

NKOWANKOWA & GREATER TZANEEN A DEEP INVESTIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE, ECONOMY AND YOUTH EXCLUSION

Comprehensive Investigative Report & Evidence Base

Prepared by the Nkowankowa Economic Renewal Initiative (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341

Document: NERI/YTH/RPT/002/2026 — Version 2.0

Date: July 2026 | www.theneri.co.za



CONFIDENTIAL — Verified research for municipal, provincial, and media scrutiny. Every claim sourced.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report investigates the infrastructure, economic, and social conditions shaping youth exclusion in Nkowankowa and Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM). It builds on NERI's earlier Youth Problems Report (NERI/YTH/RPT/001/2026), deepening the inquiry into causation, institutional responsibility, asset ownership, and comparative municipal performance.

Key findings include:

- 1. The Nkowankowa Industrial Park (161 ha, 89 factory units):** Occupancy figures vary between 73% (Sept 2022, PMG), 88% (July 2023, dtic), and 87% (Sept 2023, PMG). Job creation figures attributed range from ~1,200 (LEDA, PMG 2023) to 3,708 (dtic 2021) to 6,000+ seasonal workers linked to Peppadew International (Deputy President Mashatile, NCOP Nov 2024). These figures have not been reconciled by LEDA.
- 2. Tivumbeni College of Education** operated as a teacher training college at least until 2002 [UL Space; UP 2024]. Post-1994 national rationalisation of teacher training led to its transition to "Tivumbeni Great Hall." The precise date and legal mechanism require confirmation.
- 3. LEDA's audit outcomes** have deteriorated: qualified opinions in 2023/24 and 2024/25, with irregular expenditure of R28 million (2024/25) and fruitless/wasteful expenditure of R32 million (2024/25) [AGSA].
- 4. R5 million** allocated for Nkowankowa internal street rehabilitation (2025/2026) [GTM Oct 2025 MFMA Report].
- 5. Nkowankowa Stadium** (Bankuna Street, 5,000+ capacity, athletics track) is well-used but has documented maintenance backlogs [user reviews]. **Parks and play areas are in visibly poor condition, with broken equipment, overgrown vegetation, and no safe designated children's play spaces** in several Nkowankowa wards [NERI ground verification, June 2026].



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

METHODOLOGY & SOURCING NOTE

This report draws on primary sources (Stats SA, GTM IDP 2025/2026, PMG committee minutes, dtic IPRP reports, LEDA annual reports, AGSA audit outcomes, Deputy President Mashatile NCOP response), secondary sources (academic literature, University of Limpopo research, Wits LINK Centre), and community-sourced evidence (public reviews, user ratings).

Data Gaps are flagged where information could not be publicly verified. Each gap includes a recommended action (PAIA request, Deeds Office search, or direct inquiry).

No information has been fabricated. Conflicting figures are presented side by side with dates and sources so the reader can assess discrepancies.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

A. NKOWANKOWA INDUSTRIAL PARK

A.1 Historical Background

Nkowankowa was declared an industrial development point (IDP) between 1982–1993 under Lebowa/Gazankulu-era regional industrial decentralisation policy. The programme aimed to create employment in peripheral areas while containing Black populations within homeland boundaries [Wikipedia; UJ thesis]. Like many such IDPs, Nkowankowa showed early promise but stagnated. Academic analysis attributes high failure rates to heavy dependence on incentives and vulnerability to drought affecting agro-processing [UJ thesis].

A.2 Physical Specifications

161 hectares; ~126,551 m² developed (~7.2% of total); 89 factory units. Managed by LEDA (Limpopo Economic Development Agency).

A.3 Occupancy & Job Creation — Reconciling Different Sources

Date	Occupancy	Jobs Reported	Source
Sept 2022	73%	3,708	PMG 21 Sept 2022 (LEDA presentation)
July 2023	88%	Not specified	dtic Deputy Minister Magwanishe
Sept 2023	87%	~1,200	PMG 13 Sept 2023 (LEDA COO Mokobane)
Nov 2024	Not specified 6,000 seasonal + 348 permanent + ~5,000 indirect		Deputy President Mashatile, NCOP

Note: The 2024 figure refers specifically to Peppadew International's operations, not the entire park. NERI recommends LEDA publish a reconciled, audited employment figure.

A.4 Investment

The DTIC invested R40 million through the IPRP (Industrial Parks Revitalisation Programme): ~R23 million on security (CCTV, fencing, gates, control room) and ~R17 million on refurbishment of Factory Nos. 277, 190, and 282. Peppadew International and BS Dried Fruit are among the tenants attracted post-investment [PMG 2022; dtic 2021]. Properties within the park are owned by LEDA and leased to tenants.

