

Orange Farm Stakeholder Forum



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Orange Farm Stakeholder Forum

Orange Farm

Orange Farm is a vibrant community located in the southern-most corner of the City of Johannesburg's greater metropolitan area. Orange Farm is home to an estimated 1 million people, making it one of the largest townships in South Africa. It was only established in 1988 when a group of laid-off farm workers was settled there by the then Transvaal Provincial Administration.

While there is an increasing number of government-provided RDP houses, a large number of people still live in informal dwellings. According to the City of Johannesburg, Orange Farm is the single biggest informal settlement in the country.

Interestingly, despite the many complex social problems that residents in Orange Farm face, official police statistics indicate that the crime rates in Orange Farm are remarkably low in comparison with the rest of Johannesburg and Gauteng.

Building a safe Orange Farm

In 2008, the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF-SA) through its Criminal Justice initiative and in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Community Safety, embarked on a new strategy to support efforts to promote community safety that are cognisant of both the need for immediate law enforcement and for long-term crime prevention.

The partners believe a balanced approach, which also recognises and seeks to address the social, economic and environmental drivers of crime, provides better prospects for long-term safety. The objectives of the project are to:

- test these assumptions
- add to the the general development of knowledge in the sector
- make a real impact on community safety

These objectives will be achieved by facilitating the implementation of provincial priorities and safety strategies through locally focussed safety plans. Nompumelelo was identified as a pilot site for the project.

How do we do it?

The methodology is based on best practice and includes:

- conducting a safety audit to gain a thorough understanding of challenges faced by the Organge Farm community
- developing safety plans to address the challenges identified in the safety audit
- supporting the Orange Farm Stakeholder Forum as a partnership between community and government on the one hand, and private and public sector stakeholders on the other, to manage, monitor and facilitate the implementation of the safety plan
- encouraging a monitoring and evaluation to feed lessons on what works back into the project, and to make these available nationally and internationally.

What are our concerns?

The safety audit data shows that Orange Farm community members generally feel very unsafe in the settlement.

These concerns were expressed in direct relation to residents' perceptions of the high levels of crime in the community and in contrast to official police statistics of the area. Respondents' feedback, unlike the SAPS data, point to a prevalence of violent or serious crimes within the Orange Farm community. Particular reference in this regard is made to rape, assault, robbery, muggings and domestic Violence. Rates of housebreaking are also perceived to be very high. Other crimes noted include: murder, abuse (of women and children), prostitution, smash and grabs, and hijacking.

Many of these crimes, in accordance with police statistics of crime in the area, were cited in connection with alcohol abuse.

Who is the Orange Farm Stakeholder Forum?

The Orange Farm Stakeholder Forum is a dedicated group of individuals from across the political spectrum and representing government departments and community organisations.

Our safety plan

The Orange Farm Safety Plan seeks to:

- improve access to services
- strengthen youth and family initiatives
- improve access to social grants
- support community development
- build partnerships
- reduce alcohol- and drug-related crime

How are we doing?

Orange Farm has been evaluated against nine themes which together provide a picture of the safety of the community. The overall rating in each safety theme is presented in the graph opposite.



The lowest ranked safety theme is 'A safe and supportive environment for women'. A lack of economic opportunities for women was the main reason for this low rating. In this case, only a few systems have been established and there is often little coordination between them. They are also not communicated well to the public.

The safety theme 'Sustainable forums for coordinated action on community safety' was the highest rated theme in the evaluation. The Orange Farm Stakeholders Forum is fairly new, and is still in the process of becoming a more inclusive body. However, the systems that are necessary for the forum to effectively implement their projects and achieve their safety targets have been adopted, and the forum has a good foundation to build on to achieve coordinated action on community safety. This is encouraging and points to the potential of the forum to effect social change within Orange Farm.

The safety theme 'Safe streets and neighbourhoods' also ranked highly in the evaluation. This is despite Orange Farm being one of the most underdeveloped communities in the City of Johannesburg. What this rating reflects is that while there are significant challenges in terms of public infrastructure in Orange Farm, there are integrated strategies in place to address these challenges. There is already evidence of these strategies being successfully implemented in developing this community. Unfortunately, however, these developments tend to be concentrated in one area of the settlement. For Orange Farm to improve this rating further they will need to accelerate delivery throughout the community.

What are our future plans?

- To continue updating the Safety Plan by keeping track of the safety needs of the community.
- To continue monitoring how safe Orange Farm is with reference to the safety themes identified.
- To continue working with all stakeholders for a safer Orange Farm.