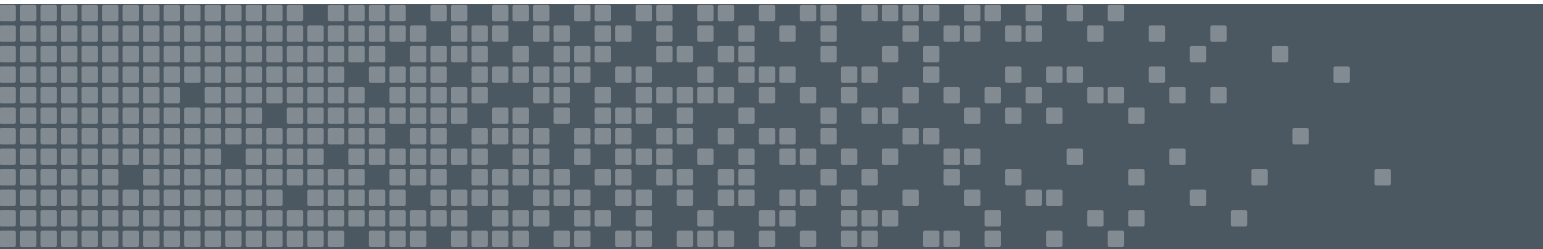


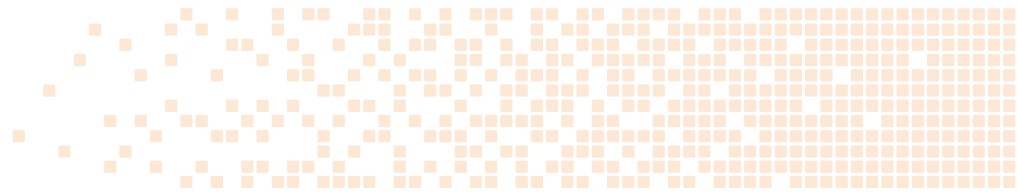
# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



JANUARY -  
MARCH  
2023-2024

**Vol. 3**

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# Editor's Note

## Dear Stakeholder, Welcome to our Quarterly Newsletter



**Luncedo Njezula**  
Editor

✉ [luncedo@sacities.net](mailto:luncedo@sacities.net)

We are excited to present the latest South African Cities Network (SACN) online newsletter edition. We have gathered informative content on various topics that are currently affecting our cities.

One of the highlights of this edition is the feature on the engagement that was convened on the implications of the draft white paper on Human Settlements on local government. The SACN, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the City Support Programme (CSP), and the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) hosted this collaborative event, which shows the stakeholders' commitment to shaping the future of our cities.

We also discuss a practical guide on building political and administrative capacity to respond collaboratively to community safety in our cities. This resource offers valuable insights for city leaders and officials on effectively addressing safety concerns in urban areas.

Moreover, we present research and market intelligence on Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises in our cities. These insights provide valuable information for supporting the growth of businesses in our urban centres.

Another highlight is the spotlight on the City of Joburg's pilot Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach. This innovative strategy aims to bridge the gap between the state's capabilities and developmental mandate, offering a new way to tackle public problems.

Furthermore, we share information on SACN's fundraising initiatives, which are crucial for supporting the network's work and ensuring its sustainability.

By contributing to these efforts, you can help shape the future of our cities.

Lastly, we highlight the events, workshops, and webinars SACN and its partners attended and hosted during the quarter. These learning opportunities provide a platform for city leaders and officials to exchange ideas and best practices for urban development.

We hope you find this edition of the newsletter informative and inspiring as we continue to work towards building better cities for all.

Thank you for your continued support and readership.

*Luncedo Njezula*

“By contributing to these efforts, you can help shape the future of our cities.”







## White Paper for Human Settlements

On 18 December 2023, the draft White Paper for Human Settlements was gazetted for public comment. To convene local government around a joint submission, on 22 February, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), South African Cities Network (SACN) and the National Treasury's Cities Support Programme (CSP) joined forces with the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) to host a "City Engagement on the Draft White Paper for Human Settlements". This engagement brought together city officials primarily from human settlements directorates but also other relevant departments such as city planning, infrastructure, technical services, economic development, strategic planning, supply chain management, budget, etc, to combine perspectives on the Draft White Paper. The conveners used the discussion to develop a shared set of comments based on the Draft White Paper's critical gaps and recommendations for strengthening them.