A.5 LEDA Governance

LEDA's audit outcomes deteriorated from financially unqualified (2021/22–2022/23) to qualified (2023/24–2024/25). Irregular expenditure rose to R103.7 million (2022/23) before declining to R28 million (2024/25). Fruitless/wasteful expenditure hit R32 million (2024/25) [AGSA].

[DATA GAP — Requires PAIA/FOI Request] The two outstanding water pumps (4 of 6 repaired, Sept 2023) have no public update on repair status. NERI recommends a PAIA request to Mopani District Municipality.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

B. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, SMME SUPPORT & THE NERI BUSINESS FORUM

B.1 The NERI Business Forum

NERI has established the **NERI Business Forum** as an official sub-structure of the organisation to address the systemic challenges facing local businesses. The Forum provides a structured platform for networking, B-BBEE compliance support, tender-readiness workshops, skills development partnerships, collective CSI, advocacy into GTM's IDP processes, and access to global partners. Membership tiers range from Platinum (R100,000/yr, >R50m turnover) to Associate (free for NGOs). Section 18A tax certificates are issued for donations of R100+ [NERI BF Charter]. The Forum is NERI's practical response to the 73% SMME support gap.

B.2 What Businesses Lack in Nkowankowa

SMMEs account for 90%+ of formalised South African businesses and employ over half the workforce, yet up to 75% fail within their first year [ResearchGate 2025; Van Scheers 2011]. In GTM, the LED office reached only 27 enterprises against an annual target of 100 — a 73% shortfall [GTM IDP 2025/2026].

Seshego Industrial Park (154 ha, 76 factories, 79% occupancy, R35m dtic investment, 1,154 jobs) is Nkowankowa's closest comparator under the same IPRP programme [PMG 2022]. Both parks face similar challenges: ~60% rental collection rates (Nkowankowa), water infrastructure, SMME sustainability.

Challenges facing Limpopo SMMEs include limited access to finance (MSME funding gap estimated at USD 30 billion nationally per IFC 2019), lack of managerial skills, market entry barriers, unreliable infrastructure, crime, and regulatory complexity [ResearchGate 2025; MIT Solve 2023].

B.3 The Infrastructure That Could Be Working for Business

Nkowankowa possesses an extraordinary concentration of state-owned industrial and commercial infrastructure that sits partially utilised or decaying while businesses struggle to find affordable workspace. The Industrial Park (161 ha, 89 factory units) operates at 73–88% occupancy depending on the reporting period — meaning at least 12 factory units are empty or underutilised at any given time [PMG 2022; PMG 2023]. These units, if fully occupied and serviced, could house SMMEs at subsidised rents, reducing the overhead that kills 75% of new businesses within their first year.

At 100% utilisation, the Industrial Park could generate an estimated 12,000 direct and indirect jobs [NERI projection]. This would mean:

- More consumers with disposable income spending at local shops and services.
- A larger pool of skilled labour for businesses to recruit from.
- Increased rates revenue for GTM to invest in roads, parks, and street lighting.
- Reduced pressure on social services as more households achieve economic independence.

The Bindzulani Complex, Tivumbeni Centre, Nkowankowa Cinema, and Old Home Affairs building represent additional underutilised public land and buildings that could be converted into SMME hubs, co-working spaces, and skills centres. The private mall built within 1 km of these decaying public assets demonstrates that there is commercial demand in Nkowankowa — it is just being captured by private developers rather than generating returns for the community and the municipality.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

C. TIVUMBENI CENTRE: FROM TEACHER TRAINING TO COMMUNITY HALL

C.1 History

Tivumbeni operated as **Tivumbeni College of Education**, a teacher training college serving the Ritavi District and wider Mopani region. A UP graduation record confirms a student obtained her teaching diploma from the college in 1997 [UP 2024]. A UL thesis examines its role in educator professional development between 2000 and 2002 [UL Space], confirming the college was operational until at least 2002.

C.2 The Post-1994 Rationalisation

After 1994, South Africa restructured teacher education, incorporating many colleges into universities or closing them. Tivumbeni appears to have been affected by this process. **[DATA GAP: The exact date and legal mechanism of transition require confirmation via the Limpopo Department of Education archives or a PAIA request to DHET.]**

C.3 Current Use as Tivumbeni Great Hall

The facility is now used as a community venue for weddings, funerals, and events [community-sourced evidence]. The GTM IDP's building condition register should confirm its current official classification.

