

A PLATFORM AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

FOR WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITIES



**UNITE COMMUNITY STRUGGLES
BUILD WORKING-CLASS POWER**

MARXIST WORKERS PARTY

October 2026

MARXIST WORKERS PARTY • OFFICIAL POLICY PLATFORM

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2026 Print-Ready Edition

Document: Official Platform | Edition: 2026 Print-Ready | Published by: Marxist Workers Party

PART I: WHY WE NEED A UNITED WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITY MOVEMENT

1. Communities Are the Front Line of the Crisis

Working-class communities are where every part of the social crisis meets. Workers return from long shifts to overcrowded houses and shacks, broken roads, uncollected refuse, sewage spills, water cuts and electricity outages. The unemployed search for work while surviving on grants that do not cover food. Women carry the greatest burden of unpaid care and face gender-based violence without adequate shelters or services. Young people leave school, college and university to find no jobs. Pensioners support entire households from grants intended for one person.

These are not separate accidents. Housing shortages, collapsing infrastructure, understaffed clinics and schools, unaffordable electricity, unemployment and crime are connected by a common thread: wealth is produced collectively, but it is owned and controlled by a small capitalist minority. The ANC-led Government of National Unity protects that system. Its parties disagree over positions and patronage, but agree that debt repayment, austerity, commercialisation and private profit must come before social need.

Local government is the point at which this programme enters people's homes. National and provincial governments cut funding and impose cost recovery. Municipalities pass the burden down through tariffs, prepaid meters, cut-offs and declining services. Private contractors extract profit while municipal capacity is hollowed out. Corruption intensifies the damage, but corruption is not the whole explanation. Even an honestly administered municipality cannot meet the needs of working-class communities when it is trapped inside an austerity programme and a capitalist economy organised for profit.

2. From Isolated Survival to Collective Struggle

Communities have never accepted these conditions passively. They organise petitions, delegations, marches, occupations, road blockades and shutdowns. Residents defend families against evictions and cut-offs, fight for water and sanitation, expose corruption and demand roads, clinics, schools and houses. Yet most struggles remain isolated from one another. Hundreds of communities can fight the same battle at different times without combining their strength.

The state can ignore, delay, divert or repress one community at a time. Councilors promise intervention, officials establish task teams and governments wait for anger to subside. A local concession may be won, but without organisation the struggle often dissolves before implementation can be enforced. The problem is not a lack of courage. It is the absence of a common platform, democratic organisation and coordinated action powerful enough to compel lasting change.

This platform is therefore not merely a list of demands. It is a proposal for uniting community organisations locally, municipally, provincially and nationally; linking community struggles with workers, women, students and youth; and developing the confidence and organisation necessary for working-class people to take control of their own destiny.

3. One Working Class - Many Theatres of Struggle

There is no wall between the workplace and the community. The municipal worker repairing a pipe, the teacher in an overcrowded school, the nurse in an understaffed clinic and the commuter paying an unaffordable fare all return to communities affected by the same crisis. An attack on public-sector wages weakens services. Outsourcing produces insecure work and poor service delivery. Retrenchments reduce household income and deepen municipal non-payment. Electricity and transport increases become wage cuts by another name.

Community struggle must therefore link with organised workers in the trade unions and with campaigns of women, students and youth. The aim is not for one section to speak on behalf of the others, but for each to organise around its own demands while uniting in common action against the government and capitalist class responsible for the crisis.

PART II: THE HISTORY AND LESSONS OF COMMUNITY STRUGGLE

1. From Apartheid Civic Struggle to the Present

Under apartheid, working-class communities built powerful civic organisations around rent, transport, housing and service struggles. Street and block committees drew ordinary residents into discussion and action. Civics linked with youth organisations and the emerging independent trade-union movement. The community-based locals of the trade unions helped connect battles in the factories with battles in the townships. Rent boycotts, consumer boycotts, stayaways and mass mobilisation demonstrated the power created when organised workers and communities moved together.

Those struggles helped make apartheid ungovernable. But after 1994 much of the civic movement was absorbed into the new state or subordinated to the ANC-led Alliance. Leaders entered councils, legislatures and government. Independent structures weakened, while ward committees created from above became consultative bodies without real power. The organisations through which residents had exercised collective power were replaced by promises that elected representatives and officials would deliver.

2. Two Decades of Service-Delivery Revolt

Working-class communities have been fighting attacks on services since at least 2004. Between 2008 and 2012, service-delivery protests brought millions of people onto the streets. By early 2014, reports counted nearly 3,000 protest actions in only 90 days. The scale of this movement earned South Africa its description as the “protest capital of the world.”

