

# Rallying South Africa towards the Common Good

South Africa has a rich and diverse social economy that has thrived for decades and offered tremendous value to communities. This includes a host of community-based organisations such as NGOs, hospices, creches, community kitchens, faith-based organisations and others in civil society. These organisations play a highly active and important part in augmenting the role of the state in addressing challenges related to health, education, gender-based violence, nutrition and more. It is mainly these organisations that the Social Employment Fund partners with.

The Social Employment Fund (SEF) is managed by the Industrial Development Corporation. Since its inception just over one year ago, over 89,000 people have been provided with meaningful work in a number of areas which benefit communities as a whole. Tackling unemployment needs a 'whole of society' approach however.

**So now we want to partner with you, too.**



**‘Social Employment’ is an important part of the social economy strategy. It actively tackles the mass unemployment issue we are currently facing in our country, by supporting a wide range of social and civic actors and allowing them to create initiatives with greater scale and greater impact.**

The SEF was set up to strengthen partnerships with non-state actors, as part of a ‘whole of society’ approach to tackling unemployment. It aims to strengthen and augment the existing efforts of civil society organisations undertaking ‘work for the common good’ in communities – focusing on health, education, early childhood development, informal settlement upgrading and more.

In a South African context, there is no shortage of work to be done when it comes to addressing the many social barriers in our society. The SEF aims to support the considerable creativity, institutional capabilities and broader initiatives that already exist in the wider society, to engage people in work that serves the common good.



Smallholder farmers are introduced to hi-tech low-cost agricultural innovation to help their community farms reach sustainability.

## How does the Social Employment Fund work?

Following requests for proposals, Strategic Implementing Partners (SIPs) are contracted to deliver work that contributes to the common good.

The SIPs are required to employ at least 1,000 participants in work programmes that are for the common good. Participants are paid for 16 hours of work each week. This provides ‘support scaffolding’ that encourages complimentary livelihood and enterprise activity.

At present, the SEF is working with 35 SIPs, who each operate in a variety of thematic areas such as community health, education, greening, placemaking, arts and culture, etc. These SIPs in turn partner with over 1,000 community organisations and structures.

It is these partnerships that create real, tangible and measurable economic change within communities. With the continued partnerships between our SIPs, the IDC and government, the SEF will continue to fund impactful community initiatives that aim to create work that serves the common good.

## Building Agency at Community Level

Participation in work not only provides much-needed incomes, it also gives people work experience. This builds capabilities such as accountability, time management, teamwork and task management – often along with hard skills too. These are vital for their chances of getting a job in the wider labour market – but also enhances their chances of becoming self-employed or starting an enterprise.

To date, at least 65,000 people have participated in the SEF across the country. They are mainly youth and the workforce is 70% female. SIPs carefully design work programmes which match community needs while also enhancing the skills of participants, to boost their pathways out of unemployment.

### Examples of Skills Learned from Participation in Social Employment Programmes

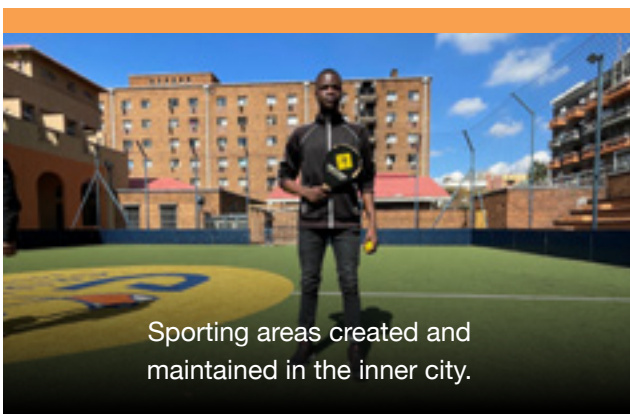
 <p><b>Health and Care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-based care for the old and frail</li> <li>• Technical knowledge to create awareness on topics such as sexual and reproductive health, family planning, HIV/AIDS, adherence to chronic medication.</li> <li>• Maternal health (latching, nutrition, immunisations)</li> <li>• Provision of psycho-social support and basic counselling skills</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Food, Nutrition and Agriculture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable, organic farming techniques</li> <li>• Crop preparation, rotation, composting, covering, mulching, pest control</li> <li>• Establishing and care for community food gardens including planting, weeding and harvesting</li> <li>• Soil preparation and soil testing</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running of an ECD centre</li> <li>• Play group facilitation</li> <li>• Facilitating support classes and sports activities</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Safety and Action against GBV</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills related to the offering of psycho-social support to survivors</li> <li>• Paralegal services, key processes on the road to justice</li> <li>• Community engagement and awareness raising</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Cleaning and Greening</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of invasive alien species and their removal</li> <li>• Beneficiation of the biomass</li> <li>• Waste sorting, safe removal and recycling</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Community and Public Art</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation skills</li> <li>• Social media usage</li> <li>• Showcasing and performance</li> <li>• Teaching Arts and Crafts</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Digital Inclusion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a computer</li> <li>• Data gathering and survey process</li> <li>• Research skills</li> </ul>

## Case Study One: Breathing Life Into the Inner City of Johannesburg

The Johannesburg Inner City Partnership (JICP) is a Strategic Implementing Partner working in partnership with the City of Johannesburg to regenerate the inner city. This is a multi-faceted challenge: urban management, addressing homelessness, placemaking and greening, youth recreation and more. JICP works with 12 NGO partners and employ 1,600 participants. Partners such Urban Space Management, Clean City SA and Constitutional Hill employ participants to clean streets, parks and other public spaces, and to carry out maintenance and landscaping.