C.4 Repurposing Potential — In Detail

Given its educational heritage and central location, Tivumbeni could serve multiple high-impact purposes under existing legal frameworks:

Option 1: TVET Satellite Campus — A satellite of a nearby TVET college (e.g., Sekhukhune TVET College or Capricorn TVET College) offering NATED programmes in business studies, engineering, or ICT. The Department of Higher Education and Training's TVET expansion policy supports satellite campuses in underserved areas. This would bring post-secondary education directly to Nkowankowa youth, reducing the travel burden to Tzaneen or Polokwane.

Option 2: Community Education and Training (CET) Centre — Under the Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006, CET centres provide adult basic education, skills training, and secondary education equivalency. The Limpopo CET College already operates centres across the province. A Tivumbeni CET centre could offer ABET Levels 1–4, Grade 12 equivalency, and vocational short courses.

Option 3: MICT SETA-Accredited Digital & Artisan Skills Centre — NERI's own Tzaneen Digital Skills Academy concept envisages a fully equipped digital training hub offering coding, data analytics, digital marketing, and artisan skills (welding, solar installation, ICT repair). Accreditation through MICT SETA or merSETA would enable learners to earn nationally recognised qualifications.

Legal/policy instruments supporting these uses: Municipal Systems Act S16–18 (community participation), SPLUMA 16 of 2013 (land use), DHET TVET expansion policy, and the MICT SETA accreditation framework.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

D. NKOWANKOWA CINEMA & OTHER DORMANT ASSETS

D.1 Nkowankowa Cinema

The Nkowankowa cinema is referenced in community discourse as a once-operational entertainment venue that has fallen into disuse.

[DATA GAP — Requires PAIA/FOI Request] NERI could not establish current ownership from public sources. The building is not clearly listed in the GTM IDP 2025/2026 building condition register. NERI recommends a PAIA request to GTM Property/Asset Management and a Deeds Office search to establish legal ownership and any title conditions (e.g., public-use servitude).

D.2 Repurposing Potential — In Detail

If ownership is confirmed as municipal or provincial, the cinema could be repurposed for the following uses, each supported by existing policy frameworks:

Option 1: Youth Digital Hub & Performing Arts Centre — A multi-purpose digital and creative space with a small cinema screen for community film screenings, a recording studio, a digital skills lab with 20+ computers, free public Wi-Fi, and a performance stage for local artists. This model exists successfully at the Soweto Theatre (city-owned) and the Market Theatre Lab in Johannesburg. A GTM-owned facility could be operated under a PPP or by a community-based organisation like NERI.

Option 2: SMME Incubation & Co-Working Space — With shared office space, high-speed internet, meeting rooms, and a business registration clinic, the cinema could become an enterprise development hub supporting the SMMEs that GTM's LED office currently cannot reach (73% shortfall). The dtic's Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP) provides funding for co-working spaces in townships.

Option 3: Library and Digital Learning Centre — Nkowankowa has no public library [NERI verification]. Converting the cinema into a library with digital learning facilities would address a critical gap. The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture's (DSAC) Library Services Grant could fund the conversion, as GTM is eligible for equitable share library funding.

D.3 Bindzulani Complex & The Rotting Mall

The Bindzulani Complex, located within the Nkowankowa Industrial Park, was developed as part of the R40 million IPRP revitalisation but remains significantly underutilised. A private mall has risen less than 1,000 metres from Nkowankowa's dormant state assets, including the Old Home Affairs building, the cinema, and the Tivumbeni Centre. This private investment is welcome — but it highlights a painful contrast: private capital builds while public assets decay.

The employment impact of this decay is quantifiable. If the Bindzulani Complex and surrounding state-owned units within the Industrial Park were fully operational, they could house:

- 15–20 additional light manufacturing and agro-processing tenants, creating an estimated 500–800 direct jobs.
- A fresh-produce packaging and cold-chain facility linked to the Tzaneen agricultural economy, creating 150–200 seasonal jobs.
- A youth enterprise incubator with zero-rent for qualifying SMMEs for the first 24 months, supporting 30–50 start-ups.
- A retail and services precinct attracting foot traffic and consumer spending that currently leaks to the private mall and to Tzaneen town.

Every month that Bindzulani and the Industrial Park's dormant capacity remain underutilised represents lost income for Nkowankowa families, lost rates revenue for GTM, and lost hope for young people who see a private mall hiring security guards from outside the community while their parents struggle.

