

BESG ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Feroza Suleman

BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Welcome to the BESG Annual Report 2023

Welcome to the Annual Report for 2023 of our esteemed organization, dedicated to advocacy and social justice work in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). We are thrilled to have you join us on this journey as we reflect upon the impactful initiatives, milestones, and progress achieved over the past year. If you not familiar how BESG came about - BESG was established in 1983, initially as a volunteer organisation within the former University of Natal Department of Architecture and Allied Disciplines, as a support group that defended communities against eviction from informal settlements in urban areas. The organisation now works with a number of progressive, committed and creative partners and funders that support and assist BESG and their communities it serves in their struggles for justice.

In the words of the late and highly respected Brazilian philosopher and educator, Paulo Freire “At the point of encounter there are neither the utterly ignorant nor the perfectly wise, there are only those who are prepared to know more than they now know”. BESG is always on the trajectory of learning and encourages everyone, from staff to community partners, to participate and raise questions as a question is a question and through questioning we learn.

In this report, you will find a comprehensive overview of the various projects undertaken by our organization throughout 2023. From supporting marginalized communities and community formations rooted in a sound praxis of empowerment, through to reinforcing the organisation’s focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of BESG and a progressive organisational culture, refining planning, learning which underpins people’s advocacy at community level, reflection, education and skill-building programs to raising awareness about pressing social issues - each endeavor has been driven by our passion for positive change. In addition to this was the building relationships of trust, solidarity and care with all stakeholders. This process further encouraged BESG to champion “sustainability” issues in human settlements work, in the form of citizenship development and promoting participatory democracy, poverty reduction initiatives, gender and environmental justice. The past year has definitely been a jam-packed year that has delivered great results on our goals and objectives as an organization following our extensive strategic process.

In this report partners and sponsors are able to read how our long-term programs continue to successfully serve the most vulnerable in our society - our Livelihood and Tenure Security Training (LTS), Housing Support, Local Economic Initiatives, Climate Change Adaptation and Awareness programmes, along with our local governance programme focusing on access to basic services, more relevant than ever to our ecological, social and economic systems together, and finally our professional support to other Community Agencies developing effective alliances and movements. Moreover, none of this would have been possible without the support from our generous donors, partners, volunteers, and community members who share in our vision for a more just society. Your contributions have not only fueled these initiatives but also served as an inspiration for us to continue pushing boundaries.

As you delve into this report's pages filled with stories of resilience, transformational impact assessments, financial summaries reflecting transparency and accountability - we hope that it serves as a testament to the power participatory practice and of collective action. BESG works in solidarity and with action to ensure the dignity and rights of its community partners are upheld. As I think back to the past year and the impact of our work, it would not have been possible without the amazing staff, volunteers and community partners.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey towards creating lasting change in KwaZulu-Natal. Together let us celebrate achievements while recognizing that there is still much work ahead. With your continued support and collaboration moving forward into 2024 we remain steadfastly committed to advocating for justice on behalf of those whose voices have been silenced for far too long.

Message from our Executive Director



FEROZA SULEMAN

BESG Executive Director

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"The thought manifests as the word. The word manifests as the deed. The deed develops into a habit. And the habit hardens into a character. So, watch the thought and its ways with care. And let it spring from love born out of respect of all beings"
Spiritual quote

I am thrilled to present the 2023 Annual Report of BESG, the NGO dedicated to advocacy and social justice. This past year has been an incredible journey as we relentlessly pursued our mission to create a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

February 2023 was a full year following the implementation of our enhanced strategy. This 6-month strategic planned process was finalized in March 2022 and involved all relevant stakeholders, from community representatives, staff and the board. Out of this, the foundation of trust and solidarity was further solidified for the common good of all.

BESG has the skill and competence to navigate the political and terrain complexities.

As a civil society organisation, we have generated unstoppable movement, pushing for required transformation and the concept of sustainability is reflected in our culture of sustainable behavior in all our work. It has developed sound relationships of trust, respect and solidarity with communities. These are some of the elements of its praxis which through action/reflection is deepened and becomes a consistent practice across the board with staff. The BESG praxis is the CONSTANT in a set of internal and external variables that is beyond its control.

In this year with challenges, new opportunities presented itself with BESG reinvigorating community driven development in the field of housing, local economic initiatives, reviving previously fractured relationships with key partner organisations and other network partners. It was a jam-packed year that has delivered great results on our goals and objectives as an organisation.

Our unwavering commitment to championing the rights of marginalized communities and addressing systemic inequalities has yielded remarkable achievements. By providing vital support, and advocating for the rights of the marginalised, we have been able to make a tangible difference in the lives of our community partners, offering them hope and a chance for a brighter future.

Our efforts in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment have also garnered notable outcomes.

Through targeted initiatives, we have worked tirelessly to dismantle barriers that hinder the progress of women and girls, fostering an environment where their voices are heard, their rights protected, and their leadership nurtured.

Environmental sustainability remains a key tenet of our work. In collaboration with communities and partners, we have implemented projects that address climate change, promote conservation, and ensure the preservation of natural resources for generations to come.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the unwavering dedication and passion of our incredible team and the support we receive from generous donors, volunteers, and partners. Together, we have built a network of change-makers who believe in the power of advocacy and social justice.

While we celebrate these achievements, we also recognize the persistent challenges that lie ahead. In the face of adversity, we remain resolute in our commitment to pushing for systemic change, amplifying marginalized voices, and creating lasting impact.

As we embark on the next chapter of our journey, I invite each and every one of you to join us in our pursuit of a more just and equitable world. Together, we can create a future where no one is left behind, and every individual can thrive.

Meet the BESG Board



Sihle Ndlovu
Chairman



Vincent Myeni
Board Member



Ndabuko Majola
Board Member



Mpumelelo Khoza
Board Member



Sthandiwe Mthuli
Board Member



Thabani Mkhize
Board Member

Meet the BESG Team

I want to personally thank each and every board member, staff and partner for your commitment, dedication and support over the past year. It has been an AMAZING ride and I am proud to be in this whirlwind of awesomeness with each and every one of you in making positive in-roads.