The revolt never disappeared. Since the early 2000s, communities have repeatedly risen against housing shortages, water and electricity cuts, sewage, poor roads, corruption and councilors who cannot be held

accountable. South Africa's description as the "protest capital of the world" expresses both the extraordinary willingness to struggle and the tragedy of struggles remaining fragmented.

The lesson is not that protest does not work. Mass action has won reconnections, stopped evictions, forced officials to negotiate and brought neglected communities into public view. The lesson is that protest must be organised, extended and sustained. It must create democratic structures that remain after the immediate action and link local demands to a national programme.

3. Independence, Democracy and Accountability

Community organisations must remain independent of the state, capitalist political parties, tender interests and wealthy donors. Independence does not mean refusing useful technical, legal or research support. It means that outside organisations work under the direction of democratically organised communities rather than substituting themselves for them.

The organisations we need must unite residents irrespective of race, sex, gender identity, language, religion, nationality or immigration status. They must reject xenophobia, tribalism and racial division. The unemployed South African and the exploited migrant worker do not create each other's poverty. Both confront employers who use desperation to lower wages and a government that has failed to provide jobs and services.

Representatives must be elected, accountable and subject to immediate recall. Decisions must be taken in open mass meetings wherever possible. Finances must be transparent and controlled by elected committees. No leader should use community struggle as a ladder into a council position, tender or personal career.

4. What Previous Struggles Teach Us

- Organisation must survive beyond the protest. Every campaign should build street, block, settlement or ward structures that meet regularly and report back.
- Demands must be clear and democratically agreed. Communities need a programme that connects immediate needs to the resources and power required to meet them.
- Unity must be built in action. Neighbouring communities should coordinate campaigns and mobilise in solidarity when one community is attacked.
- Workplace and community struggles must be linked. Shop stewards and workers should participate in community structures, while communities support strikes defending jobs, wages and public services.
- Working-class independence must be protected. No capitalist party, councilor, NGO, business forum or criminal network should control community organisation.
- Racism, sexism, xenophobia and LGBTQI+ oppression divide the class and must be fought inside every movement.
- Winning a concession is only the beginning. Democratic structures must monitor implementation and mobilise again when promises are broken.

PART III: CONDITIONS FACING WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITIES IN 2026

1. Mass Unemployment and Poverty

Official unemployment rose to 33.2% in the second quarter of 2026. The official rate excludes millions who have given up looking for work; the expanded measure remains far higher. Behind every percentage are households surviving without wages, young people denied a future and pensioners or grant recipients stretching one small payment across an entire family.

The old-age, disability and care-dependency grants reached R2,400 a month in April 2026, while the Child Support Grant rose to R580. These increases remain far below the cost of a dignified life. The government has set these grants at this starvation level. It is less than half the R5,894.85 per month minimum wage for a 45-hour work even after it was raised to R33.23 per hour on 1st March this year.

The gap between the statutory minimum and the cost of meeting basic needs is further illustrated by household affordability data. The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group reported an average household food basket of R5,479.80 in August 2026, while its basic nutritional food basket stood at R6,597.25. For a worker earning the current national minimum wage, these figures demonstrate how little income remains once basic necessities are taken into account.

Social grants prevent even deeper hunger, but the government uses poverty-level payments to manage destitution instead of guaranteeing jobs and a living income. It has appealed against the North Gauteng High Court judgement to pay millions it has disqualified from receiving the insulting R370 Social Relief of Distress grant.

Unemployment also weakens municipal finances. Government calls inability to pay a “culture of non-payment,” as though millions freely choose between food, transport and electricity. It criminalises illegal connections while refusing to confront the poverty that makes them inevitable. Working-class households cannot finance the repair of a system broken by austerity, corruption and privatisation.

2. Municipal Collapse Is Not an Accident

Across the country municipalities fail to maintain infrastructure, collect refuse, repair roads or provide reliable water and sanitation. Many lack engineers, artisans, planners and financial staff. Others spend large amounts on consultants and contractors while permanent municipal capacity disappears. Tenderisation creates a chain of private profit between public money and public need. Work costs more, quality declines and democratic accountability is replaced by commercial secrecy.

The formation of the Government of National Unity arose out of the same conditions that had become a major feature of local government before 2024. They were formed as a result of the decline of primarily the ANC's electoral support, but the failure of opposition parties to increase their support in proportion to the ANC's losses. They therefore must enter coalitions to form an administration. However, the competition amongst them for power and influence continues leading to instability.

Coalition instability has sharpened the crisis in many councils. Mayors and executive committees change through deals made above the heads of communities. Parties compete for positions controlling budgets and tenders, not over programmes capable of meeting social need. The result is paralysis, factional conflict and a permanent election campaign while infrastructure decays.

Corruption must be fought without mercy. But the claim that clean administration alone will solve the crisis is false. National austerity, an inadequate municipal funding model and cost-recovery policies would continue to produce decline even if every tender were honest. Working-class communities need both democratic control over public money and a struggle to replace the economic programme that starves local government of resources.