D.3 Old Home Affairs Building

The Old Home Affairs building in Nkowankowa is confirmed as underutilised [NERI ground verification, June 2026]. Its repurposing could serve as:

Option 1: A DHA satellite service point (re-establishing Home Affairs services that residents currently travel to Tzaneen or Polokwane for). **Option 2:** A NERI/NYDA youth service centre offering ID applications, bursary applications, and SMME registration clinics. **Option 3:** A municipal customer care satellite office, reducing residents' need to travel to the GTM Civic Centre.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

E. ROADS & BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

GTM's October 2025/2026 MFMA Section 71 report records an allocation of R5 million for "Rehabilitation of Nkowankowa Internal Streets" (Ntshunxeko, Ntwanano, Khanimambo, Basani, Chivirikane Streets). This represents progress on a long-standing infrastructure request.

Industrial park stakeholder Mr Mokone raised road condition complaints at a PMG meeting approximately six years prior to the 2023 follow-up, with no resolution recorded [PMG 2023]. The R5 million allocation partially addresses this.

Nkowankowa's road network serves the Industrial Park, schools, clinics, and residential areas. Poor road conditions increase vehicle operating costs, delay emergency services, and discourage investment. Regular maintenance budgeting through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) is essential to prevent roads from deteriorating to the point where full reconstruction is required.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

F. SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE: NKOWANKOWA STADIUM

Nkowankowa Stadium, located on Bankuna Street, is one of the few township stadiums in Limpopo province with an athletics track and field. It features two grandstands with estimated capacity exceeding 5,000. It hosts soccer matches, athletics meetings, cultural events, and the international Grannies Football Tournament [Top-Rated.Online; Heysports.co.za; 236 user reviews].

F.2 The Cost of Decay — What Teams and Athletes Face

The reality for Nkowankowa's sports clubs and athletes is a constant battle against a lack of resources. **Most teams charge their own players registration fees** simply to cover the cost of basic equipment — balls, bibs, cones, first-aid kits, and transport to matches. When parents cannot afford these fees, talented young players are left behind.

Coach **Peace Khosa**, owner of **Nkowankowa Barcelona Development Football Team** and coach of **Nkowankowa Continental**, was accepted to attend the Confederation of African Football (CAF) B Coaching Course in 2025. To secure his place, he needed to raise R20,000 from the community by fundraising because neither the club nor the municipality could fund his professional development. Coach Khosa is known for discovering talent and helping countless players at the youth level [Letaba Herald, 25 April 2025].

The **Nkowankowa Athletics Club** (Ritavi Cross Warriors), founded in 2016 by former 400m provincial runner Conride Shikwambana, trains at Nkowankowa Stadium and relies on parent support and sponsors to sustain operations. They host their annual ART Youth Challenge Road Race at Letaba Estate, covering costs through entry fees because the municipality does not subsidise the event [Letaba Herald, 23 May 2026]. The club's athletes have produced national-level results despite these constraints.

F.3 Talent That Has Emerged From Nkowankowa — Against All Odds

Nkowankowa has produced an extraordinary number of athletes given the limited infrastructure. This talent exists **despite** the system, not because of it:

Athlete	Achievement	Source
Gladwin Khosa	2019 Limpopo Sports Awards Nominee — Blue Bulls Rugby	Wikipedia; Letaba Herald
Samuel Ntsan'wisi	Long-distance runner — represented Limpopo provincially	Wikipedia
Tiyani Mitshabe	Upcoming sprinter — rising athletics prospect	Wikipedia
Shelfa Mukhari	SA u19 Ladies Cricket — vs Zimbabwe, Durban Jan 2025	SuperSport Schools Plus
Peace Khosa	CAF B Coaching Course; developer of Nkowankowa Barcelona FC	Letaba Herald, Apr 2025
Mpumelelo Mabasa	Hudson Ntsanwisi SS — ASA National Half-Marathon 2026	Letaba Herald, May 2026
Victoria Mnisi	St George's College — promising athletics star	Letaba Herald, May 2026
Ntsako Shivonivoni	Silver medal — National Schools Champs, Cape Town	Letaba Herald, May 2026
Freddy Rikhotso	Gold medal (100m, 200m) — Masters Athletics, age 64-69	Letaba Herald, 2019
Nkowankowa Hub Ladies	Schools SA20 National Finalists (Cricket)	SuperSport Schools Plus, Mar 2025

Shelfa Mukhari's SA u19 selection and the Nkowankowa Hub Ladies' national cricket finals qualification demonstrate world-class talent exists in Nkowankowa. The Ladies trained on a soccer field, batting and bowling to a fence [SuperSport Schools Plus, March 2025].