Feroza Suleman
Executive Director



Duduzile Radebe
Programmes
Manager



Khulekani Mfeka
Senior Facilitator



Nomtha Sikhosana
Facilitator



Peace Ndlovu
Project Assistant



Willem Steenkamp
Accountant



Devika Ramdhany
Office Administrator



Dudu Mhlongo
Office Support

Year in Review

Regarding the general conditions affecting the project, the adverse social, environmental and economic During the reporting period, South Africa experienced immense social, political, economic and environmental crises. These have had a direct negative impact on economically deprived people across the country, including communities where BESG is actively supporting community action, viz., communities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Of critical importance is the growing levels of unemployment, which has severe repercussions for families and its members, particularly children and youth. Individuals are left to fend for themselves and be able to access basic life necessities such as food and shelter. Taking into consideration the dire impacts of COVID-19 and unrest that took place in July 2021, many companies, businesses and small businesses were forced to either close down or scale down. As a result, the first casualties were unskilled people being laid off from regular and even part time employment.

Whilst government responded to this by introducing the R350 Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant, particularly for individuals who are “currently unemployed and do not receive any other form of social grant or UIF payment”, this has been found to not be enough to address the level of economic deprivation that exists. For instance, the February 2023 Household Affordability Index compiled by the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity group (PMBEJD) showed that the average cost of the Household Food Basket was R4,928.34 – this was up R10.91 (0.2%), from R4,917.42 in January 2023, and up R572.64 (13.1%), from R4,355.70 in February 2022.¹

Levels of trauma and desperation, resulting from people’s inability to actively participate in the economy manifest in increased gender-based violence, substance abuse and very high crime statistics. As of February 2023, 7 555 people were murdered, the police Minister reported that 3 144 people were killed with a firearm, 2 498 with other weapons such as knives, sharp and blunt instruments, bricks and in many cases bare hands. In reporting on crime statistics, the Minister highlighted that the “high rates of unemployment and poverty levels, the mushrooming of informal settlements with little to no services and other socio-economic ills are breeding criminality, coupled by high number of undocumented foreign nationals, that are hard to trace after the commission of a crime”.²

On the political landscape, factionalism and contestation for positions of power has continued to dominate the discourse with the governing African National Congress, and this has negative effects in terms of fueling corruption and political killings. This political instability in the KZN province continues to impact the delivery of programme outputs, especially in instances where violence and murder put a halt to activities and also results in people being fearful to openly advocate for their rights. An example of this happened towards the end of 2022, in Ward 99 of eThekweni, where BESG engages extensively in aMahlongwa, London farm and Samsen farm. eThekweni Ward 99 residents proved they wanted change by voting for the IFP in large numbers in a highly contested by-election that took place in December 2022. This election came as a result of the assassination of the ward’s previous Councillor in September 2022, whom BESG had been actively working with on their housing and other developmental issues. This killing came as a great shock to both the community and BESG as it precipitated the near collapse of the work done to that point.

The effects of climate change to the environment and the unseasonal weather patterns have been disruptive to peoples’ livelihoods. With this climate phenomenon known as La Niña, KwaZulu Natal (KZN) experienced one of its worst natural disasters, when heavy rains resulted in extreme flooding that swept away and, in many instances, destroyed people’s dwellings and business premises. An estimated 459 number of people lost their lives, whilst over 4,000 people were left without a place to stay, and had to be housed in temporary shelters in and around the eThekweni area. Impoverished people residing in rural areas and those residing in informal settlements were the hardest hit by the flooding, these are primarily where BESG implements its

¹ <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/average-household-food-basket-increased-by-r57264-in-february-year-on-year>

² <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-bheki-cele-quarter-crime-statistics-17-feb-2023-0000>



Figure 1 - Flood damage at Foreman Road

programs. For this reason, BESG had to develop a strategy for responding to the ensuing disaster, by first contacting community representatives, to understand the flood's impact on their communities. When visiting informal settlement communities supported by BESG in eThekweni Municipality, it became apparent that people had been devastated by the extent of the destruction and loss.

Furthermore, our Objective 4 was adversely affected by these weather patterns where local economic initiatives were being implemented in the form of agroecology. We have had to adapt the programme to appoint experts in agroecology to advise on methods to utilise towards sustainable farming

approaches that is more climate resilient.

With the incessant rains, houses in some of the communities BESG support have been adversely affected. Fortunately, having an in-house skilled technical person we were able to advise and assist affected households in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP), launched in 2011, has consistently failed to address the delivery of government subsidized housing. The budgets for Housing and services are decreasing as austerity measures are put in place, with increased backlogs, delayed and failed housing projects, corruption at tender allocation and housing allocation and the lack of support of the ePHP process in KZN. While several housing policy interventions have been developed, the housing backlog is estimated at more than 2,4 million, with low-income groups being the most affected. According to The National Housing Needs Register (NHNR) there are 2,456,773 households registered and awaiting assistance as at 28 February 2023.

On a positive note, due to the extensive work on 'Relationship Building' with various stakeholders, BESG was approached in February 2023 by Msunduzi Local Municipality, Department of Human Settlements, towards collaborative work in communities within this precinct. This is significant for BESG as the Municipality was previously mooted from engaging with BESG due to the fractious relationship with the previous Executive Director.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, funding to NGOs through CSIs and other mechanisms was drastically curtailed. Our strategy of 'relationship building' has seen BESG collaborating more closely with partner organisations and being approached by additional communities regarding their housing and other social issues.

There is growing collaboration with councillors in some of the communities BESG support, for example in the Umgeni Municipality and the eThekweni Municipality to name a few. On realising the value of our work, these councillors have been able to incorporate the work as their own achievements with their respective local municipalities. This has been good for us from an advocacy point of view as they are also actively involved in the project work.

BESG and Community Partner's Reflection on the impact KZN Flood KwaZulu Natal experienced one of its worst natural disasters, in April and also in May 2022, negatively impacting the lives of over a million people. These were as a result of heavy rains and storms that raged across the province, with most damage reported in coastal areas in and around Durban. Approximately 435 people were reported dead, as a direct result, there are also a number of people who were reported missing, and have not been located. Property such as vehicles and houses were destroyed, including business premises, equipment, road infrastructure, water and sewer infrastructure.



