



FACT SHEET

The Social Employment Network: working – together – for the common good

A learning and support network that strengthens partnerships, builds capacity, and shares best practices to maximise the impact of public employment programmes.

CONTEXT

South Africa faces a deeply complex unemployment crisis. Solutions often fail to scale because they adopt a one-size-fits all approach to addressing unemployment; local nuances are neglected. Civil society organisations (CSOs) operating at a local scale can play a crucial role in successfully scaling the impact of solutions to unemployment. Recognising this, the South African Presidency set up the Social Employment Fund (SEF) as a public employment programme to reduce unemployment through the creation of meaningful work.

The Social Employment Network (SEN) was established as a learning and support network for the SEF to foster collaboration, enhance capacity, and facilitate knowledge-sharing among the nearly 40 CSOs participating in the programme.

The SEN provides a strategic framework to strengthen relationships between CSOs and funders, extending the impact of the SEF beyond expectation.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Support CSOs in becoming key development partners, building networks, and co-developing community solutions; and strengthen public employment programmes by catalysing and maintain collaboration and learning among strategic implementing partners.

INNOVATION

The SEN connects grassroots efforts with formal governance for effective collaboration on outcomes that deepen impact, like a real-time online system to track both quantitative and qualitative outcomes or working groups to measure the social value of job placements.

STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

The Economic Development Partnership convenes the SEN on behalf of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). Activities of the SEN include regular convening of Strategic Implementing Partners (SIPs) in both online and in-person settings to foster trust and open communication and enable co-production among SIPs. The SEN now includes peer-led working groups that promote knowledge sharing; continuous feedback between SIPs and the IDC to enhance adaptive programming, and a digital repository of best practices, all of which helps partners learn and scale their impact. Ongoing innovation and partnerships steadily expand the SEF's reach, creating meaningful work for communities.

PARTNERS

- Industrial Development Corporation
- DG Murray Trust



EXPECTED RESULTS

The SEN empowers SIPs to deliver their work for the SEF more effectively and demonstrate measurable impact in their communities.

By fostering stronger networks among civil society, government, and the private sector, the SEN breaks down silos and encourages collaborative solutions to unemployment. SIPs are equipped to share compelling impact stories, attracting new resources and building credibility.

As public perception shifts, CSOs are increasingly recognised as essential partners in tackling unemployment. Ongoing regional engagement and training further embed capacity and collaboration, ensuring that solutions to unemployment emanating from this work are scalable, localised, and sustainable.

CONTACT

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