F.4 What the Stadium Could Do If Up to Standard

A fully upgraded Nkowankowa Stadium could serve as the anchor for a complete youth sports ecosystem. Benefits would include:

- 1. Multi-Sport Hosting:** With functioning floodlights, changerooms, ablutions, and seating, the stadium could host provincial athletics meetings, inter-ward soccer and netball leagues, rugby tournaments, and the Nkowankowa Community Games (founded 2006, covering football, netball, and rugby) [Vision4AfrikaNow Media].
- 2. Talent Identification:** A proper track and field facility would allow scouts from national federations to see Nkowankowa's athletes locally rather than requiring athletes to fund their own travel to trials.
- 3. Event-Based Revenue:** Provincial championships, cultural festivals, and concerts could generate rental income for GTM while bringing visitors to Nkowankowa. The Grannies International Football Tournament already demonstrates the stadium's draw.
- 4. Youth Employment:** A fully functioning stadium requires groundskeepers, maintenance staff, security, event coordinators, and hospitality workers — jobs for local youth through EPWP or GTM's LED programmes.
- 5. Crime Reduction:** Structured sports programmes reduce youth involvement in gangs, crime, and substance abuse [SA Crime Quarterly, 2022; Frontiers in Public Health, 2026]. A functioning stadium programmed daily gives young people somewhere to go after school.

F.5 Demands

(a) Minimum R5 million for Nkowankowa Stadium rehabilitation in 2026/2027 IDP capital budget, funded through DSAC Municipal Facility Grant or MIG. (b) A stadium management committee with youth representation. (c) Establishment of a GTM-NERI Youth Sports League across all 35 wards, with Nkowankowa Stadium as the central venue.

[DATA GAP — Requires PAIA/FOI Request] NERI could not confirm current GTM capital budget allocation for stadium rehabilitation or whether DSAC/MPSPD funding has been applied for. A review of the 2026/2027 IDP capital projects list and DSAC grant registers is recommended.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

G. PARKS, PLAY AREAS & YOUTH SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

This section addresses a critical gap in Nkowankowa's public infrastructure that affects every child, parent, and young person in the community: the state of parks, play areas, and safe public gathering spaces.

G.1 The Current Reality

The parks and public open spaces in Nkowankowa are in a state of serious disrepair. Public playgrounds that should be filled with children playing after school stand empty because swing sets are broken, slides are missing steps, and see-saws are rusted beyond use. Green spaces that could serve as community gathering points are overgrown with weeds and littered with rubbish. Bench seating, where it exists, is vandalised. There are no safe, designated children's play areas in several Nkowankowa wards [NERI ground verification, June 2026].

The GTM IDP 2025/2026 confirms that the municipality owns parks, municipal offices, taxi ranks, streets, and the stadium. However, the IDP does not provide a parks maintenance budget line item or a ward-by-ward audit of playground equipment condition. **[DATA GAP: GTM's actual parks maintenance expenditure for Nkowankowa in the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 financial years could not be obtained from publicly available documents. A PAIA request to GTM Parks & Recreation is recommended.]**

G.2 Why Parks Matter — The Evidence

Safe, well-maintained parks and play areas are not a luxury. They are essential public health and youth development infrastructure. The evidence is clear:

- A lack of recreational facilities is directly linked to youth involvement in gangs, crime, and substance abuse. Former gang members told researchers: "If we had things to do, we wouldn't be having all this time to be killing each other" [TimesLive / SA Crime Quarterly, March 2022].
- Organised sports and recreational settings act as protective factors against substance use initiation [Frontiers in Public Health 2026; MDPI Youth 2025].
- Access to safe play areas improves children's physical health, cognitive development, and social skills [UNICEF; World Health Organisation].

G.3 What a Properly Resourced Park System Could Look Like

In a functional municipal system, every ward in Nkowankowa would have:

- A safe, fenced children's playground with age-appropriate equipment (swings, slides, jungle gyms) on a soft surface.
- A multi-purpose sports court (netball, basketball, or both) with lighting for evening use.
- Benches, shaded seating areas, and litter bins maintained on a weekly schedule.
- A municipal parks maintenance programme that mows grass, trims vegetation, and repairs equipment before it becomes dangerous.
- Public Wi-Fi hotspots in parks, providing free internet access to youth who lack it at home (0.6% of rural Limpopo households have home internet [Science Direct 2022]).

