



38 years of pro-poor development



BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT GROUP

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If one is asked to describe the reporting period of 2020-21, it is difficult to encapsulate such a complex year in a word. Despite a progressive constitution and a Bill of Rights that establishes the right to a better life for all, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. This year highlighted the linkages between climate change, inequalities and pandemics, such as COVID-19, disproportionately impacting the disadvantaged and vulnerable. It has exposed the tenuous living conditions endured by the poorest of the poor in our society daily. They existed before Covid-19 and they will continue to exist, because they are based on economic and structural inequality – access to the basic necessities of goods and services.

On 1 April 2020, just days after the imposition of the hard lockdown, BESG was one of 12 NGOs and social movements that were invited to engage with the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Lindiwe Sisulu, on strategies to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 virus in informal settlements where we work. Top of the list were public health information, access to water, access to toilets that are cleaned regularly, food security, and access to low cost means of maintaining personal hygiene. And it needed a coordinated response. This led to the creation of the Covid-19 Informal Settlements Task Team as a platform for ongoing engagement between the Department and civil society organisations. Regarding the general conditions affecting our projects, BESG had to revise its programme targets going forward. As a consequence, BESG re-gearred its short-term priorities to support 14 settlements across the KZN province in accessing water and/or sanitation. Workshops on our Livelihood and Tenure Security Training (LTS), Food Energy and Water Security (FEWS) programme and Housing Support had to have numbers in groups restricted in size to ensure social distancing. To circumvent this, we've had to run more workshops in affected areas with reduced numbers. All project budgets were amended to provide for PPEs for staff and participants, and Covid awareness was incorporated into Health and Safety training at all intake first contact meetings. Use of virtual meetings were made where possible, however, due to many communities having little or no coverage, virtual interactions was not an option.

BESG moved into the second of a three-year grant from Misereor, the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation which has underpinned our human settlements support programme and sustainable livelihoods work for the past 12 years. This project is relevant based on the current context as rights education, housing literacy, agency, organization and mobilization are critical for the poor and marginalized to claim and realised their rights and hold government to account for delivery of housing and services. BESG also secured a small but significant funder, Heinrich Böll Foundation, for our local governance programme, particularly focusing on Covid-19 action for water and sanitation. We also continued our alliance by securing our second micro-grant from Pietermaritzburg and District Community Chest under its Community Impact Partners' programme.

Challenges can present new opportunities and BESG has had to maneuver its work strategically to respond meaningfully to the demands presented by the environment within which it works. Other NGOs and social movements have strongly advocated to counter the centralized government/corporate driven trend by re-introducing community driven development in the field of housing. BESG has commenced in its efforts to unlock several housing projects in order to generate a sustainable revenue stream in BESG Development

Services (BDS), its trading arm, via community partnerships, in terms of the Enhanced People's Housing Process (ePHP). Development through community participation is core to

BESG's vision as well as its financial future, and is a vision shared by the National Department of Human Settlements in terms of future budget allocations: To place communities in the driving seat of development with appropriate administrative, financial, and technical support provided by NGOs such as BESG.

The contract with uMgungundlovu District Municipality (uMDM) between our trading company, BDS in a joint venture with Swelihle Agricultural and Environmental Services CC, came to an end in early 2021. This contract entailed piloting a climate change adaptation programme in Nhlazuka, Richmond and a component of the uMngeni Resilience Project, "Climate Proofing Human Settlements," that BESG developed in 2015. A workshop with Traditional Leaders in the District on Climate Change Adaptation was carried out post-contract due to challenges in assimilating Leaders with Covid-19 protocols being met.

BDS in contract with Youth for Christ KZN (YFC), secured a housing subsidy for the redevelopment of the Khayaletu Street Children's Shelters for R4.1m in 2019. In the same vain, BDS also assisted YFS in raising R500,000 from Swiss benefactors as contingency funds. Construction on the shelter commenced in October 2020 following an extensive tender process with Go Plan Homes being the preferred contractor.

In light of the pandemic, our emerging Corporate Social Responsibility programme was disappointing due to us initially targeting companies in the engineering and construction as strategic partners in the built environment. Venturing into other sectors was just as challenging in attracting other CSI funding initiatives, due to the uncertainty of the business environment during this trying period.

Another adverse effect to the conditions was the political instability in the Msunduzi and uMgungundlovu District Municipalities under which majority of our work is based. Those appointed in senior positions at these municipalities were employed in acting capacities, and as a result, decisions were delayed or non-existent coupled with that is those employed in managerial positions did not have the necessary qualifications.¹ An internal audit at Msunduzi Municipality found gross negligence and uncovered fraud of more than R64 million from August 2018 to April 2021. Ultimately this gross negligence affects the delivery of basic services to the most vulnerable in the auspices of spending cuts.