3. Water and Sanitation

Water cuts, throttled pressure, leaking pipes and sewage spills have become part of daily life. The Hammanskraal cholera deaths exposed the lethal consequences of failed treatment works, neglected maintenance and corrupt contracting. The crisis is repeated in different forms from Johannesburg and eThekweni to smaller rural municipalities.

The Department of Water and Sanitation's Green Drop Report 2025 released on 31 March 2026 shows how a crisis that is already stark is worsening. 396 out of 848 audited municipal wastewater systems are in a critical state - worse than 2024. Only 14 systems received a Green Drop Certificate for performing at 90% and above - down from 22 in 2024.

Treatment systems operating at critical risk contaminate rivers, dams, groundwater and the ocean. Huge volumes of treated water disappear through leaks before reaching households. Government then responds to infrastructure failure by restricting household consumption rather than employing the workers and investing the resources needed to repair the network.

Water is a right and a condition of life, not a commodity. Communities cannot accept cut-offs, prepaid water, tanker mafias or emergency supply becoming a permanent substitute for functioning public infrastructure.

4. Electricity: From Loadshedding to Energy Poverty

The reduction in national loadshedding has not ended the electricity crisis in working-class communities. Local outages, damaged transformers, "load reduction," prepaid-meter deductions and municipal cut-offs continue.

In May 2026 revealed that electricity prices in South Africa increased by a staggering 987% between 2007 and 2023. In 2025/26 tariffs went up by a further 12.7%.

By March 2026 unpaid municipal debt to Eskom had reached R111.6 billion, an increase of nearly 18% in one year. In 2025 about 2.6-million households did not pay for their electricity. Businesses also fell behind on payments. In early 2025, 10 cities accounted for 80% of all municipal debt to Eskom. and Tshwane each owed about R5bn, or R5,000 per household.

All but one of the remaining eight were secondary cities in the Vaal Triangle and Free State. They were hit by the decline in gold mining and heavy industry, the latter partly due to rising electricity prices. They owed between R2bn (Ngwathe) and R10bn (Emalahleni). For six of these towns, their Eskom debt exceeded R50,000 per household, 35% more than their average annual household income. (*Business Day* - 11/08/2026). The problem is not that people won't pay as the government insultingly alleges, but can't pay.

Treasury's municipal debt-relief conditions require rising collection rates and cost-reflective tariffs. These "costs" are based on the private sector's calculations of what is profitable pushing the tariffs above what is affordable for communities. Municipalities therefore receive lower revenue. In practice this pushes municipalities to disconnect households that cannot pay. Government shifts the cost of Eskom's corruption, mismanagement and restructuring onto residents, while large corporate users pay less per unit than private household consumers.

The government has responded to growing domestic and global pressure to switch to renewables. But it has used this as a cover to step up privatisation. A transition to renewable energy is essential, but privatisation makes the

transition unjust by making it unaffordable to the majority.

The popular myth that the private sector is inherently more efficient and cheaper is contradicted by Eskom's own history. In December 2001 Eskom won an international global energy award, when it was named **Best Power Company of the Year** at the Financial Times Global Energy Awards in New York. Competing against major international energy giants, including Europe's, Eskom was recognized for its reliable electricity generation, cheap electricity tariffs, and massive historical and ongoing electrification work.

Replacing a public monopoly with private profiteers will deepen energy poverty. Electricity generation, transmission and distribution must remain in public ownership under democratic workers' and community control, with a planned transition that protects jobs and guarantees affordable power.

5. Housing, Land and Spatial Apartheid

According to Dr Golding, Chairperson of the National Housing Finance Corporation "After three decades, the housing backlog remains stuck between 2.5 and 3 million units and is still growing. At its peak in 1999, South Africa was delivering close to 200 000 housing units annually. Today, that figure has fallen to roughly 40 000. Over the same period, the country's population has expanded from 40.6 million in 1994 to around 64 million in 2025 (*The Mercury* 15/04/2026). In addition to the backlog, there are 3.4 million households registered for housing assistance

Millions remain on housing waiting lists or live in overcrowded backyards, informal settlements and unsafe inner-city buildings. The housing backlog runs into millions, while the annual rate of public housing construction is nowhere near what is required. Apartheid spatial planning survives: working-class people live far from jobs and services and pay heavily in money and time to travel.

Shack fires, floods and extreme weather turn inequality into disaster. As the MWP pointed out in September 2023 following the Isindiso fire disaster in Johannesburg: "This is by no means a Joburg disaster – it is countrywide. The massive housing backlog that drove the desperate and the poor to seek shelter in derelict hijacked buildings where they are extorted for the privilege to have a roof over their heads, stood at 2.5m countrywide in 2022 and growing. Shack fires, destroying lives and livelihoods are regular occurrences across the surroundings of SA's major cities.