Figure 2: Temporary shelter for flood victims

Impoverished households and individuals, especially residing in informal settlements and in rural areas, were the hardest hit by this disaster. Just as they were recovering from the hard impact experienced from COVID 19 and July unrest, they had to experience the loss of their dwellings, saw their family members and neighbours killed by buildings collapsing on them, others swept away by flood water and others trapped and buried under rubble.

BESG's commitment to remain in close solidarity with impoverished people, and seeking to put this in action, particularly at a time when they were reeling. Our task was to be present, to hear their voices and to ask how could we journey alongside them, in their struggles. We were again humbled to be allowed access to their pain. In the aftermath, we saw the devastation that had occurred, were also experienced people's trauma, shock, but we also saw people's resilience and camaraderie amongst community members.

As the launch and part of its movement building objective, within the scope of the new strategy (2022-2025), BESG felt it necessary to bring together community groups that we work with, from areas affected by the disaster. This was structured as a space for community partners and BESG, to reflect together, and to explore common strategies for addressing issues identified. This report provides a summary of reflections and recommendations from the meeting.

To conclude workshop proceedings, participants reflected on trauma, and how it may be presenting itself within their communities, following the loss and devastation caused by floods. A majority community partners indicated that they have observed the following issues, linked to trauma: substance abuse, gender based violence, depression and suicide, following the floods.



Figure Above: show community partners attending BESG workshop

MILESTONES

GENDER WORKSHOPS

The very core of BESG's work is grounded in accompanying impoverished communities as they seek to access government's basic services that are aimed at improving their lives. Women in these communities are present and understand a myriad of dynamics that take place in each community, they are the ears and eyes of their communities. BESG has largely gained immense knowledge and understanding from the many women who actively participate and contribute to the work that BESG does in their communities.

Gender justice in service delivery project implementation has brought to the forefront, the invaluable role of women, who bear the highest responsibility in their households and communities. In particular, project activities by BESG are implemented during the week and during the time when most people, especially men, are at work. This partly explains the reason that it is women who participate in project activities. Despite this critical role played by women in society, the socio-economic and political landscape in south Africa and in the world in general, continues to diminish the voices and recognition of women.

The programme took the form as follows:

- Scanning the gender balance in each of the community groups we work with
- Gender Inclusion workshops
- Understanding and elevating the role played by women in society
- The value of women in community struggles
- Finding and utilizing spaces for women to develop their leadership skills.

The workshops were held in the following communities:

Shiyabazali Gender workshop

BESG is supporting advocacy work started by women in Shiyabazali, an informal settlement located on the banks of Howick Falls. The work supported included capacity building on municipal systems, understanding IDP processes, advocacy on access to water and sanitation and food security.

Because the work done has been women led, it became necessary to reflect together with the Jabavu group, on the gendered nature of the work they have done. The workshop held in July highlighted that the group had not necessarily made space to reflect on their shared work as having a gendered perspective.

The workshop therefore aimed at recognizing and celebrating the important initiative played by women who constitute the group, enabling them to reflect on what it means, and how they can leverage on this, as they move forward with their community struggles.

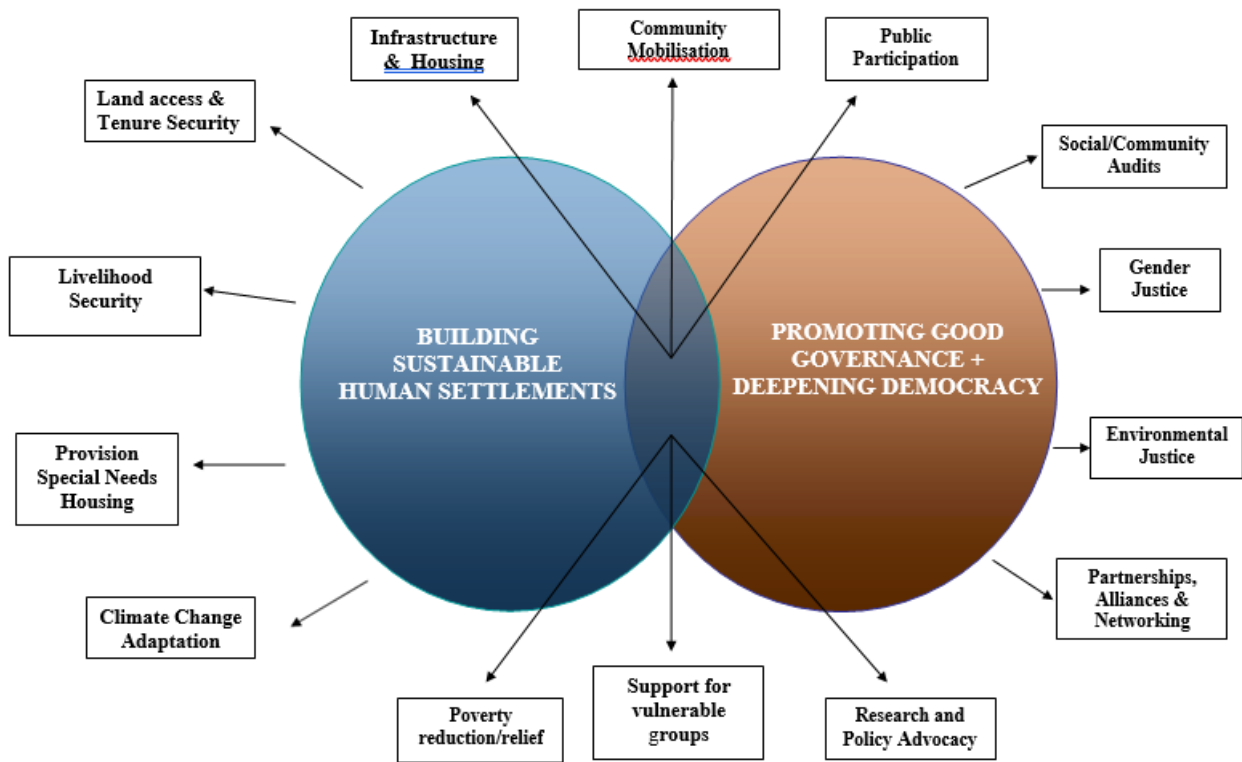
P46 Gender workshop

With the context of the P46 community, BESG having supported this community, after being invited to support the P46 committee and the Amajuba Development Association (ADA), there was a realization that the participation of women in leadership positions was deficient. For this reason, BESG proposed a workshop with the then current leadership to reflect of the role of women and how this can be addressed.