The challenge on the PHP process, which is premised on community involvement in design, planning and construction (self-construction and sweat equity) has seldom reflected dweller control but rather state control and as recipients of housing products with self-appointed self-help groups and construction companies. This has made it difficult for NGOs like BESG to play their intended facilitatory role.²

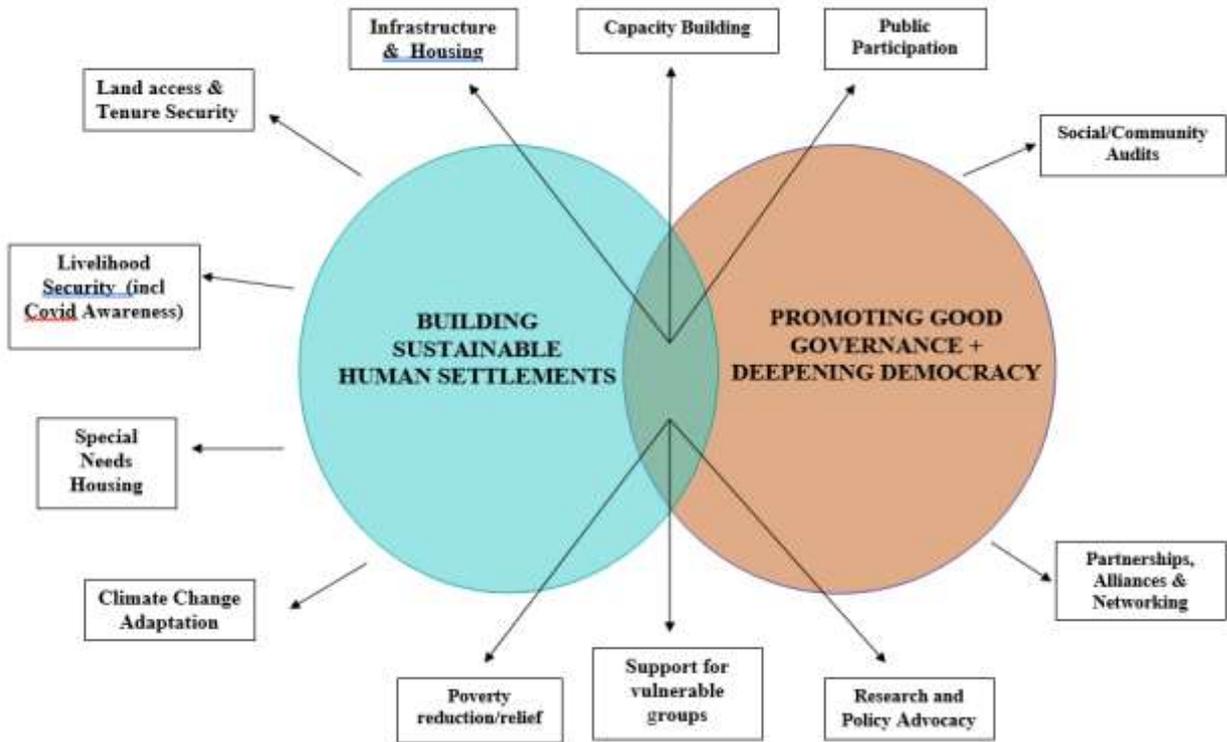
A change in the organization has been the transitional process of replacing BESG's long standing Executive Director who was instrumental in shaping the strategy, practice, team dynamic and image of BESG over decades. In July 2020, a new General Manager was appointed and is currently leading the organization with the former director involved on a part-time basis in the capacity of a Technical Services Manager. The ensuing year will be one of building a progressive organizational culture, refining a community practice informed by their needs and facilitating effective networking among community partners.

¹ "City Staff unqualified – *Many Msunduzi employees not suitable for the job, reveals skills audit*" – the Witness 02/07/2021

² Trynos Gumbo (2015), Interrogating South Africa's Housing Process – Towards comprehensive collaborative and empowering self-help approaches, Journal of Korean Housing Association, December 2015

There is close intersection between BESG's interlocking programmes of **Building Sustainable Human Settlements and Promoting Good Governance and Deepening Democracy**. Key activities conducted, facilitated and supported fall under the following as depicted below: Land Access and Tenure Security; Infrastructure and Housing; Livelihood Security incorporating Covid awareness; Special Needs Housing; Climate Change adaptation; Poverty Alleviation/Relief; Capacity Building; Public Participation; Research and Policy Advocacy; Social/community Audits; Partnerships/alliances and Networks.