The session was structured around four major themes regarding local government's role in human settlements, namely:

 **The Role of Local Government in Human Settlements: Accreditation and Assignment**

 **The Shift to Incremental Housing and Support**

 **Small-Scale Affordable Rental Housing**

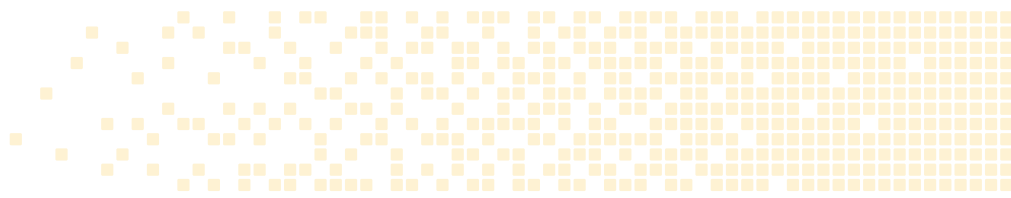
 **Stable and Inclusive Property Markets**

During the discussion, it was agreed that the Draft White Paper was too broad and failed to provide bold, focused, and prioritised levers and actions to transform the residential property market and human settlements radically. Practitioners agreed that the White Paper needed to be more precise and more deliberate around the future trajectory of human settlements in South Africa, particularly around the shifting role of the state from provider to enabler, supporter and facilitator, by outlining the various implications and mechanisms required to do this, especially at the local government level.

All comments from the discussion were captured and consolidated into a joint submission submitted to the DHS on behalf of local government.



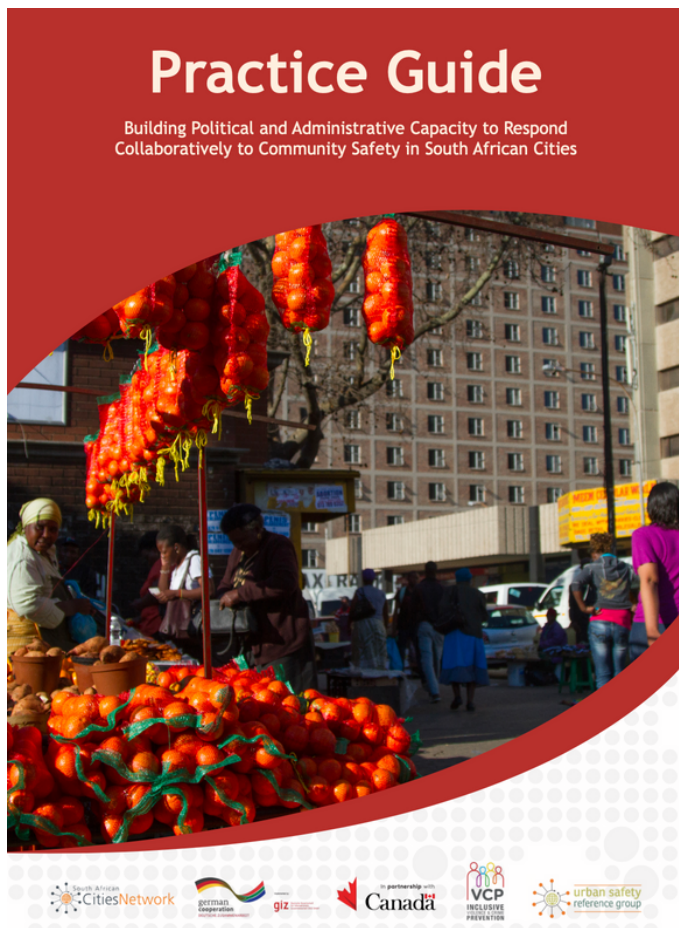




## Practice Guide on Building Political and Administrative Capacity to Respond Collaboratively to Community Safety in South African Cities.