"With only 2 500 houses built over the last two years, it will take over 100 years to overcome the 500 000 backlog. Yet Joburg receives over 130 000 new residents annually through internal migration from e.g Kwa Zulu Natal and the Eastern Cape – one of the country's poorest and most corrupt provinces, as well as the poor from neighbouring countries ravaged by their corrupt elites propped up by the ANC government. All of them are seeking a chance to escape destitution."

In 2026 severe flooding across several provinces destroyed or damaged thousands of homes, with informal settlements suffering most. These are not purely "natural" disasters. Their impact is magnified by the failure to provide safe land, drainage, durable housing and emergency accommodation.

The government has responded to the crisis with an attack on democracy. The Draft Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Amendment Bill, 2026 (PIE). As the Federations of Trade Unions (Fedusa) points out: "The Bill is (an) attempt to criminalise organisation itself. It creates sweeping offences against anyone who 'incites', 'organises', or 'permits land occupation. This is not accidental. It is aimed at: community leaders, housing activists, social movements, and working-class organisations. It is an attack on the right to organise, the right to protest, the right to associate and the right to speak. This is a direct assault on the democratic freedoms protected in the Constitution."

Eviction without suitable alternative accommodation cannot be accepted. Nor can housing allocation remain hidden behind bureaucratic waiting lists vulnerable to corruption and political favouritism. Residents must exercise

democratic oversight over allocation, planning and construction.

6. Refuse, Roads, Transport and the Environment

Uncollected refuse, illegal dumping, potholes and failing storm-water systems reflect the destruction of municipal capacity. Waste reclaimers perform socially necessary environmental work without adequate pay, equipment, transport or protection. Public transport remains fragmented, unsafe and expensive, punishing workers who were placed far from economic centres by apartheid.

Mining, industry and property development frequently impose pollution and environmental risk on poor communities. Abandoned mines, unsafe tailings, toxic dumping and polluted air and water reveal whose lives are considered expendable. Climate change intensifies drought, fire, floods and heat, but capitalist development leaves working-class communities least protected.

7. Clinics, Schools, Care and Community Safety

Municipal collapse cannot be separated from the wider crisis of public services. Understaffed clinics, overcrowded schools, insufficient ECD centres, absent social workers and inadequate shelters transfer the burden back onto households, especially women. Crime, gangsterism and drug addiction grow in conditions of unemployment, inequality and social abandonment.

More police powers alone will not make communities safe. The police are also used to suppress strikes, protests and land occupations. Communities need democratic control over policing, resources for prevention and rehabilitation, and mass organisation against gender-based violence, xenophobia, gangsterism and organised crime.

PART IV: A PROGRAMME FOR WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITIES TO FIGHT FOR

1. Housing, Land and Integrated Communities

- A mass public house-building programme to clear the backlog and meet population growth, creating permanent, unionised jobs and apprenticeships.
- Expropriate unused land and buildings needed for public housing, with compensation based only on proven need.
- No forced evictions or relocations. No eviction without suitable permanent alternative accommodation.
- Place housing waiting lists and allocations under democratic community oversight, using clear and publicly agreed criteria.
- Full community control over housing design and settlement planning, including clinics, schools, ECD centres, parks, libraries, youth clubs, sport and cultural facilities.
- Upgrade informal settlements in consultation with residents, with water, electricity, sanitation, drainage, roads, refuse removal and fire protection.
- Nationalise the big construction companies, building-material manufacturers, wholesalers and banks under democratic workers' control and management.

2. Water and Sanitation for All

- Sufficient free basic water for every household, with higher consumption by wealthy households and corporations charged on a steeply progressive scale.
- No water cut-offs, prepaid water meters or pressure throttling for working-class households.
- A publicly funded national programme to repair and expand pipes, reservoirs, pumping stations and water and wastewater treatment works.
- Employ and train the engineers, artisans and municipal workers required to maintain systems permanently.
- End outsourcing and tanker profiteering. Bring water provision, maintenance and emergency supply fully in-house.
- Worker and community inspection of water quality, contracts, maintenance plans and expenditure, with all information publicly available.

3. Affordable Electricity and a Just Energy Transition

- Cancel electricity arrears for poor and working-class households and end punitive prepaid-meter deductions.
- Provide sufficient free basic electricity, funded through progressive tariffs on wealthy households and large corporate users.
- No cut-offs or load reduction imposed on communities because of poverty or municipal debt.
- Open Eskom and municipal contracts with big business to public inspection and end preferential secret pricing.
- No privatisation of electricity. Reverse commercialisation and place generation, transmission and distribution under democratic workers' and community control.
- Massive public investment in renewable energy, grid expansion and storage, with no job losses and fully paid retraining for affected workers.

