

Groups to learn their way around the municipality

by **Thabisile Gumedede**

ELECTIONS come and go yet there are many people who remain ignorant of municipal processes and how they can participate in municipal matters.

This realisation has led the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Built Environment Support Group (BESG) to offer courses free of charge to rural and urban communities to teach them how to engage with municipal officials and structures around local government legislation, integrated development planning (IDP) processes and how to budget for the upliftment of their communities.

The programme, called the Kuyasa Capacity Building Programme for Community Based Organisations (CBOs), is an outreach programme where BESG goes to the concerned communities. The programme will begin in January next year and will run for 10 months.

During that time, qualifying participants will attend a series of nine workshops.

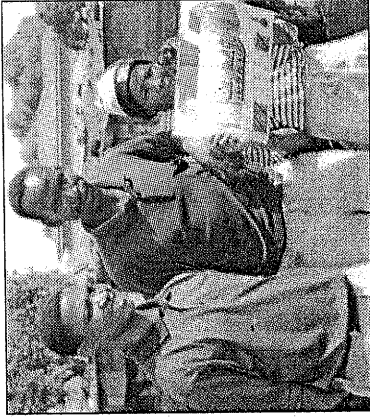
Twelve CBOs will be eligible for the programme, selected on the basis of the development needs of their communities.

On completion of the programme, CBOs will be better equipped to strengthen accountable local leadership and promote and secure the rights of residents for basic services and housing.

Project manager Zolani Mbhele said that many people are unaware of how they can get involved in or benefit from development policies.

"This programme teaches communities the correct routes to take when requiring municipal services. Even during the recent IDP izimbizo many people were uncertain as to what was going on," he said.

To qualify for the pro-



Community leaders from Soweto settlement attended a Kuyasa workshop.

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gramme, CBOs must submit a letter of motivation in which they demonstrate their commitment to community development and highlight their developmental needs. The CBO will need to have a regular meeting venue where the workshops can be conducted.

Letters of motivation must also be accompanied by a letter of support from the local councillor. Each participating CBO will receive certificates.

For more information, contact the BESG offices at 371 Jabu Ndlovu Street (Loop) or phone 033 394 4980. Closing date for applications is December 12.