In this Quarter, the Inclusive Cities programme, as part of the work of the Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG), also developed the Practice Guide on Building Political and Administrative Capacity to Respond Collaboratively to Community Safety in South African Cities. The need arose from the imperative to embed collaborative and multidisciplinary safety practices, which has become more urgent due to increasing political instability at the municipal level. It aims to improve the capacity of cities' political and administrative arms, collaborate on safety and foster a shared vision that resonates across city functions. The Practice Guide is a package of practical tools that officials within a municipality can use to engage towards a shared vision of safety in a city. For political leadership, it clarifies their critical advocacy role at the community, budget and council process levels to influence in favour of 'safety as everyone's business'.

The Practice Guide is proudly co-created with the Cities of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, with input from the broader USRG. While it is no silver bullet to challenges associated with political-administrative collaboration, it does provide a vantage into the varying experiences of cities that may offer lessons and techniques for building convergence and continuity for municipal safety governance. It is also a conversation starter, and it helps to get on the same page internally about critical concepts and sites of intervention and direct influence for the city. It is also a valuable template for institutionalising or designing safety into a city's planning, budgeting, resourcing and implementation as a cross-cutting issue impacting overall development.



or [click here](#) to  
get your copy



## The 5th Annual State of Environment Information Community of Practice (SEI-CoP) Meeting



15 February 2024

State of  
Environment  
Information  
Annual  
Community of  
Practice Meeting



Our Urban Data Manager, Majaha Dlamini, was invited to speak at the 5th Annual State of Environment Information Community of Practice (SEI-CoP) Meeting by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. The SEI-CoP meetings provide an annual platform to share knowledge and experience on the state of environment information provision and associated systems. The SEI-CoP, thus, offers an invaluable opportunity to influence and inform the Department's initiatives in this regard to ensure that they remain modern, functional, user-friendly and of a quality comparable to the best local and international web-based information sources.

The 5th SEI-CoP took place on 15 February 2024. He spoke about supporting the planning, management, monitoring, and reporting needs of South African Cities through data, such as the South African Cities Open Data Almanac or SCODA. This city-centric data portal provides evidence, analysis, and insight into current and comparable information about South African Cities.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SCODA**



South African Cities  
Open Data Almanac



## Tailoring support interventions and initiatives to the unique needs of SMMEs.

This edition provides insights into research and market intelligence conducted as part of developments and interventions in our cities, focusing on Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). We scrutinize the pivotal role of SMMEs and evaluate the supportive infrastructure they rely on. From navigating economic fluctuations to overcoming systemic challenges, we explore the resilience strategies adopted by these enterprises. Moreover, we explore the efficacy of the SMME support landscape, probing into initiatives and interventions designed to bolster their growth and sustainability.

South Africa's SMMEs are of interest to cities as they are the sector that will provide the most job opportunities. As such, their support constitutes a significant lever in the inclusive transformation of the economy. SMMEs have an enormous potential to contribute meaningfully to job creation and the inclusion of vulnerable groups and individuals into the mainstream economy. However, this potential is yet to be fully realised as the sector faces multiple challenges, including access to finance, shortage of skills development and training, marketing, and the quality of the business environment within which SMMEs operate.




Under the Township and Informal Economy sub-programme, the SACN undertook research exploring the support landscape available for SMMEs operating within the South African economy, including the sources and types of support. Although not exhaustive, the paper series demonstrates a mix of support available to SMMEs, varying in type and eligibility criteria. Informed by case studies and impact assessments, the paper proposes that there should be a better alignment of support interventions and initiatives with the unique needs of SMMEs, such that they are demand-driven. This policy intervention is expected to enable the estimated 3.2 million SMMEs in the country to achieve their full potential in contributing to inclusive economic growth.

**NO.2/2023**

### Resilience of SMMEs in South Africa: A Framework for Understanding and Mitigating Exposure to Shocks and Stressors

Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) are vital to the South African economy, generating substantial employment and contributing to the nation's overall economic growth. However, recent shock events, including floods, civil unrest, and load shedding, have highlighted the vulnerability of SMMEs and the need for a more resilient business landscape. This paper aims to investigate the resilience of SMMEs in South Africa, providing a draft framework to understand and enhance their capacity to prevent and mitigate risks associated with these events.