4. Clean, Safe and Climate-Resilient Communities

- Insource refuse collection, street cleaning, maintenance and environmental services and employ sufficient permanent workers.
- Provide durable public bins, regular collection, safe landfill management and enforcement against corporate toxic dumping.
- Recognise waste reclaimers as workers: provide decent income, protective equipment, storage, transport and democratically agreed integration into public waste services.
- Compel mining and industrial companies to prevent pollution and fund rehabilitation under worker and community oversight.
- A public programme for drainage, flood protection, fire services, emergency housing and climate adaptation in every vulnerable community.
- No mining or development on communally owned land, sacred sites or environmentally sensitive areas without the democratic consent of affected communities.

5. Public Transport and Roads

- Massive investment in safe, reliable, integrated and publicly owned rail, bus and municipal transport, moving towards free public mass transport.

- Services must operate according to workers' actual hours, including early mornings, nights and weekends.
- Repair roads, bridges, pavements, streetlights and storm-water systems through permanent municipal workforces, not tenders.
- Accessible transport and public infrastructure for people with disabilities, older people and caregivers with children.
- Bring privatised and fragmented public transport into a single democratically planned system under worker and commuter control.

6. Jobs for All - Share the Work

- A mass programme of socially necessary public employment to build houses and infrastructure and expand health, education, care, culture and environmental services.
- Convert EPWP, CWP, community healthcare, ECD and all permanent forms of supposedly temporary public work into permanent jobs with full labour rights, benefits and collectively negotiated wages.
- A living wage of at least R15,000 a month. Enforce equal pay for work of equal value.
- A 32-hour maximum working week without loss of pay, sharing available work among all who need it, as a step towards a 20-hour week made possible by modern technology.
- End labour broking, outsourcing, casualisation and repeated temporary contracts for work of a permanent character.
- Municipal apprenticeship and training programmes with guaranteed permanent jobs for young people as artisans, technicians, care workers and other socially needed workers.
- Build unemployed-worker and unemployed-youth structures in every community and campaign for "once a member, always a member" in the trade unions.

7. Social Grants and Household Security

- A universal basic income for every adult aged 18 to 60, set initially at no less than half the living wage and increased towards a living income.
- Raise pensions and disability grants to at least half the living wage and double the Child Support Grant immediately.
- All grants must rise automatically with the real cost of living and be paid reliably without punitive means tests or bureaucratic obstacles.
- No household should lose water, electricity or housing because its income is inadequate.

8. Food Security and Working-Class Control

Food is a basic right, yet millions of working-class families are forced to go hungry while large agribusinesses, food processors and retail monopolies protect their profits. Communities must not be reduced to passive recipients of charity. Workers and communities must fight for democratic control throughout the food system - from land and production to processing, distribution and consumption.

- Legally enforceable price controls on essential foods, supervised by elected worker, trade-union and community representatives, to stop price-gouging and profiteering.
- State-funded, democratically managed public wholesale and distribution networks and community markets supplying affordable, nutritious food directly to townships, rural areas and informal settlements.

- Land, equipment, seeds, fertiliser, municipal water and public finance for worker-run agricultural cooperatives, urban farming, community food gardens and genuine small-scale producers.
- Universal, year-round school and ECD nutrition programmes providing fresh, adequate meals, supplied wherever possible by local cooperatives and prepared by permanently employed, unionised public workers receiving a living wage.
- Place vacant municipal land and underused agricultural land under democratic public and community control for food production. Expropriate large unused holdings without compensation except in cases of proven need.
- Bring the major agribusiness, fertiliser, food-processing, wholesale and retail monopolies into public ownership under democratic workers' and community control as part of a socialist plan to guarantee nutritious food for all.

9. Free, High-Quality Public Services

- Free, high-quality public healthcare based on expanded clinics and primary healthcare, with all vacancies filled and sufficient medicines and equipment.
- A unified national health service: bring private hospital groups and pharmaceutical monopolies into public ownership under democratic worker and community control.
- Free education from ECD to university, including books, transport, meals and accommodation where required.
- Repair and expand school infrastructure; provide water, safe sanitation, electricity, libraries, laboratories, internet access, sport and cultural facilities.
- Free, universal, publicly provided ECD, childcare, elder care and disability support in every community.
- End austerity, outsourcing and tenderisation. Restore and expand municipal and public-service staffing according to population needs.