BESG Operational Structure



The programmes are inter-linked by the premise that service delivery to the poor can best be realised by the demonstration of innovative solutions to development needs – both human and physical – and government embracing the challenges of development in a transparent and participatory manner. Although the year under review was a challenging one, to say the least, BESG reoriented its activities to support all programme interventions adaptive to the COVID crisis and our dominant activities have been:

At household level: Our Livelihood and Tenure Security work supports Agro-ecological production, water and community safety, energy innovation, household budgeting, mitigating against fire-hazards, health and safety in the home and tenure and asset security indicating the importance of having a will. These programmes are high-impact poverty reduction initiatives. It has spawned two variations – FEW (Food, Energy and Water security) for All, supported by Community Chest, and Climate Change resilience as part of the joint venture contract with uMgungundlovu District Municipality. Between the three component programmes, we reached over 202 households and caregivers with revising our programme targets for the year under lockdown



Nutrition and food security - Shiyabazali Informal Settlement

PROGRAMMES AND FOCUS AREAS

_At project level: At any one stage we support up to 20 communities in their quest to access land, tenure security, basic infrastructure, and housing through the provision of training, social facilitation, and technical support. Some communities are already locked into housing projects that are in various forms dysfunctional or non-performing, while 5 communities have realised tangible progress towards their aspiration to develop their areas through the People’s Housing Process. PHP has not been supported by KwaZulu-Natal Province, however, there will be an imperative to embrace it in the very near future. During hard lockdown, BESG reoriented its activities to support 14 communities in establishing communication lines to report water shortages to the relevant authorities as part of Government’s Covid-19 Informal Settlements Task Team.



*Right to adequate housing and water and sanitation
Shiyabazali Informal Settlement*

At policy level: Our work and opinions are valued by many policy makers, as one of a body of NGOs that work on the coalface of development with indigent communities. Prior to this review period BESG participated in two national meetings of the PHP National Reference Group, where plans were announced to shift the national budget allocation to PHP and Informal Settlement Upgrading over the next 5 years from 15% to 50%. This presents tremendous opportunities for re-growth of the civil society development sector if managed in an incremental manner, together with acknowledgement and cooperation from both provincial and local government structures.



Activists across KZN province voting to form a People’s Housing Alliance

The KZN Human Settlements programme aims to support and strengthen civil society in the achievement of sustainable development and livelihood security. It is targeted at low income communities and other vulnerable groups across KwaZulu-Natal, and is funded largely by our anchor donor, Misereor, the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation. Core to our approach is to create community agency, as encapsulated in our Mission Statement:

“BESG supports vulnerable sectors of our society in accessing and developing land, basic services, shelter, and livelihood security through the provision of capacity building, social and technical support, and promoting citizen engagement with government.”

The four components of the KZN Human Settlements Support Programme are:

1. Livelihood and tenure security (LTS) training

This is a participatory learning programme that develops self-reliance and resilience to withstand shocks to the wellbeing of a households. It is directed toward vulnerable households as well as community caregivers. Due to the pandemic, hygiene awareness was introduced into all communities at the first point of engagement.

The modules cover:

- Water security
- Energy security
- Nutrition and food security
- Health and safety in the home
- How to manage your money
- Tenure and asset security.

During the year under review we have conducted LTS training with 142 participants from 11 community partners, in spite of the time lost to hard lockdown and restarting community engagements.



Households come out in numbers to collect water in Shiyabazali Informal Settlement



Maqongqo-Nonzila water from streams used by community and cattle

FEW for All Programme:

We secured a second year of re-grant from Pietermaritzburg and District Community Chest, a Community Impact Partner, as an extension to our Livelihood Security programme, focusing on Food, Energy and Water (FEW) security. As a consequence of the pandemic our grant of R100,000 was scaled down to R65,000 due to scaling down in adherence to protocols. In spite of Covid-19 restrictions on movement and gatherings, the project reached 64 households out of the 40 planned over 8 months.

The impact of Covid-19 has had an exponential impact on the poorest and most vulnerable sections of our society. Service delivery declined as a result of budget constraints and underperformance at both

provincial and local government levels. Water and food insecurity reached epic proportions – restrictions on movement caused the temporary collapse of voluntary feeding schemes; contractors responsible for water tanker deliveries could not access essential worker permits; food relief promised by the government sat in warehouses while the logistics of distribution were in chaos.