Through a desktop approach, including case studies and previous impact analysis, as well as discussions with other researchers and practitioners, we assess the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of SMMEs. The findings reveal that SMMEs face numerous challenges, such as limited infrastructure and insufficient risk management capabilities. Building on these insights, we propose a multifaceted framework that focuses on risk prevention, mitigation, and adaptation strategies. By integrating the perspectives of practitioners and policymakers, this paper seeks to inform the development of targeted interventions and policies that foster resilience among South African SMMEs, enhancing their ability to withstand and recover from shocks and ultimately supporting the long-term sustainability of the national economy.



After reviewing the impacts of recent shock events such as KZN floods, unrest and pandemic, and ongoing stressors such as crime and load shedding on SMMEs, a framework for understanding SMME resilience is proposed and presented as a practitioner guide for assessing and building SMME resilience.

The paper series titled 'Resilience of SMMEs in South Africa: A Framework for Understanding and Mitigating Exposure to Shocks and Stressors' takes stock of the impact of recent shock events, including floods, civil unrest, and load shedding, on SMMEs. The paper highlights the vulnerability of SMMEs and the need for a more resilient business landscape. It offers a framework to understand and enhance the capacity of SMMEs to prevent and mitigate risks associated with shocks. The framework focuses on risk prevention mitigation and adaptation strategies.

A key lesson in this regard is that strengthening municipal services (infrastructure, public safety, and environmental management) is vital for SMMEs to thrive in the face of shocks. The paper series on SMMEs is available on the South African Cities Network website.





# Sustainable and Resilient Cities



**Liteboho Makhele**  
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Sustainable and  
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## Cities' Lunchtime Chats: Unpacking the Urban Nexus for a Sustainable Future

Africa's cities are on the rise. Rapid urbanisation brings a wealth of opportunities but also a complex web of challenges - water scarcity and insecurity, overflowing landfills and the devastating impacts of climate change all threaten the well-being of city dwellers. These issues are not isolated problems; they are intricately linked, forming an "urban nexus" that demands innovative solutions.

The South African Cities Network (SACN) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) are tackling this complexity head-on with the Cities' Lunchtime Chats: The Urban Nexus Edition, offering a unique platform for fostering dialogue and igniting innovation.

Imagine a city where managing waste leads to a more secure food supply and a thriving environment or where waste management transforms from a burden to an opportunity, with informal recyclers playing a vital role in a circular economy. Water security depends not just on infrastructure but also on healthy ecosystems that naturally filter and retain water. Or imagine a city where nature-based solutions enhance biodiversity and bolster resilience to climate change. These are just some possibilities that emerge when we understand the urban nexus—the idea that urban challenges are deeply intertwined.

The Lunchtime Chats series brings together diverse voices – city practitioners, leading experts, and community changemakers – to unpack this complex web.

These engaging online discussions delve into critical issues facing African cities, including:



**Water Resilience: Water scarcity and climate change significantly threaten African cities. The Chats explore effective water stewardship strategies and the power of nature-based solutions for adaptation.**



**Waste Management: Turning waste into a resource is critical to a sustainable future. The series showcases innovative approaches to tackling waste management challenges while addressing food security and environmental protection.**



**Just Energy Transition: Shifting towards clean energy sources is essential for a healthy planet and thriving cities. The Chats will explore pathways for a just and equitable transition for all.**



**Climate Change Adaptation: From land restoration to drought resilience, the series equips cities with the knowledge and tools to build adaptability and flourish in a changing climate.**

# Sustainable and Resilient Cities

The first Lunchtime Chat, held in March 2024, coincided with World Water Day and National Water Week and focused on the interconnectedness of water, nature, and climate change.

## CITIES' LUNCHTIME CHATS: THE URBAN NEXUS EDITION



### UNPACKING THE URBAN NEXUS: CONNECTING WATER, NATURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

27  
MAR  
12:30 - 2:00PM

Join us as we unpack the interconnectedness of water, nature and climate change. We will explore effective water stewardship and the power of nature-based solutions for climate adaptation. Our guest speakers represent South and East African Cities and organisations working on urban water resilience and stewardship as well as biodiversity projects.

The upcoming sessions promise to be equally engaging.

### CITIES' LUNCHTIME CHATS: THE NEXUS EDITION

26  
APRIL  
12:30PM - 2:00PM

#### BEYOND THE BIN: TURNING WASTE INTO ENVIRONMENTAL WINS

In April we will commemorate Earth Day with a focus on Waste, Food and the Environment nexus as we showcase innovative strategies in tackling waste management challenges, addressing food security and protecting the environment.