10. End Gender-Based Violence, Hate and Discrimination

- A publicly funded network of safe shelters with space for children, emergency income, long-term housing, healthcare, counselling and free legal support.
- Properly staffed specialist GBV units, forensic services and courts, accountable to survivors and communities.
- Mass campaigns led by trade unions, women's organisations and community structures against gender-based violence and femicide.
- Defend LGBTQI+ people against violence and discrimination in communities, workplaces, schools, healthcare and housing.
- Fight xenophobia. Defend migrants and refugees against violence and organise all workers, irrespective of nationality, in common struggle.
- Abolish discriminatory traditional laws and institutions and place communal resources under democratically elected community control.

11. Crime, Policing and Corruption

- Organise democratic community safety structures and mass mobilisation against gangsterism, drug dealing, gender-based violence, xenophobic attacks and organised crime.
- Free, accessible, high-quality drug rehabilitation and mental-health services linked to education, housing and guaranteed jobs.

- Working-class oversight of policing through genuinely democratic Community Policing Forums with elected community and worker representatives.
- Community control over police priorities and resources; dismiss and prosecute perpetrators of bribery, torture, rape, harassment and corruption.
- Full trade-union rights for police and civilian workers. Workers and communities must democratically determine emergency cover during industrial action.
- Abolish militarised units and state-security structures used to suppress legitimate working-class protest.
- Open municipal budgets, tenders, contracts and council records. Protect whistleblowers and recover stolen public money under worker and community oversight.
- Establish democratically elected street, block and village safety structures linked to transformed Community Policing Forums. These structures must be accountable to open community meetings, defend all residents without discrimination and reject vigilantism, punishment, xenophobic profiling and political intimidation.
- Create community-led monitoring systems for police response, violent-crime and GBV and Femicide cases, while protecting survivors, witnesses and personal information. Demand transparent case-tracking procedures so that dockets cannot simply disappear.
- Fully staff every police station with properly trained 24-hour GBVF response capacity, private statement rooms and immediate access to free medical, psychosocial and legal assistance.
- Clear, light and maintain parks, transport hubs, paths and abandoned public spaces through permanent municipal jobs. Install and maintain streetlights, high-mast lighting and emergency infrastructure according to democratically identified community needs.
- Expand publicly owned rehabilitation, mental-health and wellness services so that every community has free and practical access, with facilities distributed according to population need and linked to education, housing and guaranteed work.
- Demand the power for communities and democratic Community Policing Forums to vet station leadership, scrutinise performance and initiate removal proceedings. Campaign for the law to give communities the power to elect and recall station commanders and other designated local police leadership.
- Provide public resources for democratically controlled community-safety work, subject to training, human-rights safeguards, transparent accounts and regular public audit.

12. Street Traders and Small Businesses

- License street traders without discrimination and provide secure, serviced trading space, storage, sanitation and protection from harassment.
- Support democratic trader organisations and unity among South African and migrant traders against exploitation by banks, wholesalers, landlords and shopping malls.
- Public wholesale networks, affordable credit, equipment and guaranteed markets for genuine small businesses and cooperatives.
- Strict price, labour, food-safety and health inspections under worker and community oversight.
- Nationalise large businesses that sabotage supply, engage in price-gouging or close viable workplaces, under democratic workers' control.

13. Make Capital Pay - Take the Wealth Into Public Ownership

- Restore corporate taxation at least to the levels imposed on big business in the 1980s and 1990s and close tax loopholes and illicit financial flows.
- Impose steeply progressive taxes on high incomes, accumulated wealth, corporate property and luxury consumption.
- Repudiate illegitimate public debt and redirect debt-service expenditure to housing, infrastructure and public services.
- Nationalise the banks, mines, major construction companies, energy monopolies, transport, telecommunications, wholesale and retail giants under democratic workers' control and management.
- Integrate public ownership through a democratic socialist plan of production based on social need, ecological sustainability and the elimination of poverty.

PART V: HOW WE FIGHT - A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

1. Build Worker and Community Action Committees

Begin where people live and work. Convene open meetings street by street, block by block, settlement by settlement and at major workplaces and service points such as clinics, schools and municipal depots. Elect Worker and Community Action Committees with clear mandates, regular report-backs, transparent finances, rotation of office bearers and the right of immediate recall.

These committees should bring together permanent and precarious workers, including EPWP, CWP, community healthcare, ECD and labour-broker workers; unemployed workers and youth; shop stewards; women and LGBTQI+ people; migrants; pensioners; people with disabilities; and the users of public services. Their purpose is not to replace existing organisations, but to give common organisational form to struggles that meet in both workplaces and communities.

Map local needs, vacant public posts, failing infrastructure, service interruptions, contracts and struggles. Coordinate campaigns; organise mutual aid and solidarity for strikes, occupations and community action; and expose attempts to set public-sector workers and residents against one another. Decisions must be taken in open mass meetings, and the committees must remain independent of the state, capitalist parties, tender interests and criminal networks.