2. Housing consumer education and support

This is where the bulk of our human and financial resources are invested. It is our long-standing anchor programme which aims to equip communities at various stages of a project cycle with the knowledge and skills to ensure they are able to play a meaningful role in addressing their development needs. Some of the interventions with which we assisted were:

- + *Simunye Farm CPA – uMvoti:* In February 2021, after persistent calls for an engagement on their blocked housing project, Simunye was one of 14 CPAs included in the Muden Rural Housing Project who were invited to a meeting convened by uMvoti Municipality. The Implementing Agent delivered a project progress report and committed to a further meeting to discuss choice of house designs.
- + *Amajuba Development Association (ADA)/ P46 – Newcastle:* In November 2020 we ran a workshop on informal settlement upgrading for the Amajuba Development Association and P46 Executive Committee. In February 2021 we assisted the leadership to ascertain the ownership of P28 -- land adjacent to their settlement -- to relocate the households who cannot be accommodated on P46.
- + *Nkanini rural settlement, uMlalazi:* In July 2020 we trained four community volunteers in monitoring the supply of water to the community from May – December 2020. In September 2020 we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Nkanini Traditional Council. In October 2020 we accompanied the community leadership to meet the Housing Manager of uMlalazi Municipality to seek support for their planned housing project. In December 2020 we held a workshop on the Operation Sukuma Sakhe poverty relief programme. In January 2021 we supported the community leadership in formulating an engagement plan with uMlalazi Municipality and King Cetshwayo District Municipalities.
- + *Denmark, Slangspruit – Msunduzi:* In August 2020 we conducted a mapping exercise to ascertain the extent of inadequate sanitation in the community as a result of Msunduzi Municipality's failure to empty their VIP toilets for 4 years. In September 2020 we ran a workshop on the Bill of Rights and the community confirmed that three rights, i.e., Right to dignity, Environmental Rights, and Children's rights, were violated. We also ran a workshop on the powers of the South African Human Rights Commission. In October 2020 we assisted the community in lodging a formal complaint to the SAHRC that resulted in Msunduzi Municipality dispatching honeysuckers in February 2021.
- + *Dlamini Informal Settlement – Endumeni:* In January 2021 we offered advice to the community leadership on how to monitor the building of 25 subsidised houses under construction.



Mapping exercise conducted in Denmark with community members

- ✦ Dambuza combined CBO – Msunduzi: The CBO implemented a monitoring plan for the municipality’s land acquisition programme. Bi-weekly monitoring of access to water n services was conducted from May – October 2020. In January 2021 we held a meeting to help revitalize the group as some of the key members have relocated from the area.
- ✦ Hlaleleni Farmers Association – Endumeni: In March 2020 we held a meeting with the executive committee of Hlaleleni to explain the housing process and public participation. Bi-weekly monitoring of access to water and sanitation services was conducted from May– October 2020. In December 2020 a budget submission was submitted with the community to uMzinyathi District Municipality. In January 2021, we held a meeting with the leadership to map out plans for rescoping of their proposed housing project.
- ✦ Nkululeko Farm -- Mpozana: In December 2020 BESG met the community to brief them on the time frames for PHP funding, and the work to be done for project preparation. In February 2021 we ran a PHP awareness workshop.
- ✦ Nyanini, uMlalazi: In July 2020 Covid-19 awareness training was held with the leadership of Nyanini CBO. In February 2021 we held a meeting with leaders of two CBO’s working in Nyanini who wish to collaborate in monitoring their planned housing project.
- ✦ Endumeni Civic Association (ECA) – Endumeni (Dundee): In June and August 2020, we provided logistical support for ECA’s virtual consultations with the Legal Resources Centre (LRC). In August 2020 we conducted a verification process of the ECA housing beneficiary list against the Department of Human Settlement’s Housing Subsidy Scheme (HSS) database. We also ran training with ECA on how to use the HSS portal to verify check the status of applicants. In September 2020 BESG provided advice to the LRC attorney about the subsidy system. In January 2021 we held discussions with the Association to agree on a submission to Endumeni Municipality for a new housing project for the affected community members.
- ✦ Ruigterfontein – Endumeni: In November 2020 a meeting was held with the Councilor and members of the Ward Committee to further discuss PHP. In this meeting the Councilor introduced another community with a planned rural housing project in his ward, i.e., Strafford Farm.
- ✦ Strafford Farm – Endumeni: In December 2020 we held a meeting with the community leadership to introduce the work of BESG and the possibility of supporting the community with their planned housing project. In February 2021 we held a meeting with a community representative who will facilitate a meeting between BESG and the Chief of the area.
- ✦ Mayibuye People’s Movement, Foreman Road informal settlement – eThekwini: In May 2020 we conducted a Covid-19 awareness workshop and a rapid assessment of access to water and sanitation services in the community. This settlement was one of the informal settlements selected in the Covid-19 Informal Settlement Task Team programme. Recommendations for improved water and sanitation supply, were formulated. Engineering Reports mapping the state of provision of water and sanitation was also compiled during this review period.