In August 2022 the gender workshop held with this community, therefore focused on engaging with the ADA and P46 committee leadership regarding the benefits of increasing gender inclusion in community struggles. This also looked at the importance of elevating women's voices

Undertaking this workshop has resulted in the two committees being more intentional during their recent elections in ensuring that there is gender balance within their leadership structures. In addition to this, it was reported that there is an increase in women's voices.

BESG Interlocking Programmes



Year in Review:

Objective 1: Livelihood and tenure security



Objective 1

Despite ongoing social, political and economic limitations experienced at community/project level and at the organisational level, within BESG, progressive strides have been made within the current reporting period.

This strategic objective is aimed at ensuring that participating households, in particular female headed households, are resilient to vulnerable conditions that compromise their well-being, by addressing challenges with regard to water, fuel, shelter, insecurity, waste, domestic hazards, and to initiate projects to address livelihood and environmental challenges.



Figure above: Maqongqo LTS workshop

To date BESG has conducted Livelihood and Tenure Security (LTS) training with 135 participants of the 240 planned for a 3-year cycle. The current numbers were achieved from the 8 communities workshoped in year 1. The LTS programme was conducted with participants from 4 municipalities namely; Msunduzi Local Municipality, uMngeni Local Municipality, Ndwedwe Local Municipality, and Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The

communities include Dambuza, France Mpumelelo, Imbali 14, Bhamshela, SACCA, Mvelweni, Maqongqo, and Jabavu.

During the project's evaluation, participants reported that they were able to utilize their learning from the LTS programme to implement the skills in practice. Examples of practical application include the establishment of household and community food gardens, applying water and energy conservation measures, climate change mitigation strategies, and other household resilience strategies learnt, to mention a few.

This feedback demonstrates the improvement in the households' resilience in dealing with general life shocks such as load shedding, the general rise in prices of food and other goods, the recurrent flooding, lack of constant water supply and more to maintain their livelihoods with limited resources at their disposal. LTS modules completed included training modules such as; Water Security, Energy Security, Health and Safety, Household Budgeting, Nutrition and Food Security, Tenure and Asset Security and Climate Change awareness together with methods for recycling solid waste. All internal post-training evaluations that are designed to take place after a 3-month period were undertaken with all groups, to demonstrate the impact of the training.

At the beginning of 2023, additional community groups were recruited under the banner of our Livelihood Security and Tenure programme, these are; Nonzila, Samsen informal settlement, Mkhambathini ward 2, Bulwer. BESG's LTS work is the entry level intervention, a tool through which BESG builds relationships with communities, key for connecting and interacting with other stakeholders in the sector. Most communities that participate in the LTS training progress into our output 2 where additional range of community development support is offered by BESG.

France Mpumelelo: Impacts

During our engagement processes, participants shared challenges they were faced with as a community, where for instance taps are dry for days, and the community is compelled to rely on water tankers during those times which delivers insufficient amount of water and is not consistent in delivering. Participants shared their appreciation for the knowledge they have received during the workshops. They now harvest rain water for domestic use as well watering their garden. The group also mentioned they have implemented water recycling methods to stretch the little water they have.

We are beyond our Year 1 target of 80 participants. We have accomplished livelihoods training of 135 participants, (over 56% of the total 240), which indicates the appeal and need for this programme in many communities. The livelihood security programme historically shows a high level of impact in terms of household behaviour change and replicability. Of the number of participants attending the workshops, 78% have been females and many fall in the category of women headed households. For the purpose of this report, the following modules have been evaluated, water, energy, health and safety, climate change awareness and waste recycling. This objective will be easily achieved.



Woman having to carry the heavy burden on fetching water

Year in Review:

Objective 2: Housing Support



Objective 2 is our anchor work and involves long term developmental work. In the year 1, we have seen visible progress in 5 of the 18 communities towards the improvements in their living conditions. More details have been provided in Annexure A. One of the main advocacy focus for objective 2, is to call on the Department of Human Settlements to actively implement the Enhanced People's Housing Program (ePHP) policy. It is becoming increasingly evident that it will take much longer for the Department to demonstrate a willingness to implement the policy. We have accomplished solid partnerships with 6 unified community structures towards forming an alliance on advocating collectively as a movement on the ePHP which is discussed under Objective 3.

Various capacity building processes and trainings have developed the capacity of the critical mass of local leaders to engage with local government including for example, the Mayor of Umngeni Municipality, speakers and councillors of other local government structures. This capacity building is highly relevant for participants in creating increased awareness of their rights and understanding the dynamics of how and where to get relevant information in order to engage with governmental authorities and to hold them to account. Through their knowledge and actions communities have compelled municipalities to install extra stand pipes, fix water leaks, ensure daily water delivery, the building of toilets, more consistent emptying of toilets, delivery of chemical toilets, the building of tarred roads with installation of speed humps with storm water drainage.

Despite ongoing social, political and economic limitations experienced at community/project level and at the organisational level, within BESG, progressive strides have been made within the current reporting period.

The core of BESG's work is focused on enabling marginalised people to gain access to information regarding housing and basic services, including the built environment. This work also includes addressing state's inability to provide sufficient access for marginalised communities and community formations to basic services relating to human settlements. For this reason, a bulk of BESG's community partners are supported within this program.

Bhambayi

- The community was supported in engaging eThekweni Municipality - Pat Marshall housing project went into implementation in October 2022 with a budget of R74 mil, second phase of the action is advocating for livelihoods opportunities for community members during the implementation of the project and transparency regarding the housing allocations;
- June 2022, community event attended by 86 people focusing on the role of the youth in democracy;
- July 2022, a community event attended by 107 to raise awareness about disability;
- August 2022 - The annual women's day celebration attended by 122 people;
- All the events hosted by the CBO, had an emphasis on community agency and working together towards development.