**Speakers**

 <b>Dr. Tamlynn Fleetwood</b> Researcher and MEL Specialist Durban University of Technology (DUT)	 <b>Sifiso Gumbi</b> Urban Surfer: Informal Recycling Solutions	 <b>Fundisile Guleni</b> Director for Community Services King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality	 <b>Jokudu Guya</b> Professional Officer Urban Systems Unit ICLEI Africa
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[REGISTER NOW](#)

### CITIES' LUNCHTIME CHATS: THE NEXUS EDITION

23  
MAY  
12:30PM - 2:00PM

#### BE PART OF THE PLAN: CO-CREATING BIODIVERSE CITIES FOR ALL

"Be Part of the Plan" for International Day for Biological Diversity in May as we dive into the Urbanisation and Biodiversity nexus discussion and discover ways cities are harmonising urban development with thriving ecosystems.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

### CITIES' LUNCHTIME CHATS: THE NEXUS EDITION

27  
JUNE  
12:30PM - 2:00PM

#### ADAPTING AND BUILDING RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

We observe World Environment Day in June. Join us as we converse and share insights on land restoration and drought resilience and learn how cities can build adaptability and flourish in the face of environmental challenges.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



## City of Joburg Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) Pilot

Addressing the gap between the state's capability, functions, and developmental mandate is a priority in the current South African Cities Network (SACN) strategic business plan. This year, the SACN Well Governed Cities Programme is piloting a capability development approach called Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) in the City of Johannesburg.

The Building State Capability Programme at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government developed this innovative approach to solving "wicked" or seemingly intractable public problems.

Since July 2023, teams of practitioners nominated by senior management in the city's Group Citizen Relationship and Urban Management (CRUM) and Group Strategy, Policy Coordination and Relations (GSPCR) have been guided by Harvard-trained PDIA coach and facilitator Peter Harrington in applying the PDIA methodology to three problems:

**1. Region E: Illegal dumping**

**2. Region E: Illegal recycling**

**3. Region F: Hijacked buildings**

The teams have been meeting weekly and presented updates on their progress to CRUM and GSPCR management at update meetings in August, November 2023, and January 2024. During February and March, the teams completed the final steps of the PDIA Pilot, namely identifying possible solutions to their nominated problems and beginning to implement them.



**Danga Mughogho, SACN**



**Peter Harrington, PDIA Coach and Facilitator**



## Community of Practice Event 12 March – Long-term Financial Strategies and Local Government Budget and Financial Management Reform: Lessons Learnt and New Developments.

On 12 March 2024, the SACN Community of Practice in Urban Governance and Municipal Finance held an online seminar on lessons learned in implementing Long-Term Financial Strategies (LTFS) in select municipalities in South Africa, following the previous workshop on 12 October 2023.

Tania Ajam, Associate Professor in Public Policy, Finance and Economics at the University of Stellenbosch School of Public Leadership and a former Commissioner and Director of Research of the Financial and Fiscal Commission, also facilitated this second webinar. The keynote presentation, by Jan Hattingh, Chief Director: Local Government Budget Analysis, National Treasury, was titled "Lessons learnt in LTFS implementation and new developments in Local Government Budget and Financial Management Reform."

The respondents were Gert Van der Linde, Senior Specialist at Inca Asset Managers, who has been working with municipalities to implement LTFS and spoke on the importance of linking a long-term financial strategy to a municipality's planning processes, and Felix Lotter, CFO of Bitou Municipality, who reflected on the experience of reconciling these two, sometimes contradictory goals in the municipal environment.

# 12 MARCH 2024

## 12:30PM-2:00PM | MS TEAMS

SACN Community of Practice on Urban Governance and Municipal Finance Invites you to join us for a Panel Discussion on:

**LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REFORM: LESSONS LEARNT AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS.**



**Jan Hattingh**  
Chief Director:  
Local Government Budget Analysis  
National Treasury



**Gert van der Linde**  
Senior Specialist  
INCA Portfolio Managers

## **The City of Ekurhuleni elects Ald Nkosindiphile Xhakaza as Executive Mayor**

We would like to congratulate Alderman Nkosindiphile Xhakaza on his election as the Executive Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni.