Via the SEF, Urban Space Management employs 360 participants to work in Hillbrow, Maboneng and Berea. Programmes Lead, Nonkululeko Hadebe notes that when participants do beautification and cleanliness work, crime drops, visitors increase, businesses thrive and eventually investment value increase. Public space activation is vital to urban regeneration. Boundless City integrates public art, park maintenance and safety measures in Ernest Oppenheimer Park with a basketball program for youth. Sport for Social Change provide after-school programs like street racket, squash, skateboarding, and boxing, but also provide lessons in gardening, life skills, and chess in public spaces across the Inner City.

But this is also about active citizenry.



Sporting areas created and maintained in the inner city.

Another partner, Water for the Future focuses on rehabilitating the Jukskei River, removing invasive alien species, providing environmental education and supporting small business opportunities. Fatima Haniff, 54, a SEF participant, says: “As a resident in the community for the past 30 years, I have watched with great concern as we deteriorated and degenerated as a community. This initiative is providing me an opportunity to better myself not only mentally but physically as well. In the recent months I have been able to rekindle my interests in nature and my passion for working with community and conservation environment.”

***“The success of this [JICP] partnership has been largely because of the efficiencies and collaborative support of the JICP – allowing the Water for the Future team to learn from their years of experience, to address some of the high levels of unemployment in our community, by encouraging people with no work experience to learn the most basic of skills. The IDC’s Social Employment Fund acknowledges the work being done in this space and have allocated budget for training, allowing opportunities to change mindsets and learning about the green economy. The power of stimulating green economic activity is that it leads to investment, jobs and partnerships, which in turn will uplift communities and allow South African Ubuntu heritage to thrive.”***



**Robert ‘Robbie’ Brozin,  
Co-founder Nando’s South Africa**

## Case Study Two: Sisterhood Advocates in Action

Hlanganisa Institute for Development Southern Africa, is a SIP of the Social Employment Fund. Hlanganisa has trained 2,662 ‘Sisterhood Advocates’ as para-legals. The Sisterhood Advocates are known as ‘Pinkies’ in their communities because of the pink bibs they wear. They are providing support to survivors of gender-based violence in 150 communities in Free State, North West, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. They are often placed in police stations, courts and community halls.

“The Social Employment Fund has allowed us to expand our work several times over. Before, we were able to handle an average of 391 GBV cases per month. Now, we can handle an average of 6,000 each month. Over 15,000 cases have been completed and over 25,000 survivors of GBV have received support.” Bongiwe Ndondo – MD Hlanganisa Development Institute.

This illustrates how Social Employment can take good work already being done to significant new levels of scale.

***“When you observe rising statistics, consider how much higher those numbers might soar without the vital impact of programs like the Social Employment Fund.”***

-Ms. Lebogang Ramafoko, Executive Director - Oxfam South Africa

Victims of GBV often find the formal channels of recourse to be cold, time consuming and unkind towards their plight and would rather speak to a community elder, neighbour or friend. Hlanganisa recognises this social dynamic and has put in place a paralegal training programme to empower these community resources as ‘sisterhood advocates’.



Sisterhood Advocates or ‘Pinkies’ in the field.



Sisterhood advocates receiving awards at their graduation ceremony.

In this way, survivors of GBV can not only talk to a sister, but someone armed with the right knowledge.

The Sisterhood advocates are being snapped up in the labour market because of their skills – including in the Department of Justice. Whilst this causes attrition in the project, it speaks to the success of the programme in enhancing employability.

## Case Study Three: Tackling Hunger and Food Security

A hungry child cannot learn, an undernourished adult is a shell of themselves, yet up to 2.1 million South Africans experience regular hunger. SEF has several partners tackling this challenge.

Seriti Institute has built a multifunctional agri-node in Deelpan, North West. Itumeleng Khoza, SEF Field Administrator, explains:

“The agri-node is attracting customers and putting our community on the map. These community gardens contribute to a healthy lifestyle by providing fresh and safe vegetables. This helps increase wellness and overall physical health. Our community will be healthy and strong and there will be less traffic in the clinic. And because people are working there is less crime.” In addition, the agri-node creates a range of enterprise spinoffs like seedling production and composting, creating opportunities for participants to transition into such activity.