Cedara Informal Settlement – uMngeni

- March 2021 – water tank provided by the District in March 2021, frequency of water supply is remains unsatisfactory. BESG reported to UMDM operations that there are complaints about the supply of water and BESG appointed 2 local residents to monitor and report water supply regularly, to BESG and the municipality. The community reported that incidents of underground water emerging, the BESG technical team is working towards following up on this report. The community, which is an informal settlement, feels alienated from the RDP township-with some residents threatening to destroy their water tank. The community has grown from +45 h/h to 60+, a second tank is required.

Dambuza

In April 2022 the community group was supported in understanding the land expropriation process - information about land expropriation notices published by Msunduzi Municipality. Continued advocacy for the most vulnerable members of their community. In May 2022, the MEC for KZN Human Settlements launched a temporary housing project in the area for most vulnerable members of the community with unsafe shelter. The KZN Human Settlements is building at the rate of 12 temporary houses per month. The community group continued to monitor the erection and allocation of temporary housing units between June 2022 and February 2023. A total of 84 houses have been erected. The community leaders were supported using their influence in the ward committee to ensure that there is transparency and equality in the process.

Denmark

The community-based organisation was supported in organizing an Earth Day commemoration in April 2022. This event created a space to discuss environmental issues that concern the community. Fruit trees were planted and vegetable seedlings planted as a communal activity. This sparked interest to other members of the community. A total of six household gardens have been established to address food security needs for the households. One communal garden has been established for income generation purposes.



Endumeni Civic Association

The group was supported in self-organising and supporting communities where access to basic services and housing is compromised within the Endumeni Municipality.

- June 2022, two engagements with Umzinyathi District Municipality, the engagements have not yielded any results
- The ECA engaged the services of the Legal Resources Centre to write to the municipality. In April 2022, the association was supported in using the technical assessment report was produced by BESG technician to engage eNdumeni Municipality housing officials regarding defective houses.
- August 2022, the ECA was joined by the Endumeni Development Forum, a formation of younger activists for joint action going forward. The joint action now comprises the ECA, Dundee Ratepayers Association and the Endumeni Development Forum.
- Between September and December 2023, the ECA held four meetings with the Dundee Hospital management up to the District Health Director to advocate for better treatment for patients and employment opportunities for the local youth. The engagements were successful to the point that the District Health department has committed to bimonthly meetings with ECA.

Foreman Road

-People affected by the floods in April 2022 and were moved to a local church building the municipality has built temporarily shelters on a better position away from flooding areas, since the church wanted to use their property. Members of the communities that were affected but still have sites to rebuild away from flooded areas were provided with material to reconstruct their houses

-The community has been given sirens to use when there is a criminal activity or fire in the area. The community has been told and they are aware that the place can never be developed but there are plans to relocate them the areas that are planned for future developments in the city and they are happy to move but they are worried about being moved far from their places of employment.



Foreman Road - "Many hands make light work"

-One the issues faced by the Forman Road informal settlement is inadequate water and sanitation facilities due to over population and broken taps and toilets. After two years of waiting for the repair of toilets by eThekweni Municipality, in October 2022, the community group decided to fix the community ablution blocks themselves. The community volunteers were assisted with training on plumbing skills and materials. -Two ablution blocks were repaired back to functionality. The community group also continued to advocate for refurbishment of CABS that required major works. In December 2022, eThekweni Municipality sent plumbers to refurbish the CABS to full functionality.

Jabavu-uMngeni

In August 2022, BESG facilitated the delivery of donated second-hand clothes to victims of shack fires. BESG further facilitated the referral of an orphan who had challenges with unhealthy family issues to the local Social worker. BESG objectively engages on various community development issues with the community of Jabavu. The need to create platforms for male and female teenagers, women development and organizing recycling collectors was identified. By November, a strategic planning session was held with the local Councillor and crafted a plan of action and key stakeholders on issues identified.

We progressed to more human settlements related issues, whereby we assisted Residents committee write a letter to Mayor regarding updates on project progress for Housing and Land occupation issues at project site. The Resident Committee had a meeting with the Municipal Manager who explained the progress of the 1500-unit housing project.

Jabavu is one of the community partners that have plans for the 1500-unit housing project (being shared by Jabavu, Shiyabazali, and two other informal settlements). BESG is planning to unite these communities in order to provide housing support for them to collectively advocate for the housing project in question.

Additionally, in February 2023, BESG met with the Local Disaster Office to advocate for assistance to those households that were hard hit by floods. BESG also met with uMngeni municipality's Youth Office Manager discussing and reporting on drug use and youth support issues that had surfaced during a session where the BEST Tool was facilitated in the settlement. A concept note on youth programmes was later developed and sent to the youth office manager, with the purpose draw the municipality's attention to the spread of drug abuse and addiction in Howick Ward 12 and to find ways to mitigate its effects through the implementation of awareness raising campaigns, training, and rehabilitation for youth and local communities. A number of drug addicted youth and their families had reported themselves during one of the LTS training sessions and asked BESG to support them to get out of drugs.

London Farm - eThekweni



Engagements and trainings with the community group in London farm alternatively happen at Mahlongwa because the areas are closely situated to one another. Volunteers convene in one place for activities such as capacity building.

Water and sanitation monitoring commenced, with the following key activities taking place; introductory meeting, recruitment of volunteers, practical mapping of existing basic municipal services, training in developmental local government-wide modules such as Municipal Structures Act, and Municipal Systems Act.

BESG also facilitated a community meeting, where local leadership was present to discuss challenges and to plan a way forward. The provision of water and sanitation services, by local volunteers, was also introduced. The community requested BESG to find information on land ownership for the farm, BESG approached the Deeds office for this information, and outcomes were presented to the community. The community then took a decision to engage the land owner, who had no problem in negotiating the sale of the land with the municipality.

Mahlongwa – eThekwini

Water and Sanitation monitoring was done following training in local government, covering the following module: Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Structures Act, Climate Change, Social Audit, Practical Mapping of services. This was done because it came out during the BEST process that service delivery is one of the key challenges the community is facing. Volunteers were recruited to monitor the delivery of basic services as BESG was working with the community to monitor service delivery.