**The City of Ekurhuleni  
Mayoral Committee - [Click Here](#)**

# Fundraising Initiative



**Pholisa Magqibelo**  
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The SACN's five-year strategic business plan outlines ambitious objectives to support cities in transitioning towards a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable socio-economic paradigm. Central to these objectives is ensuring a well-governed network and securing the organization's financial viability. The SACN is dedicated to enhancing its capabilities and diversifying revenue streams to realise these ambitions.

In line with our mission, the SACN actively pursues funding opportunities from various sources, including grants from international and local donors, corporate sponsorships, philanthropic donations, and revenue generation from our services.

## Our Value Proposition:

-  **A robust Network of Cities providing a platform for the exchange of best practices among municipalities.**
-  **City Support through actionable Research and Learning Events.**
-  **Advisory services offering commissioned research and pilot programs tailored to municipalities' needs.**
-  **Establishment of Partnerships dedicated to urban and rural development.**



# Fundraising Initiative

## Partnership Project Highlights

### Open Data Institute (ODI) and Microsoft Peer Learning Network

The SACN participated in the learning network to exchange best practices with other cities and stakeholders. The aim was to support cities in tackling climate resilience or sustainability challenges through data stewardship and data use.



### Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH GIZ Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme

The VCP Programme is in its 9th year of providing technical and financial support to the SACN's Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG). The partnership has contributed to efforts to achieve the national development priority of creating a safer South Africa.



### World Resource Institute Water Resilience Project in the City of Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

The SACN partnered with the WRI to conduct research and unique geospatial analysis to improve understanding of urban water resilience challenges and critical adaptation pathways for Nelson Mandela Bay and the City of Johannesburg. The research has led to developing urban water resilience action plans that identify measures cities would take to address their water risks holistically.



### US Embassy, New York City and SACN Partnership on Urban Safety

The SACN partnered with the New York City Mayor's Office to END Gender-Based Violence office to strengthen cultural ties by sharing best practices, approaches, and systems on gender mainstreaming and GBV prevention, increasing the capacity to apply evidence and evidence-informed decision-making. With funding from the US Embassy, the SACN and New York City have hosted a series of learning events with city practitioners to support South African cities in tackling Gender-based violence.



## How to get involved in our work!

- 👉 Explore partnership opportunities to advance urban and rural development initiatives.
- 👉 Participate in our learning events to contribute to shaping our agenda.
- 👉 Advocate for our mission within your networks.
- 👉 Reach out to explore any of our services and discover how we can work together.

For more details on our offerings and partnership opportunities, please visit our website, [www.sacities.net](http://www.sacities.net)

# Team News & Events

## LearningPlanet Festival 24-27 January 2024



Brenda Kessler



Dominic Regester



Liteboho Makhele



Ashwini Kumar  
Dhakal



Carolina Escobar-  
Tello

Sustainable and Resilient Cities Programme Manager Liteboho Makhele participated in the LearningPlanet Festival hosted by the LearningPlanet Alliance. The session on Greening School Grounds and Outdoor Learning took place on 26 January. She joined other experts in the field and explored some case studies about the benefits of greening school environments, sustainable landscaping practices, and the integration of outdoor spaces to advance nature-based education.

## SEAD-SA Community of Practice Workshop 13-14 March 2024

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), National Treasury and UK-FCDO, together with their partners, the Metros, South African Revenue Services (SARS), UNUWIDER, StatsSA, South African Local Government Association (SALGA), South African Cities Network (SACN), and the University of the Free State (UFS) hosted the SEAD-SA Community of Practice Workshop on how local data can be leveraged to support more inclusive and vibrant city economies with lessons from the UK's Office for National Statistics.

The Spatial Economic Activity Data South Africa or SEAD-SA Community of Practice aims to generate new knowledge and exchange of ideas alongside better practice in strengthening the economic performance of South African cities. The purpose is to widen the circle of researchers, policymakers and practitioners interested in the economy of cities by building a vibrant network of enthusiasts and experts.







As our loyal readers of our Quarterly Newsletter, we would love your feedback! Please [click here](#).



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