Endumeni Civic Association in virtual consultation with LRC facilitated by BESG

- ✚ *Nkungumathe – Nkandla:* In October 2020 BESG made a presentation on PHP for the Mpungose Traditional Council, the council responsible for Nkungumathe Housing Project. In November 2020, we held a workshop on PHP for community leaders in Nkungumathe.
- ✚ *Mkholombe – Port Shepstone:* Bi-weekly monitoring of water supply in the informal settlement was conducted from May-December 2020. In August 2020, four community volunteers we trained in monitoring service delivery in their community. In September 2020, a stakeholder meeting including Ward Councillor and Director of Southern KwaZulu Christian Council, was held to update them about the monitoring work. In October 2020 we conducted a thorough mapping exercise of water supply in the community. In December 2020, a submission was submitted to uGu District Municipality.
- ✚ *Mpolweni – uMshwati:* In September 2020, we started engaging the leaders of the Presbyterian Church who are landowners of the Mpolweni Mission, on behalf of the Mpolweni CBO. In November 2020, we met with the members of Mpolweni Oversight Committee to discuss the request that we had received from the Mpolweni CBO to assist the community with their planned housing project.
- ✚ *Mahlongwa rural housing -- eThekwini:* In October 2020 we met local stakeholders to chart a way forward for their planned project. In November 2020 we conducted awareness workshops on People’s Housing Process, Rural Housing Programme, and One House per Umuzi rural housing policy. Represented in the sessions were the Ward Councillor, Ward Committee, Traditional leadership, Faith Based leaders, and residents.
- ✚ *Shiyabazali informal settlement – uMngeni:* This settlement was selected in the Covid-19 Informal Settlement Task Team programme and we undertook a rapid assessment of water services and sanitation at the start of lockdown.
- ✚ *Bhambayi informal settlement – eThekwini:* In November 2020 the leadership obtained training in the provision of interim services, incremental upgrading and long-term housing support workshop. In December 2020 an IDP submission was made to eThekwini Municipality with a request for an Indaba (conference) where municipal service delivery units will brief the community on what projects they are working on, share timelines for completion, and discuss challenges. We have continued to give the GOLDCO leadership advice and support on request as officials are reluctant to allow and NGO into their space.
- ✚ *Esitendeni Informal Settlement, Nottingham Road -- uMngeni:* In September 2020 we were approached by the Landless People’s Movement to help victims of a shack fire that left 27 families destitute and one man dead. In November 2020 BESG facilitated a meeting with the Ward Councillor to assist the community by applying for the Emergency Housing Assistance to the Department of Human Settlements via the Municipality, and prioritise the case in his War Room.
- ✚ *Siyajabula, Msunduzi Municipality:* In October 2020 BESG facilitated a meeting between the Siyajabula leadership and newly elected Councillor of neighbouring Ward 33 to request rental space for disabled group members in the new Jika Joe housing development project.
- ✚ *London Farm -- eThekwini:* The community leadership showed interest in the work we are doing in Mahlongwa and asked for more information. In February 2021 we held a PHP workshop.



BESG engaging with Bhambayi community members on the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme

- ✚ Maqongqo -- Mkhambathini: In November 2020 we met beneficiaries of an abandoned housing project and facilitated an engagement with the Ward Councillor and the Development Committee elected by the concerned residents to get a full brief on the project. The Ward Councillor was tasked with following up with officials from the Municipality and KZN Human Settlements on the way forward to revive the project, and report back to the Development Committee.