An engagement regarding the delivery of planned housing project was held with the Ward Councillor and Branch Executive Committee, strategizing on the acceleration of the housing project. The Councillor was requested to facilitate an engagement with the city of eThekwini's Human Settlement department so they can address the community with progress of project.

In the last quarter of 2022, the same Ward Councillor was fatally gunned down, as a result of ongoing local political instability. By-elections were held a few months later and the opposition party (IFP) won the elections.

In February 2023 BESG had an introductory meeting with the new Ward Councillor who is supportive of the community's plans for housing. BESG's work was introduced to the new ward Councillor, this included the introduction of key local leaders who are involved in this work. The new ward Cllr invited Bishop Mike Khumalo (one of the key community leaders BESG is working with) to become the war room chairperson, and the Chairperson of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for the housing project. The Bishop was voted as Chair of the PSC during eThekwini Human Settlement's public meeting with the community. Planned strategic interventions in Mahlongwa are yielding positive results, as we individuals involved in BESG's projects now occupy positions of influence, which is a win for project advocacy.

Madadeni P46

The main activities with this community included conflict management between the Amajuba Development Association (ADA) and the P46 community. ADA is the umbrella organization for communities in need for housing with the Amajuba District Municipality in Kwazulu-Natal. The main sources of conflict were a dictatorial attitude by ADA towards the P46 community. The matter was resolved

by electing new leaders for ADA in their annual general meeting held in April 2022. In May 2022, the new leaders of ADA were updated in the work done with the previous leaders as their handing over process was interrupted.



Our Program Manager meeting the Endumeni Civic committee

The working relationship between ADA and the P46 committee has improved making the joint advocacy work more manageable. Although the follow up process with the Newcastle Municipality had been ongoing since last year a breakthrough took place August 2022, when the joint committees of ADA and P46 managed to secure a meeting with the senior officials of the municipality. In this meeting the Newcastle Municipality formally received the draft PHP Business Plan that had been submitted to them over one year earlier. The formal receipt of

the business plan sets in motion dialogue between the municipality and the community leaders to engage and refine the plan before it can be submitted to KZN Human Settlements for funding. Follow up in this regard has so far not been successful with the municipality. The leaders of the community group have resorted to using the chairman of Ingonyama Trust Board as the land owner to assist in the negotiation with Newcastle Municipality.

The community leaders have been supported understanding the issue of gender through a workshop conducted in July 2022. As a result of their improved knowledge and sensitivity to gender equality, the community elected more women to serve in the P46 Committee. This is for the first time that women occupy strategic roles in the committee in the history of the settlement.

The member of this community group who serves as a ward committee member was supported in documenting the issues in the community for the attention of the public participation department on Newcastle Municipality and the KZN Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs.

Maqongqo - Mkhambathini

In May 2022 BESG engaged Maqongqo's the Ward Cllr, and the Task Team to seek the right information from Mkhambathini Municipality, about the current progress of the housing project. This was subsequent to a long period where the Implementing Agent (IA) was battling to reach a decision with the Municipality about the rates, and cost issues. The houses were passed years ago and the rates were no longer the same in 2022. This caused the project many unnecessary delays. Moreover, the people's right to housing was

being denied, while the municipality was taking its own time deciding on rates to pay the implementing agent.



A request for a programme plan on how the IA was going to handle the project implementation upon his return was tabled before full Council. This plan was discussed and strategized in the war room by all representing the housing portfolio and sent via the Councillor who attends full

council meetings. The most important emphasis embedded within the plan was prioritizing those who have the worst living conditions, the elderly/disabled, impoverished, and those affected by the floods.

The Councillor reported that Council rejected the Implementing Agent's programme plan as it did not meet the needs of prioritizing the most vulnerable households. By September 2022, the municipality was not

satisfied with IA's plans for resuming work and the Human Settlement officers reported they are waiting for the end of his contract so they can advertise for a new contractor to take over his duties.

In the same month, BESG and the Task Team prioritized housing issues during Public Service week, to engage with officials from different municipal and provincial governments coming out to unblock the bottlenecks and end the red-tape in the delivery of services and housing.

The housing Task Team supported by BESG continued with various engagements with different government offices including liaison with the Mkhambathini Municipal Manager, Technical Services Department, and the Provincial Department of Human Settlements. In the long run, the Task Team was called to a meeting where their housing project was discussed with Municipal officials. The municipality had been liaising with the IA to reach an agreement. In March 2023, the Mkhambathini Municipality at full Council decided to give the Implementing Agent a 12-month contract to finish the remaining houses.

Mpolweni

The community-based organisation was supported in engaging the Umgungundlovu District Municipality for the rolling out of a community based indigent support registration drive. The engagement was based on the requests from the majority of community members who are facing hardship with regards to payment for water. However, the plan for the CBO to partner with the District Municipality in conducting the registration drive was discouraged by the local ward councillor. The CBO was assisted in supporting the qualifying households by giving information and with the documentation required for indigent registration. A total of twenty-four households were approved through the assistance of the local CBO. Upon noticing the success of the local CBO, Umshwathi Local Municipality has commenced with an official registration drive.



In April 2022 discussion about housing rights for the new members of the CBO. A stakeholder analysis was conducted with the CBO in May 2022. Three meetings with key stakeholders in the community were held between July and February 2023.

Mpophomeni – uMngeni

The 2019 to 2022 project, BESG supported community groups to monitor access to water and sanitation services, facilitated LTS training, local government training and implemented various other programmes in the area.

-July 2022, BESG liaised with the local Councillor to propose capacity building sessions to enable the community to understand the indigent policy, and to assist qualifying community members to access relevant municipal services. The Councillor welcomed the suggestion especially because of its focus on training smaller groups per area and helping them understand key issues about the use of electricity, water, and valuable information on applying through the municipality, and the danger of illegally connecting electricity to avoid service delivery protests that have now dominated the township.

-Following ongoing public protests that emanated from lack of proper service delivery, BESG is exploring ways of reviving its involvement with the community. BESG is also following-up with groups that might require capacity and information on the indigent support services and registration. Through our continuous networking with uMngeni Municipality, officials are channelling their much-needed attention to the water infrastructure programmes since the month of February 2023.