Map the community's existing organisations. Bring together civics, crisis committees, residents' associations, informal-settlement committees, street-trader organisations, women's groups, youth formations, student structures and shop stewards without requiring them to dissolve. Unity must take a federal form: each organisation retains its identity while agreeing on common demands and action.

2. Draw Up a Community Needs Budget

Every community should conduct a democratic audit of what it needs: houses, kilometres of road and pipe, classrooms, clinic staff, ECD places, transport routes, parks, libraries and other recreational facilities safety measures and jobs. Turn this into a publicly costed Needs Budget. Technical experts may assist, but they must work under community direction and explain their findings in accessible language.

Campaign for councils to adopt the Needs Budget. Reject the claim that existing budgets are immovable. Budgets express class priorities. Demand that spending on consultants, tender profits, prestige projects and political

privileges be redirected to services, public employment and infrastructure.

3. Use Statutory Bodies to Enforce Community Accountability

Community Police Forums, School Governing Bodies, clinic committees and hospital boards are contested sites in which working-class communities can demand information, expose failure and fight for public services. They are not substitutes for independent community organisation and should not become ceremonial talking shops or auxiliaries of state officials. Worker and Community Action Committees must intervene in them with clear mandates from mass meetings.

Elect and mandate delegates to pursue community priorities in these bodies and establish formal liaison with them. Campaign for scheduled joint meetings involving statutory bodies, trade unions, community committees, workers and service users, with shared agendas, accessible reports and publicly available minutes wherever confidentiality and the protection of individuals do not legally require otherwise.

Compile evidence dossiers and quarterly community scorecards covering matters such as police response, unresolved cases, staffing vacancies, medicine and equipment shortages, school and clinic infrastructure, service continuity, budgets, contracts and complaints. These records must support mobilisation and remedial demands, not reduce accountability to paperwork.

Demand time-bound complaint and escalation procedures, declarations of interests and the exclusion of any member from decisions in which they or close associates have a financial interest. Representatives nominated by community structures must report back and can have their community mandate withdrawn. Where existing law prevents their formal removal, communities must campaign for recall powers and use organised pressure to secure their resignation or removal through the applicable legal process.

4. Unite Struggles Locally and Nationally

Link neighbouring committees into municipal and regional coordinating structures. When one community faces cut-offs, eviction or repression, others must mobilise in solidarity. Coordinate days of action around common demands, escalating from petitions and mass meetings to marches, occupations, boycotts and shutdowns determined democratically by those involved.

Build towards provincial and national coordination capable of bringing hundreds of communities into action on the same day. A national community shutdown must not be proclaimed from above. It must be prepared from below through functioning organisations, political explanation and democratic mandates.

5. Link Communities with Organised Workers

Invite shop stewards and rank-and-file workers living in the area into community structures. Establish joint action committees when municipal and public-sector workers fight outsourcing, retrenchment or wage cuts. Communities need properly staffed services; workers need public support against governments that portray wage cuts and job losses as necessary for service delivery.

Campaign inside trade unions for active support to housing, electricity, water, transport and anti-xenophobia struggles. Revive the tradition of trade-union locals rooted in communities. Prepare solidarity for strikes and ask workers to use their organised power in support of community demands.

6. Fight Division and Defend Working-Class Unity

Every community structure must oppose attempts to redirect anger towards migrants, other racial groups, women or LGBTQI+ people. Organise political education explaining who benefits from division. When xenophobic

mobilisation or hate crimes threaten, trade unions and community organisations must defend those targeted through mass action involving the affected people themselves.

Reject criminal networks and business forums that use unemployed people as a rent-a-crowd for tenders and extortion. Job and business opportunities must be allocated through transparent, democratically agreed processes, not through armed force, factional connections or nationality.

7. Build a United Working-Class Community Movement

Local and municipal structures should convene towards a countrywide federation of community organisations based on a common platform and programme of action. Existing organisations should affiliate as organisations. Delegates at every level must be elected, mandated, accountable and recallable.

Funding should come primarily from the rands and cents of working-class people and supporting organisations. All income and expenditure must be reported openly. Paid positions, where necessary, must be controlled democratically and paid no more than the wage of a skilled worker.

PART VI: THE 2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

1. Use the Elections to Build Struggle and Organisation

The local government elections on 4 November 2026 will concentrate attention on the crisis in every municipality. Capitalist parties will arrive with promises, food parcels, t-shirts and manifestos, asking communities to surrender their power to councilors for another five years. The election must instead become an opportunity to organise around demands, expose the record of councils and compel every candidate to answer to working-class communities.

This platform does not suggest that voting by itself can end municipal collapse. Councils remain constrained by national austerity, capitalist ownership and a funding system built on cost recovery. But an election campaign can help unite struggles, popularise a fighting socialist programme, build democratic community structures and challenge the monopoly of parties that treat council seats as careers or access points to tenders.