Maqongqo Development Committee attending a project meeting with Provincial Human Settlements and Mkhambathini LM facilitated by BESG

- ✚ Siyathuthuka Phase 1 defective housing project -- Richmond: In August 2020 we followed up a complaint that had been lodged with the Public Protector regarding the defective housing and sanitation. The PP simply made an inquiry with the Department of Human Settlements and forwarded their response, which stated that defective top-structures will not be rehabilitated. The PP then closed the case without any proper investigation. An application for a review on findings and how the case was handled has been made to the head office of the Public Protector. The sanitation problems were reported to the District Infrastructure unit, who acknowledged that it is included in a backlog of projects awaiting Municipal Infrastructure Grant from the Department of Water and Sanitation.
- ✚ Mpophomeni – uMngeni: Attending district IDP forum meetings, and uMngeni Municipality IDP forum meetings has proved unfruitful at this stage as the buck stops with the district Municipality. The Mpophomeni water crisis is prioritised in BESG’s water and sanitation monitoring project. District and local Municipal officials have failed to communicate with community, in terms of time frames for the reservoir building project, and how long it will take them to finish works. Furthermore, the district has not been providing constant supply of water tankers to areas where they are needed most.
- ✚ Cedara Informal Settlement -- uMngeni: In September 2020 we attended a community meeting to discuss the lack of any water supply to the settlement. BESG wrote to uMgungundlovu District Head of Infrastructure to intervene. In December 2020 the District sent out a Technical Officer to assess the water situation and recommend a method of providing a water source.



Meeting between BESG, uMDM official and community members of Cedara Informal Settlement on water issues.



Cedara Informal Settlement witness the installation of their first water source

3. Advanced community housing literacy training

This programme was developed to respond to community activists who wanted to have a deeper knowledge of legislation and practice. The ultimate objective being the creation of a People's housing Alliance/Network comprising NGOs, CBOs and social movements across KZN to provide mutual support and learning and a collective platform for engaging with the state on higher level issues of land and housing policy, resource allocation, and procurement. It was also a prime opportunity for BESG to harvest the knowledge and experience of the previous Executive Director, and instill his insights into a new generation of land and housing activists.

In the previous reporting period 17 community leaders from across KwaZulu-Natal took part in the first Advanced Housing Literacy Training Programme over 3 days in September 2019, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, hosted by our strategic partner Ujamaa. The programme covered:

- Housing policy: Evolution of the Housing Subsidy Scheme
- Housing subsidy programmes and instruments: Something for everyone
- Housing supply and demand:
- Land access and tenure
- Beneficiary administration
- The Right to Adequate Housing
- Upgrading of informal settlements programme (UISP)
- Full, permanent services - Norms and Standards
- Housing typologies, density, cost & financing
- Quality control & regulation of house construction
- Project cycle
- Procurement
- Roles of Province, the Local Municipality, the community
- The professional team
- Social Justice – when things go wrong



In this closing session held in 2019, activists/participants across KZN are seen to be voting to form a KZN People's Housing Alliance to provide cross-learning and mutual support, and to set up an activists' WhatsApp group in order to maintain contact.

This programme was suspended in 2020 and completely derailed by social distancing protocols, continued closure of the university campus, and challenges with internet access and equipment to hold virtual group meetings in remote locations. BESG redesign the entire programme to work on-site with smaller groups around specific themes, e.g., informal settlement upgrading, rural housing, People's Housing Process.

People's Housing Process

Our community housing support work is best illustrated as a 3-tier pyramid. The higher you go, the more intensive and sustained is the support we provide to those communities who are deeply involved in exercising their own agency. At the base, a lot of ad hoc training and advice work takes place.



About ¼ of the communities we touch need longer term development support. They move to the next level, where we provide ongoing support aimed at empowering them to engage with government (local and provincial) around their development needs. The dominant form of housing delivery in KwaZulu-Natal is "turnkey contracting", where an Implementing Agent – usually a firm of consulting engineers or a construction company – takes responsibility for all aspects of development. Our largest target groups emerge from communities in blocked projects due to any combination of not being prioritised, unresolved land-legal issues, lack of bulk services, and simple bureaucratic inertia. We aim to support 15 communities in a 3-year cycle at a deeper level, where they are sufficiently informed to develop their own engagement strategies.

At the top tier, a small number of communities has opted to drive their own development via the Enhanced People's Housing Process. This is very intensive work, and demands a lot of training and mobilisation, as officials have developed a mindset over many years that communities are a "social risk to be mitigated." In the PHP paradigm, communities drive decision making, assisted by a Community Resource Organisation (CRO) that provides social, technical, financial and administrative support through the entire development process.