G.4 The Cost of Inaction

The absence of parks is not a neutral condition. It actively harms the community. When children have no safe place to play, they play in streets and on dumping sites. When teenagers have no sports courts, they gather in shebeens or on street corners. When young adults have no recreational outlet, they turn inward or outward — towards depression or towards crime. The R5 million allocated for street rehabilitation is welcome. But a fraction of that amount, invested annually in parks and playgrounds, would yield measurable returns in community safety, youth health, and social cohesion.

G.5 Demands

(a) NERI demands a ward-by-ward audit of all municipal parks and playgrounds in Nkqowankowa, published within 60 days. (b) A minimum 10% of GTM's Parks & Recreation capital budget to be allocated to Nkqowankowa wards in the 2026/2027 IDP. (c) The establishment of a youth-led Parks Maintenance Corps under GTM's EPWP to maintain green spaces, repair equipment, and clean public areas, creating temporary employment for 50+ young people.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

H.2 SCHOOLS & THE RESOURCE DIVIDE IN NKOWANKOWA

H.2.1 Schools in Nkowankowa

Nkowankowa has the following schools across its wards and surrounding areas:

Primary Schools: Dududu Primary School, Nkowankowa Lower Primary School, Masungulo Primary School, Ritavi Primary School, Bombeleni Primary School, Bright Morning Star Primary School.

Secondary Schools: Bankuna High School, Hudson Ntsanwisi Senior Secondary School, DZJ Mthebule High School, Progress High School.

Combined/Independent Schools: Meridian College, St George's College [Wikipedia; Seeff].

H.2.2 The Resource Divide

Academic research in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools confirms: **a lack of necessary resources hampers effective curriculum implementation** [International Journal of Education Humanities, 2024]. A study of all eight public secondary schools in the Circuit found resource shortages are the single biggest barrier to quality education.

This reflects a national crisis:

- 20,071 schools have no science laboratories nationwide [Amnesty International, 2020].
- 18,019 schools have no libraries; 79% have no library at all [Amnesty International; Mail & Guardian, 2012].
- 77% of schools have no computer centres; only 10% have stocked computer centres [Mail & Guardian, 2012].
- 17% of schools lack any sporting facilities [Mail & Guardian, 2012].
- Schools in poorer quintiles have class sizes of 41-48 vs 33-35 in wealthier schools [Daedalus, 2024].

The Limpopo Province consistently has among the highest number of underperforming schools nationally. Inadequacies in school provisioning cause “psychological stress and low morale among teachers” and “exacerbate learners’ demotivation, resulting in dropouts” [South African Journal of Education, 2020].



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

H.3 DIGITAL DIVIDE & ICT ACCESS

Only 0.6% of rural Limpopo households had internet access at home as of 2018 [Science Direct 2022]. A University of Limpopo study confirmed Nkowankowa has only one MPCC and limited internet cafes [UL Space]. The Mamaila Community Network (a community-owned Wi-Fi network in Mopani District, launched March 2022) has connected over 3,000 devices and trained 100+ community members in digital skills [Wits LINK Centre 2023]. This model is directly replicable in Nkowankowa.

The SA Connect Phase 2 programme allocated R3 billion (2023/24–2024/25) for expanding ICT networks into underserved areas. The programme aims to connect 18,036 schools, 3,873 health facilities, and 8,241 tribal authority sites [National Treasury 2023]. NERI recommends that GTM submit a formal application for Nkowankowa to be prioritised under this programme.

**NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)**

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

J. SUBSTANCE ABUSE & COMMUNITY SAFETY

Readers are referred to NERI's Youth Problems Report (NERI/YTH/RPT/001/2026) for detailed analysis. In summary: 45% of Limpopo adolescents reported substance use in a 2024 study [Mmethi et al.], average age of initiation is ~15 years, and lack of recreational facilities is a known contributing factor [Frontiers in Public Health 2026].



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

K. LAND, HOUSING & DORMANT STATE ASSETS

The GTM IDP 2025/2026 confirms the municipality owns only parks, offices, taxi ranks, streets, and the stadium. Other abandoned assets may fall under provincial or private ownership. Lenyenye is landlocked. Extension 3, 4, 5 and 6 are being transferred to GTM by DARD. Land grabs at the periphery negatively affect ratepayers.

J.2 Missing Basic Amenities in Nkowankowa

This section catalogues basic public amenities that Nkowankowa still lacks or has in critically inadequate condition. Each is a basic service that communities of comparable size in functional municipalities have, and that residents have a right to expect.

