

From concept to design

Community Hubs are not intended to create another standalone programme. Instead, Action 15 of the Shared Blueprint asks what could happen if existing people, organisations and resources were better connected around the needs of young children.

The team started by talking to community collectives with deep roots in the places where children are. The following organisations put their hands up to co-create what the Bana Pele Community hub could be:

Cotlands

South Africa's oldest and most adaptive children's organisation. Since 1936 it has re-invented itself from baby sanctuary and pioneering HIV and Aids hospice care, to its current role in play-based early learning.

Rotary International

One of the world's largest service organisations, with 1.4 million members. They have active chapters in Southern Africa with a strong focus on community service.

SACOFF / Mahlesedi Foundation

The South African Community of Faith-based Fraternals and Federations is a multi-faith network representing 252 members encompassing 26,538 places of worship nationwide. Their social impact focus is on food security, ECD, gender-based violence and disaster relief.

ABESA

The Anglican Board of Education for Southern Africa is one of the largest church-school networks in the region. One of its strategic pillars is to galvanise parish and community involvement in education.

Your organisation

Community Hubs are designed to grow through partnership. Your organisation can join the network and help spread locally led hubs across the country.

The design process

The partners workshopped a possible design for the Community Hubs. This was a 1 day human-centred design approach. The conversation began with a simple question: where are the children, and what can we do to make sure all of them are in early learning? Instead of beginning with problems, we looked to recognise the people, places, relationships and resources communities already have. That shift can change the tone of the conversation and opened our imaginations to what was possible.



From design to prototyping

From there, the group identifies what matters most, what greater coordination could make possible and what can begin immediately. The result is not a fixed model imposed from above, but a local team, a practical priority and a way to keep moving. The six-step journey is designed to help communities turn what they already have into collective action.

Six step community hub journey

1. Appreciate

Start with what is already working in the community.

2. Take Stock

Use a simple baseline to understand where children and early learning stand today.

3. Map the assets

Identify the people, places, organisations, relationships and resources already available.

4. Imagine the hub

Ask what greater coordination could make possible locally for early learning.

5. Choose a priority

Identify a few practical actions and select one that can begin immediately.

6. For the team

Appoint local leaders, exchange details, create a task team and start.

The 5 prototype sites

- **WESTERN CAPE**
Atlantis [Rotary WCape]
Ocean View [Rotary WCape]
- **EASTERN CAPE**
Mthatha [ABESA]
- **GAUTENG**
Princess [Cotlands]
Olievenhoutbosch [SACOFF]

The timeline

- **March 2026**
Network meetings with ABESA, SACOFF and Rotary
- **June 2026**
Prototyping design workshop
- **Jul–Sept 2026**
Five asset-based community development workshops take place
- **Oct 2026**
Share learnings and train hub champions



What's next?

Learn from the first hubs.

Five Community Hubs are currently being prototyped, giving the team a chance to see what works in very different local contexts. Already more want to join. The Retreat community in the Western Cape are ready to go.

Train local champions.

The next phase will share early lessons and equip local hub champions to convene communities, map what already exists and turn shared priorities into action. We're learning what a good local champion needs to do.

Turn experience into a playbook.

What is learned through prototyping will inform a practical guide for setting up Bana Pele Community Hubs, helping future communities adapt the approach rather than copy a fixed model.

Grow the network.

The ambition is to build more local micro-networks that connect early learning programmes with families, grassroots leaders and community partners, while keeping the model flexible enough to reflect what each place already has.