Nkanini

-April 2022, the traditional leaders were exposed to the KZN Human Settlements budget and the budget speech. The community leaders have been supported in thinking through strategies on how to re-establish

a blockmaking operation for income generation. The secondary purpose of the blockmaking work is to get the community members ready to supply blocks for the planned 1000-unit housing project when it finally happens. Three training modules on enterprise development were conducted for the women block makers between May and August 2022. The second phase of the process of building the houses for the most vulnerable of the community through Operation Sukuma Sakhe is underway and two houses are built per month.

-The community group continued to monitor the building of OSS houses and a total of 18 houses have been built. In September 2022, a meeting was held with Mr Buthelezi the Housing Manager at uMlalazi Municipality to restart a conversation about the planned 1000- unit project for the Nkanini community.

A group of women was supported in thinking through the process of establishing a blockmaking establishment for the purpose of income generation. In September 2022 a workshop on business ownership was held. In October 2022, a marketing workshop was held.

Nkululeko Farm - Mpofana

In 2022, work on the PHP business plan was completed and awaiting the community's proper structure to start being advocated at municipal and provincial level. By July 2022, BEG had started with organizational development with the existing CPA members. Various workshops were held with a focus on; "Roles and Responsibilities for CPA's, Advocating for a PHP Project, Technicalities of House Building, and Mitigation of the then Climatic Conditions".

After the floods a few families in Nkululeko Farm needed the assistance with Temporary Residential Units, the community was supported in advocating and there were four beneficiaries in the area. Local people were also appointed to work when the implementation phase starts. While our activity implementation plans were obstructed by floods, arrangements were made for the residents' leadership to attend a Farmer Event where the Mpofana Local Municipality was providing financial assistance and other support for local farmers.

Further liaison with Mpofana Municipality revealed that the community needs to attend IDP roadshows where BEG assisted with plans. We were now looking into starting engagements with the local councillor as more information was with him, as the Housing officer advised. Nkululeko farm has been integrated with other 14 farms and appears in the IDP under Rural Housing as one project in the municipality's Integrated Development Plan.

BEG had further engagements with the Rural Development Department seeking assistance with holding the annual AGM and re-establishing the CPA. Disturbing information surfaced; upon acquiring the farm, the community started vandalizing infrastructure on the farm, leasing it to unknown people, and fighting with the departmental officials on many occasions. In short, the department reported to BEG that they have decided to stay out of their way and let them be because it is their farm after all.

It has become clear that the community is not united, there is very little trust amongst the group and its leadership. It is difficult to get them to collaborate on anything in such a way that the planned events BEG organizes with them they do not attend. They failed to attend planned BEG PHP Alliance meeting with other communities, they could not attend the farmers meeting, and planned engagements and workshops with them were undoable e.g. Participation workshop, Building Community Champions, IDP/Housing Advocacy, and Planned Engagements with various Stakeholders. BEG has decided to put a hold on activities with this community unless they unite and show that they are serious with their development.

Nkungumathe

The draft PHP business plan for the planned housing project has been completed. Two engagements with Nkandla Municipality have taken place in June and July 2022, for the purposes of securing an appointment to begin the engagement about the business plan. The response from the Nkandla Municipality has not been positive and the community is being supported to devise other strategies to get an audience with the municipality. Numerous attempts to follow up with Nkandla Municipality have not yielded any positive results.

Water and sanitation monitoring work took place.

Nonzila- Mkhambathini

In consultation with participating community group members, plans were put together for a social-ills programme, with local Department of Social Development (DSD) and other local stakeholders via the provincial Department of Social Development who is responsible for social programmes in the area. In addition to this, BESG met with the youth of Nonzila and established a group of committed youth who need assistance with beating drug addiction and other reported social ills.

BESG initiated a Livelihoods support programme to get the youth used to meeting and participating in programmatic work, and partner with them in improving their livelihood situation. Through the Livelihood support programme, the group was capacitated on Water Security, and Energy Security. These modules are key considering that everyone has been affected by the lack of proper water supply, a common phenomenon in the area, and that everyone is affected by load shedding that the country is currently facing.

Nyanini

BESG has been requested to work with the community of Nyanini eShowe to help with their housing project that is about to start in the area. The request came after the community noticed poor quality of houses that has been built in the past within the district.

Issues that have been identified on other housing projects: Failing foundations, cracked walls, roof leaks, doors and windows not closing properly and the lack of knowledge among community members on their rights and their involvement on their projects from initial stage, during construction and after the project has been completed.

The project will be done in phases and they also need assistance with ways to prioritize who will benefit first since the project will be done in phases and the first phase will have 300 houses. Traditional Leaders are also involved in the planning it is not only government which might also pose some challenges within communities since government boundaries and Municipality one are different and they are more likely to be a challenge with planning.

Samsen-eThekwini

In May 2022, BESG held an initial meeting with local leadership of Samsen informal settlement, with an intention to support the community to focus on improving the delivery of basic services such as water and sanitation. In 2023, BESG commenced with setting up systems for local volunteers to monitor the municipality's provision of water and sanitation services within the community. Over the next period, BESG will also be implementing the Livelihoods, Tenure and Security (LTS) training within this community.

Shiyabazali – uMngeni

-BESG's work seeks to increase the quality of life for residents in informal settlements while advocating for housing, in this reporting cycle 60 new toilets were installed, 250 solar panels were installed in the first phase of the project. BESG further championed conflict mitigation between residents in between the installation of toilets.

-The community participated in a project planning meeting, facilitated by BESG, at this meeting, a vision board was developed by the community.

-A representative team of 4 women were elected to represent the group in meetings with ward leadership about the progress of their housing project, and plans to unify the settlement in preparation for housing advocacy. The community group has been strengthened to engage with both PR and ward Councillor, Municipal Manager, and Municipal Mayor on the progress of their housing project.

- Group members, participated in a Gender Development workshop, facilitated by BESG, aimed at mobilising the group to actively advocate for gender justice, followed by a series of engagements including;

local leadership, Municipal Speaker, and Municipal Mayor engaging the group on various development issues, dissatisfaction with municipal hiring processes and others.