Over the year under review, BESG has been working with the following communities toward a People's Housing Process project. All projects are at capacity building stage with a view to applying for Pre-Project Facilitation funding:

- ✚ *Nkululeko Farm Communal Property Association (CPA), Mpofana (60 units):* Land restitution project with post settlement support grant. IDP approval for 60 units. The CPA has elected to go PHP, opportunity for an integrated farm-dweller support project.
- ✚ *Amajuba Development Association (ADA), Newcastle (270 units):* Voluntary association organisation formed after multiple land invasions in Madadeni. ADA has offer of land from the Ingonyama Trust Board, and is earmarked for Informal Settlement Upgrading.
- ✚ *Amahlongwa, uMzinto eThekweni Municipality:* Potential 1,000-unit rural housing project in planning stage. All local stakeholders in support of PHP.
- ✚ *Nkanini community, uMlalazi (Eshowe District) (1,000 unit rural):* Potential 1,000-unit rural housing project in IDP. Traditional Local Council in support of PHP. In October BESG assisted with a funding application to support the establishment of 3 women's block-making cooperatives.
- ✚ *Nkungumathe rural housing project, Nkandla (1, 000 units):* Community and Inkosi has been advocating for subsidies since former MEC promised a project. The community faces water supply challenges.

4. Special Needs Housing

For over 15 years BESG has supported other Non-Profit Organisations who provide residential care or support in some form or another to some of the most vulnerable members of our society – orphans, street children, survivors of domestic violence, and many other groups. This support is based on technical advice, assistance in securing housing subsidies and in developing and implementing plans to provide shelter and care support.

Two project agreements were concluded in respect of the Khayaletu and Save the Children home extensions pilot projects. However, the implementation of the Khayaletu Street Children's Shelters redevelopment was the only success story. Although, funding was secured for the Save the Children pilot project, to provide extensions to township housing for AIDS-affected orphans. The site that was chosen was aborted due to the hard lockdown forcing a change in circumstances on the part of the home owner. Save the Children in the meantime merged into a national entity and changed their strategic focus to child protection. In the process they withdrew support from the network of creches they supported across eThekweni, and were not supportive of moving the pilot to another location.

After negotiating the detailed conditions of contract and the project agreement being signed in the previous period, the project was thereafter transferred to our trading company for implementation.



Pine Street, Khayaletu Street Children's Shelter – Entire construction team together with BESG and YFC on signing of contract with GoPlan Homes before commencement of construction in October 2020

Covid-19 Action for Water and Sanitation Monitoring Project

Following on the success of the Accounting for Basic Services in 2019, an optimum re-granting relationship with Heinrich Böll Stiftung was established. Funding for R214,000 was secured in June 2020 to undertake a 6-month spatial mapping and service delivery monitoring project -- the Covid-19 Action for Water and Sanitation monitoring project -- in 6 informal settlements.

At the height of lockdown, BESG undertook a 6-month monitoring project in 14 settlements to support the roll-out of water and sanitation as part of the emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic, this project is an extension of that work in 6 of the settlements encompassing a more enhanced and deeper fieldwork. BESG worked in collaboration with these communities to jointly undertake a mapping and service delivery monitoring exercise in order to report on the state of shared water and sanitation services, as part of the emergency response spearheaded by the National Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation from the start of the hard lockdown. These 6 settlements comprised of:

- Foreman Road, eThekweni Municipality
- Bhambayi Informal Settlement – Southern Portion, eThekweni Municipality
- Shiyabazali Informal Settlement, uMgungundlovu District & uMgeni Municipality
- Nkanini, King Cetshwayo District & uMlalazi Local Municipality
- Mkholombe, Ugu District & Ray Nkonyeni Local Municipality
- Hlaleleni Farmers’ Association, Endumeni Local Municipality

This project was considered a demonstration, or pilot project with very modest objectives given that it was a rapid response born of the Coronavirus pandemic – for communities to develop the capacity and tools to monitor the delivery of critical public services. In considering the potential for replication, the 6 communities with whom we partnered each had distinct challenges. There was an equal balance of urban and rural settlements; some with similar challenges over physical access; others with failed tanker delivery and dysfunctional services. However, there is no “one size fits all” in implementing community-driven development – only in the analysis thereof does one look for commonalities. The conditionalities affecting each community form the basis for understanding what is possible, both technically and socially: Settlement size and density, topography, access to mains water, community dynamics, and, not least, whether the settlement is transient or suitable for permanent upgrading.

It also demonstrated the power of community agency, with technical support from an intermediary such as BESG, to co-create solutions to development and service delivery challenges, and for citizens to hold government to account in fulfilling its mandates. One of the big failings in the implementation of the National Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme over the past 10 years has been the lack of community engagement. As it was envisaged in key Policy Principles for Informal Settlement Upgrading, set out in Chapter 3 of the 2009 National Housing Code (p13):

“Engagement between community members and their local authorities is of the utmost importance to ensure locally appropriate solutions.”