1. Public Library

Status: ABSENT. Nkowankowa has no public library [NERI verification; UL Space research]. The nearest is in Tzaneen town, 15-20 km away, requiring two taxis (return fare ~R40). A lack of library facilities in rural Limpopo schools “deprives learners of opportunities for independent learning, research, and exploration beyond the classroom” [RESSAT Journal, 2024]. The DSAC Library Services Grant exists to fund libraries in underserved communities, and GTM is eligible.

2. Public Swimming Pool

Status: ABSENT. In a subtropical climate where summer temperatures regularly exceed 35°C, children have no safe, supervised swimming facility. The nearest public pool is in Tzaneen. Water safety education, learn-to-swim programmes, and recreational swimming are entirely absent.

3. Computer Lab & Public Internet

Status: CRITICALLY INADEQUATE. Nkowankowa has only one MPCC and very few internet cafes [UL Space]. Only 0.6% of rural Limpopo households had internet at home as of 2018 [Science Direct, 2022]. The SA Connect Phase 2 programme (R3bn) was designed to address this, but Nkowankowa has not yet benefited.

4. Public Wi-Fi Hotspots

Status: ABSENT. There are no free public Wi-Fi hotspots in Nkowankowa. The Mamaila Community Network in a neighbouring Mopani community has connected over 3,000 devices since March 2022 using a community-owned model [Wits LINK Centre, 2023] — directly replicable in Nkowankowa.

5. Safe Children's Playgrounds

Status: CRITICALLY INADEQUATE. Existing playgrounds have broken equipment, overgrown vegetation, and no soft surfacing. There is no safe, fenced children's play area in most Nkowankowa wards [NERI verification, June 2026].

6. Street Lighting

Status: INADEQUATE. Many streets have non-functional or absent lighting, affecting safety for women and children after dark and limiting evening use of sports facilities. High mast light installation remains incomplete.

7. Stormwater Drainage

Status: INADEQUATE. Summer rainfall (~800mm annually) causes flooding in low-lying areas where drainage is blocked or absent. This damages roads, homes, and businesses, and creates mosquito breeding grounds.

8. Street Furniture & Public Seating

Status: ABSENT. There are no public benches, shaded rest areas, or street furniture in Nkowankowa's commercial or residential areas. Elderly residents, persons with disabilities, and parents with young children have no places to rest within public spaces.

**NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)**NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

L. CIVIC PARTICIPATION & GOVERNANCE

The Home Affairs office in Nkowankowa is referenced as non-operational. The IDP Representative Forum allows NGO/CBO membership — the basis for NERI's demand for a seat. The NYDA premises remain provisioned but inactive [NERI ground verification, June 2026].



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
5 consecutive unqualified GTM audits [AGSA] National Cleanest Municipality 2026 R40m IPRP investment at Industrial Park R5m street rehab allocation (2025/26) Stadium with 5,000+ capacity & track	73% SMME target shortfall [GTM IDP] LEDA qualified audit 2023/24–2024/25 42.71% vacancy rate (504 posts) 0.6% rural HH internet access Broken playgrounds, no safe parks 2 outstanding water pumps (as of 2023)
Opportunities	Threats
SA Connect Phase 2 (R3bn allocation) TVET/CET at Tivumbeni Cinema conversion to youth hub Peppadew job multiplier Mamaila network replication Digital fault-reporting (eThekwini model)	45% adolescent substance use rate 75% SMME first-year failure rate LEDA fruitless expenditure R32m (2024/25) Youth out-migration / brain drain Climate variability/droughts Unreconciled asset ownership



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

DATA GAPS & RECOMMENDED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

1. Nkowankowa Cinema Ownership

A PAIA request to GTM Property/Asset Management and a Deeds Office search to establish legal ownership and title conditions.

2. Tivumbeni College Transition Date

A PAIA request to the Limpopo Department of Education or DHET for the exact date/mechanism of transition from college to hall.

3. Industrial Park Pump Repairs

A PAIA request to Mopani District Municipality for current pump repair status (4/6 done as of Sept 2023).

4. Reconciled Industrial Park Job Figure

A formal request to LEDA for a single, audited employment figure for the park, disaggregated by tenant.

5. GTM Parks Maintenance Expenditure

A PAIA request to GTM Parks & Recreation for actual maintenance spend in Nkowankowa, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

6. DSAC/MPSD Grant Applications

A PAIA request to GTM Budget & Treasury for DSAC Municipal Facility Grant applications/allocations 2024–2026.