Solidaridad Network South Africa focuses on smallholder community farmers. Their thesis is

simple: empower smallholder farmers with good low-cost technology, best practices and access to markets. Their SEF programme has created 1,650 jobs in Gauteng, Eastern Cape and the North West, providing families with a more sustainable source of income, contributing to household food security and community development. “The outcomes reflect our commitment to reducing unemployment, boosting skills, and advancing social wellbeing” says Sade Balogun, Solidaridad’s SEF project manager. “It is a testament to the positive change we can achieve when we invest in people and their potential, fostering a legacy of skill and empowerment that will last long beyond the project’s closure.”







*“I love seeing the children grow and develop through our Early Childhood Development centre. At our centre, we help children understand the basics such as holding a pen and how to speak clearly. We also teach children about cleaning themselves every day and make sure that they are getting nutritious meals, as some families do not have money for food. We share with guardians the importance of immunisations and make sure that children are kept up to date with theirs. We are also able to pick up a lot of things with children that guardians might miss, such as if a child has a speech impairment or hearing difficulties. I would like to say thank you to SEF as I now receive some money for the work I do after years of volunteering.”*

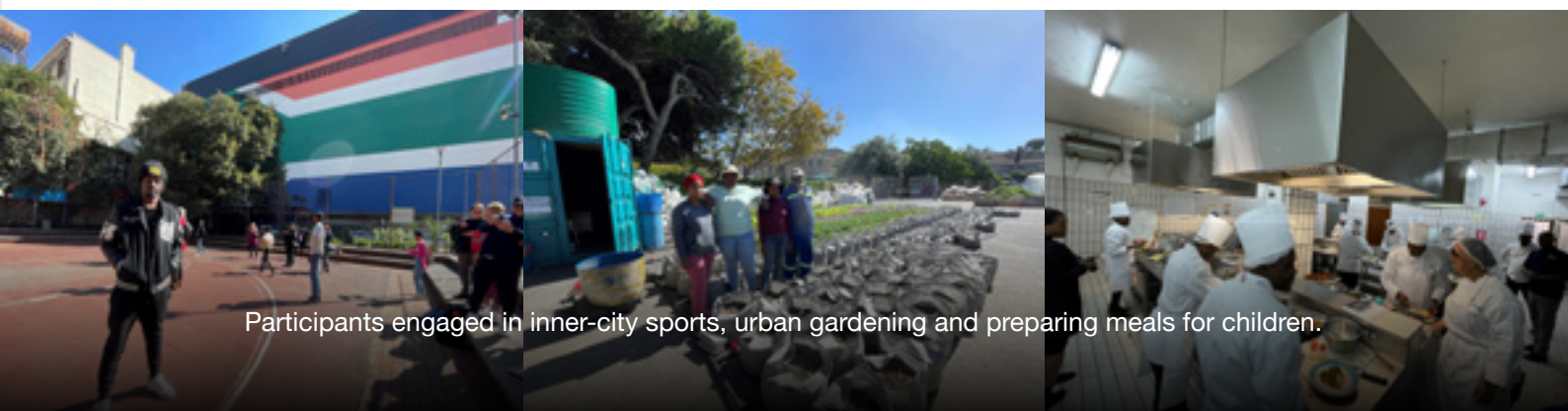


**Makhosazana Mbelu (47 years)**  
participant within the SIP,  
Impande Yotshani



Solidaridad SEF Participants tackling food security.

Community Level Impact	Example of Impact to date	Importance of Impact
 <p><b>Health and Care</b></p>	<p>31,300 patients tracked and assisted with taking their chronic medication. This work also involves educating the patient 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 strain on the public health system.</p>
 <p><b>Education</b></p>	<p>89,000 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><b>Arts and Craft</b></p>	<p>41,530 school children reached through Art Programmes</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><b>Action against GBV</b></p>	<p>Over 25,000 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><b>Food Security</b></p>	<p>At least 6,700 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 enterprise.</p>
 <p><b>Placemaking</b></p>	<p>At least 760 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>



Participants engaged in inner-city sports, urban gardening and preparing meals for children.



SEF Participants of NaliB'ali conducting a reading class.

## A Call to Action

We need a Team South Africa approach to addressing unemployment, to address the many social challenges faced – and to seize opportunities for innovation and community agency in doing so.

R2,4 billion in public investment has been committed to the SEF thus far – and now the private sector and donors are also getting involved. R67 million has been contributed so far, thus augmenting work programmes. This has allowed SIPs to intensify their impact and allow for greater spend on skills-transfer, tools, equipment and more.

The Social Employment Fund offers a unique opportunity for a ‘whole of society’ approach to tackle the scale of the problem. So right now, the SEF and its SIPs are seeking 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.

For Corporate Social Investment (CSI), Foundations, Impact Funds or other forms of funding – here is a mechanism that enables funds to do ‘double duty’: supporting social outcomes in relation to health, education and many other important priorities – while supporting employment in the process.

**Let's do it together.**

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