2. Support Candidates of Struggle, Not Career Politicians

The MWP will not stand its own candidates in these elections. We call on genuine civic and community candidates emerging from struggle to adopt this platform and programme of action. Communities should convene democratic selection meetings and test every prospective candidate by their record, programme and willingness to remain under community control.

No candidate should be supported merely because they call themselves “independent.” Independence from a party label is not the same as independence from business, tender interests, xenophobia or personal ambition. A working-class civic candidate must stand on collective decisions and help build organisation before, during and after the election.

Worker and Community Action Committees should organise candidate-selection workshops, investigate the record and interests of nominees and ensure that communities understand the powers and limits of local government. Candidates should be nominated openly and selected by secret ballot at properly convened ward or settlement mass meetings. Before endorsement, each candidate must sign a public commitment to this platform, the community Needs Budget and the accountability arrangements agreed by the structures that nominate them.

3. Principles for Working-Class Civic Candidates

- Be nominated openly and selected by open show of hands at a properly convened community mass meeting, and stand on this platform and the programme democratically agreed by the community.
- Accept the community's right to withdraw its mandate and endorsement when they break the programme or lose the confidence of the structures that selected them; support the fight for a legally enforceable right of recall.
- Take only the wage of a skilled worker. Any councilor income above that amount must be donated to democratically controlled community organisation and struggle.
- Publish all income, benefits, gifts, interests and meetings with contractors or businesses.
- Refuse participation in tender patronage, coalition horse-trading and secret agreements for positions.
- Report back at least monthly through open ward meetings and publish their decisions, votes, council documents, budgets, contracts and progress in implementing the community mandate.
- Use the council chamber as a platform for struggle, while recognising that decisive power lies in organised mass action outside it.
- Support strikes and community action and help link council workers with residents rather than setting them against each other.
- Oppose racism, sexism, xenophobia, tribalism and discrimination against LGBTQI+ people without compromise.

Councilors endorsed through this process must take binding direction from democratic community meetings on central questions such as insourcing, budget priorities, procurement and service delivery. Where council rules or the law obstruct a mandate, the councilor must report the obstacle openly and mobilise with the community to overcome it, rather than using institutional limits as an excuse for retreat.

4. Before and After Election Day

Community organisations should organise public assemblies at which candidates answer questions and sign written commitments. Produce community scorecards based on the Needs Budget. Demand access to council meetings and records. Elect observer delegations to report on every decision affecting the area.

Whatever the election result, the organisation must remain. If a civic candidate wins, mass structures must direct and monitor their work. If the candidate loses, the campaign should leave behind stronger committees, wider political understanding and a programme for action. Electoral work must serve struggle; struggle must never be postponed until the next election.

PART VII: FROM COMMUNITY STRUGGLE TO SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION

Working-class communities should fight for every improvement that can be won now. A stopped eviction, a repaired pipe, a permanent job or a reopened clinic matters enormously. Every victory demonstrates the power of collective action. But capitalism will always attempt to take back with one hand what struggle has forced it to concede with the other.

The wealth and productive capacity needed to provide housing, services and jobs already exist. They are locked inside private ownership and directed towards profit. Municipalities cannot democratically plan construction while the banks control credit, developers control land, construction monopolies control materials and large retailers set

prices. Communities cannot control electricity while generation and supply are organised around profits for privately owned providers.

You cannot control what you do not own. The major banks, mines, construction, energy, transport, manufacturing, telecommunications, wholesale and retail companies must be taken into public ownership under democratic workers' control and management. These sectors must be integrated through a socialist plan of production drawn up by elected representatives of workers and communities.

Such a plan would mobilise society's resources to eliminate unemployment, poverty and the housing backlog; rebuild infrastructure; shorten the working week; expand public services; and carry out a just transition away from fossil fuels. It would replace competition between municipalities and communities for scarce resources with democratic planning according to need.

Communities cannot achieve this transformation alone. A united community movement must join organised workers, women, students and youth in rebuilding a fighting working-class movement and a mass workers' party on a socialist programme. The organisation created in today's struggles can become part of the democratic power through which the working class governs society tomorrow.

HELP BUILD A UNITED WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITY MOVEMENT

Discuss this platform in your street, settlement, civic, trade union, youth organisation and campaign. Amend it through democratic debate. Turn its demands into local action. Link your struggle with neighbouring communities and with workers confronting the same government and capitalist system.

Unite communities. Build democratic organisation. Fight every cut-off, eviction, retrenchment and service collapse. Use the 4 November 2026 elections to strengthen struggle and working-class political independence.

For a countrywide federation of working-class community organisations. For working-class unity across every theatre of struggle. For a socialist alternative to poverty, unemployment and municipal collapse.

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