilience. Shaunita's transformation from despair to empowerment highlights the critical role of Planact and SEF in shaping brighter futures for marginalised communities.

Watch Shaunita's story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGAYBCxGxQM>



Case Study 2



Photo credit: Unathi Sihlahla (INMED)

Harnessing Collective Strength For Common Good

At first glance, a performing arts organization and an aquaponics-focused NGO seem worlds apart. However, guided by a shared commitment to community development, INMED South Africa joined forces to launch the Kasi Sellers Network. This initiative aims not only to enhance market opportunities for smallholder farmers but also to create sustainable employment for youth in disadvantaged communities.

Both organisations faced unique challenges – community aquaponic farmers struggled with sales, while creative and artists lacked consistent work opportunities. Recognizing these issues as opportunities for synergy, the Kasi Sellers Network was born.

Utilizing custom-built tricycles equipped with cooler storage, young artists now transport fresh produce and fish from local farmers to markets in communities like Diepsloot, Orange Farm, Soweto in Gauteng and Bultfontein in Free State.

The value of this partnership delivered in impact:

- 1. Economic Empowerment:** By integrating arts with agriculture, the initiative generated year-round employment for artists while expanding market access for smallholder farmers, thereby boosting local economic resilience.
- 2. Food Security:** Direct sales of fresh produce and fish improved access to nutritious food in communities previously underserved by traditional markets, addressing local food security challenges.
- 3. Skills Development:** Participants acquired valuable skills in sales, marketing, and sustainable agriculture, enhancing their employability and fostering entrepreneurial spirit among youth.
- 4. Community Cohesion:** The initiative strengthened community bonds by fostering pride and collaboration among local producers and consumers, promoting a sense of shared responsibility for community well-being. Beyond growing markets for smallholder farmers, increasing revenue and creating employment, increased market opportunities will also strengthen investment opportunities for scaling among smallholder farmers.

The Kasi Sellers Network exemplifies the transformative power of collaboration, creativity, and community-focused initiatives. It bridges gaps between sectors traditionally seen as worlds apart – arts and agriculture—unleashing potential for holistic community development. As this partnership continues to flourish, it underscores the importance of innovative thinking and collective action in addressing societal challenges, ultimately creating pathways to a more inclusive and resilient future for all.



Beyond growing markets for smallholder farmers, increasing revenue and creating employment, the Kasi Seller's network will also strengthen investment opportunities for scaling among smallholder farmers.