



epilepsy

SOUTH AFRICA

Services + Programmes

Epilepsy South Africa – The organisation

Epilepsy SA was established in 1967 as the South African National Epilepsy League (SANEL). It is the only national organisation in South Africa offering specialised and comprehensive services to persons with and affected by epilepsy. Our aim is to enhance and improve the quality of life of our target group.

The organisation comprises a coordinating National Office based in Cape Town and six regional Branches: Western Cape (Cape Town and Wellington), South Cape/Karoo (Knysna), Eastern Cape (East London), Gauteng (Springs and Johannesburg), Free State & North West (Parys) and Mpumalanga & Limpopo (Dullstroom and Elandsdoorn), public more than anything else.



The National Office provides services in unserved areas (most notably the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) until a service point can be established.

Advocacy and human rights

Epilepsy South Africa is a vigorous advocate for the realisation of the human rights of persons with epilepsy as defined in South African legislation and the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

- Advocacy and human rights development is initiated via training programmes at the individual and trainer levels. The Epilepsy South Africa training programme is approved for CPD points with the SACSSP. The training initiative enables persons with epilepsy to become self-advocates to realise their human rights.
- Public education and awareness initiatives aim to inform and educate people about epilepsy to increase understanding and acceptance and decrease discrimination and stigmatisation. Many myths and misconceptions still exist about the condition preventing persons with epilepsy to realise their rights on an equal basis with other citizens.
- Human rights support services aims to advance the realisation of the rights of persons with epilepsy at a macro-level by influencing policies and legislation and at a micro-level by supporting individual cases of human rights abuses.
- Information services: Epilepsy South Africa provides information via our website, social media, talks and training and an electronic library housed in the National Office.

Social Development services

- **Counselling:** A key service offered is individual, group and family counselling of persons with epilepsy, their families and caregivers, including information dissemination, epilepsy management and successful integration and inclusion of persons with epilepsy in society.
- **Health and welfare services:** Epilepsy South Africa recognises the need for a more proactive approach to community wellness and thus focuses on issues such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), adherence to treatment regimens and general health promotion. Epilepsy SA Free State & North West offers home-based care services in partnership with government.

- **Day care facilities and stimulation groups:** Services are offered at care centres on weekdays focusing on stimulation, care and protective work initiatives, offering families respite and the opportunity to engage in economic activities.
- **Child and youth development:** Children and young persons with epilepsy represent a particularly vulnerable group in need of specialised services. We provide awareness talks and epilepsy education workshops to enable self-advocacy and create understanding and thus acceptance of epilepsy as a condition. Epilepsy South Africa launched a youth development programme in September 2016.
- **Lifeskills training:** We empower persons with epilepsy (including children and youth) with skills associated with managing and living a better quality of life. Such training enables the target group to reach their goals and fulfil their ambitions.
- **Food security projects:** Food security plays an important social development role, particularly in impoverished communities. Epilepsy South Africa's vegetable gardening projects support food security while creating potential for economic development and independence.

Residential care

Epilepsy SA accommodates persons with epilepsy (and other disabilities) at six residential care centres.

Services include a safe working environment in protective workshops, stimulation programmes, social work services and medical care.

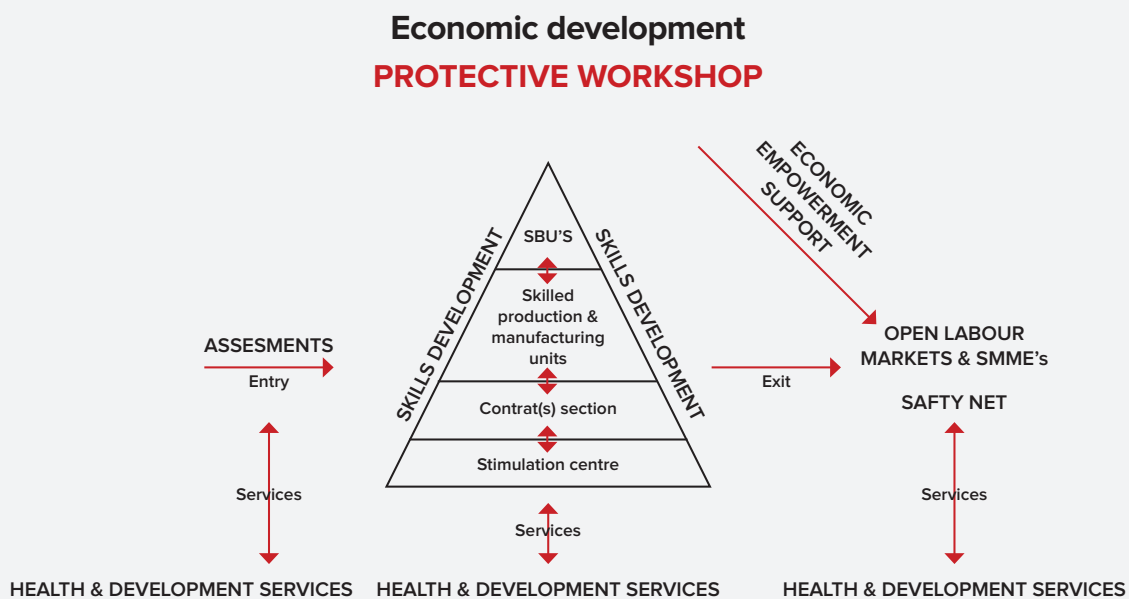
As space is limited, applications are carefully considered by a multi-disciplinary team.

Community development

We interact and work with community members for collective action and generating solutions to common problems in terms of economic, social, environmental and cultural issues.

As such, Epilepsy South Africa often creates collaborative partnerships to achieve community goals.

Support groups provide educational and emotional support to persons with and affected by epilepsy, including sharing information and experiences (peer support) to improve quality of life.



Epilepsy South Africa recognises a variety of employment options for persons with epilepsy, including:

- **Protective workshops** offer opportunities not only for employment, but also for skills development to enhance employability.
- **Open labour market employment** enables the direct inclusion of persons with epilepsy. Epilepsy SA offers services in terms of recruitment, assessments, placement and employment support for employers and employees.
- **Small business development** refers to both entrepreneurship (individual level) and income generation initiatives (group level). Epilepsy SA offers a variety of entrepreneurial development training programmes (including programmes of the International Labour Organisation) at both entrepreneurial and trainer levels.

Skills development

- **Technical skills training:** Epilepsy South Africa develops technical skills through on-the-job training of persons with epilepsy. Training aims to meet industry requirements and standards and enable access to the open labour market or small business development.
- **Learnerships** are offered in a variety of fields and levels, including business administration, early childhood development, cleaning and hygiene and furniture manufacturing.
- **Bursaries** are available for students with epilepsy for tertiary education via our Educational Trust. Applications must be submitted on the prescribed form by 31 October annually.