Among the first emergency measures implemented by government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic were to emphasise the importance of social distancing and personal hygiene, including washing hands frequently. These measures that are extremely difficult to put into practice in dense settlements such as Foreman Road, where the level of, and access to, basic interim services (water and sanitation) is severely constrained. Part of the R500bn Covid-19 emergency funding package was a commitment of R20bn to help local municipalities improve access to water and sanitation.



Aerial photograph showing locations of interim services Foreman Road Informal Settlement

The project had two objectives in Foreman Road, informed by a baseline study and focus group meeting with the leadership of the Mayibuye People’s Movement:

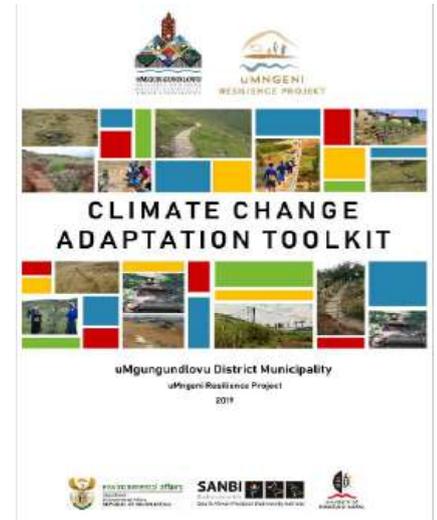
- To monitor the functionality of the Communal Ablution Blocks (CABs) and other service delivery points that had been installed by eThekweni Municipality. This was undertaken weekly over a period of 12 weeks across the settlement by a network of trained volunteers.
- To assess the adequacy of water and sanitation and whether access could be improved in the short term by non-invasive means. This was undertaken by an Engineering Technician and Facilitator from BESG and then reported back to community representatives on 10 December. Foreman Road Informal Settlement was

While there were many challenges related to lockdown conditions – offices being closed, officials being in isolation, sourcing venues to meet that allowed for compliance – the most prevalent challenge remains one of mindset: Over 26 years of the new dispensation, service delivery has been contaminated by a patronising culture of “we know what is best” that sees citizens as passive beneficiaries, and that has been further corrupted by patronage politics. There were inevitably many technical challenges in undertaking such work. BESG has a long tradition of integrating technical and social processes. This is key to solutions being feasible and socially acceptable.

BESG gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in making this pilot project possible.

BESG Development Services, our trading company undertook the following projects; Our Joint Venture contract with Swelihle Agricultural and Environmental Group involves a series of measures to strengthen community resilience to the impacts of climate change, in particular the unpredictable cycles of drought and severe storms. The project was entering its third and final year when Covid-19 and hard lockdown struck.

The focus for this year was to conduct training in the Toolkit on Climate-Smart Human Settlements Planning and Design for provincial and local government officials and traditional leaders. The contract period was extended by 6 months and the training was modified into a series of virtual sessions conducted during January and February 2021.



Save the Children Home Extensions for Orphaned Children, eThekweni

This was a pilot project, to provide extensions to the township houses of carers of orphans, that was blocked by KZN Human Settlements in 2017 due to land legal problems with two of the sites selected by Save the Children. The project was repackaged as Phase 2 with a single site in Hammarsdale. Tenders had been invited in February 2020 but we were unable to award the contract when hard lockdown was implemented. When the construction industry reopened in July 2020, we were unable to gain possession as two sons of the owner, who had been living on site, refused to vacate. The project had to be abandoned by mutual agreement.

Khayaletu Shelters for Street Children, Msunduzi

In November 2019 we had entered into contract with Youth for Christ KZN to act as project manager for the redevelopment of the Khayaletu Shelters for Street Children in the Pietermaritzburg CBD, after KZN Human Settlements approved R4,5m of special needs housing subsidy. Tenders were invited in August 2020 and Go Plan Homes took occupation of site in October.



She Khumalo and Liz Govender at the Pine Street Khayaletu street children's shelter that is going to get a makeover. PHOTO: MOKKETSU MAMANE

Courtesy: The Witness

The project could not have come at a better time. The shelter was forced to close in June 2018 due to its dilapidated state. The directive from the Covid-19 Joint Command Centre for municipalities to clear the streets of homeless people during hard lockdown resulted in over 300 people being crowded into two temporary shelters, in conditions that were bound to place people at risk.

Construction continued to be hampered by knock-on delays caused by lockdown on steel manufacturing and other industries that supply the construction sector. Practical completion is anticipated in August 2021.

Our thanks are extended to the donors who supported our work during the year:

Copies of our February 2021 audited Annual Financial Statements are available on request.

FINANCE