7. Home Affairs Office Status

Verification via DHA's official office locator/service points list.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

- Statistics South Africa. Census 2011; Census 2022; QLFS Q1 2026 (P0211).
- Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Draft IDP 2025/2026. Available: greatertzaneen.gov.za.
- Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Monthly Finance Report, Oct 2025/2026 (MFMA S71).
- PMG. (21 Sept 2022). Development/plans for MMSEZ & Seshego/Nkowankowa IPs. pmg.org.za.
- PMG. (13 Sept 2023). Follow-up engagement with LEDA/LEDET. pmg.org.za.
- PMG. (16 May 2023). ATC230516: Portfolio Committee Report. pmg.org.za.
- SANews.gov.za. (3 July 2023). 'Industrial parks to transform economy.'
- SANews.gov.za. (8 Nov 2024). Deputy President Mashatile NCOP response.
- LEDA Annual Reports (2020/21–2024/25). leda.co.za; provincialgovernment.co.za.
- AGSA audit outcomes: provincialgovernment.co.za/units/financial/168/leda.
- Wikipedia. 'Nkowankowa.' en.wikipedia.org.
- UJ thesis. 'Industrial Development at Nkowankowa: A Geographical Analysis.'
- UL Space. 'Assessment of demand for Internet services at Nkowankowa.'
- Wits LINK Centre. (2023). Mamaila Community Network study.
- UP. (7 May 2024). 'Village educator receives Masters.' up.ac.za.
- UL Space. 'Role of Tivumbeni College as centre of professional development.'
- Frontiers in Public Health. (May 2026). Adolescent substance abuse in Sekhukhune.
- Mmethi et al. (2024). Substance use among school-going adolescents in Limpopo. IJERPH.
- Mphekgwana et al. (2024). Trends in substance use among Limpopo learners. BMC Public Health.
- Top-Rated. Online. Nkowankowa Stadium reviews. 236 ratings.
- Science Direct. (2022). Digital transformation challenges in rural SA.
- ResearchGate. (2025). Challenges faced by SMMEs in SA: Integrative review.
- TimesLive / SA Crime Quarterly. (March 2022). Recreational facilities gap.
- Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, Ch.4, S16–18.
- SPLUMA 16 of 2013; Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006.
- Constitution of RSA, 1996, S152; PAIA 2 of 2000.



NKOWANKOWA ECONOMIC RENEWAL INITIATIVE (NERI)

NPC: 2026/531180/08 | Tax: 9003946341 | www.theneri.co.za

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AGSA — Auditor-General of SA
CET — Community Education and Training
CIPC — Companies & IP Commission
CoGTA — Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs
CSD — Central Supplier Database
DARD — Dept. of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development
DHA — Dept. of Home Affairs
DHET — Dept. of Higher Education & Training
DSAC — Dept. of Sport, Arts & Culture
DSD — Dept. of Social Development
dtic — Dept. of Trade, Industry & Competition
GTM — Greater Tzaneen Municipality
IDP — Integrated Development Plan
IPRP — Industrial Parks Revitalisation Programme
LED — Local Economic Development
LEDA — Limpopo Economic Development Agency
LEDET — Limpopo Economic Development, Environment & Tourism
MFMA — Municipal Finance Management Act 56/2003
MIG — Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MPSD — Mass Participation & Sport Development
NCOP — National Council of Provinces
NEET — Not in Employment, Education or Training
NERI — Nkowankowa Economic Renewal Initiative
NYDA — National Youth Development Agency
PAIA — Promotion of Access to Information Act 2/2000
PFMA — Public Finance Management Act
PMG — Parliamentary Monitoring Group
POPIA — Protection of Personal Information Act 4/2013
PPPFA — Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act
SETAs — Sector Education & Training Authorities
SMME — Small, Medium & Micro Enterprise
SPLUMA — Spatial Planning & Land Use Management Act 16/2013
TREP — Township & Rural Entrepreneurship Programme
TVET — Technical & Vocational Education & Training

"A New Generation. A Renewed Nkowankowa."

NERI | www.theneri.co.za | info@theneri.co.za | 071 115 7028 | @neri_nkowankowa

Role	Name	Email	Phone
Amen Kwetsimani Clive Phambane	Chairperson	chairperson@theneri.co.za	073 768 1858
Dion Nkuna	Deputy Chairperson & CEO	deputychairperson@theneri.co.za	071 115 7028
Areka Logan Khosa	General Secretary & Projects Mgr	generalsecretary@theneri.co.za	079 235 3852

Document: NERI/YTH/RPT/002/2026 | Version 2.0 | July 2026