The group is getting used to actively engaging with their municipality, advocate for their wellbeing and have their voices heard. Amongst the key issues of discussion are engagements on land occupations on their identified housing project site, the planned development of the Howick precinct and how it is going to affect them as they live in the vicinity. uMngeni Municipality is responding positively to engagements with the community group.

-The community group, supported by BESG secured a piece of land for a gardening project under the Local Economic Development output and strengthened partnership with local church own the land.

-BESG successfully facilitated the group's partnership with slum dwellers movement, Abahlali BaseMjondolo (AbM). An introductory meeting with the provincial leadership was held with a smaller group of women leaders, this was followed by a public engagement and organizing session where the president of AbM, together with the Provincial Executive Committee was present. The Ward Councillor who has a good working relationship with the community group was also present.

Siyajabula, Msunduzi Municipality

Continuous follow up with the National Department of Women, Children, and People with Disabilities to assist housing members of Siyajabula group with housing arrangements in the CBD. In July 2022, BESG attended a webinar on Special Needs Housing Policy organized by sector stakeholders which covered the journey as organizations demanding to get the policy approved and entered into the National Housing Code, and accelerating the HS Department to work fast in approving the policy. Further attempts to contact the national department have bore no fruit. In November 2022, BESG contacted the KZN Premier's office who is responsible for the well-being of PWD's to support the group with their housing need. Due to the lack of movement, the BESG team took a decision to reduce monthly focus on this group, unless the group requested additional support.

Siyathuthuka Phase 1 defective housing project – Richmond

A number of follow-ups have been made with Public Protector following a promise that the review letter was drafted and awaiting sign-off before sending to BESG. However, the letter has still not been sent.

Year in Review:

Objective 3: Movement building



Objective 3: Movement building

This objective emerged from our communities' involvement in BESG's Strategic Planned Process. It was found that the strengthening of formations between communities with similar problems and challenges in realising their rights to housing and services, like the Enhanced People's Housing Process, impacted the strategy of building peer solidarity and alliance between the communities themselves. This insurgent knowledge with a bottom-up community driven alliance through BESG's facilitation has benefitted and strengthened their struggles and as a collective this formation was able to get an audience with the MEC's office in KZN regarding their housing issues.

The only challenge with the alliance is the proximity of the communities to each other and virtual meetings have been a challenge due to connectivity issues, now exacerbated by load-shedding.

BESG supports community groups that are spread across the province of KwaZulu Natal, some of whom have not had opportunities to engage with each other. Work within this objective emerged as a result of BESG realising that there were commonalities in the issues/themes, making this an important opportunity to bring these formations together, to explore the possibility of advocating on a common platform.

As this work was a build up from BESG facilitating cadre development for its community formations, the BESG team spent additional time thinking through ways in which the strategy can be effectively implemented. Part of this reflection incorporated assessing how other social movements are formulated and structured.

Based on BESG's work in addressing housing issues, the common thread was identified as the Enhanced People's Housing Program (EPHP) policy. This reflection was then followed up by BESG convening a workshop, where seven community formations, from Newcastle, Dundee, Mooi river, Melmoth and eThekweni, where the policy will be workshopped. Utshani Fund and Slum Dwellers International (SDI) were also invited to share lessons learnt from implementing the PHP in communities where their members are situated. The common experience by community partners that were present at this workshop was that officials and also political representatives were not well conversant with the policy provisions on PHP. As a result, calls by communities to use PHP in their housing projects have been met by resistance or ignored.

The outcome from this workshop was the formation of an alliance of community partners, to jointly advocate for the Human Settlements Department to prioritise the implementation of the policy. Following the establishment of the alliance, selected leaders organised a meeting with the office of the MEC of Human Settlements in Kwazulu Natal. The meeting was with the Head of Ministry, who was open to having further engagements with members of the alliance and other organisations that had also approached the department on similar issues.

Year in Review:

Objective 4: Local Economic Development



Objective 4: Local Economic Development (LED)

Implementing local economic development program, as envisaged in objective 4, has highlighted that the economic atmosphere in South Africa, and the world in general, which puts constraints on community formations.

The ongoing scourge of job losses and deepening unemployment in South Africa greatly impacts the most marginalised sectors of society, especially located in informal settlements and rural settings. Extended family members, especially the elderly, children, women and people with disabilities who previously depended on remittances from employed family members, no longer have this source of financial support. With this realisation, in the course of engaging with our community groups, BEGG created spaces for reflection, to analyse the economic context. Local Economic development interventions were proposed as the best approach to address the people’s diminishing ability to actively participate in the economy. During this reporting period, BEGG supported three community groups in initiating LED projects.

Denmark

A conversation about starting a communal garden for income generation purposes for the Denmark group started in July 2022. Vacant land within the community was secured and the process of preparing the land commenced. A series of meetings with the community group to clarify the process were held prior to starting the planting process in August 2022. After planting, training workshops on Business Ownership and Marketing were held in August 2022. Further training workshops on Costing and Record Keeping were held in September 2022. The group harvested vegetables twice between October and December 2022. Most of the produce was sold among their neighbours. A reflection session was January 2023 to review the process where successes and gaps were identified. One of the main gaps identified was the need for specialist agricultural extension expertise to support the work on an ongoing basis.



Nkanini



A group of women was supported in thinking through the process of establishing a blockmaking establishment for the purpose of income generation. In September 2022, a training workshop on Business Ownership was held. In October 2022, a training workshop on Marketing workshop was held. A significant amount of time was spent on market research by the community group. This included identifying their competitive niche in the blockmaking market. Technical advice was also provided on the process of making quality blocks.

Ophokweni

In the course of the reporting period, BEGS also supported uBuhle boMkhambathi group, a rural women’s group, located in an area called Ophokweni, within uMkhambathini municipality. The group constitutes a very active and committed collective of 16 elderly women, who are mostly not formally employed, but took their own LED initiatives which included creating traditional ornaments and clothing using beads and fabric and other locally sources materials. As part of their income generation and physical and emotional wellness, they also perform in traditional dancing, where they get paid to provide entertainment. They get invited to perform in various local and provincial platforms. BEGS supported the group through the livelihoods, tenure and security (LTS) program, followed by the Local Economic development program, which is currently underway. The group requested BEGS to help expand their LED interventions, with chairs that would be hired out locally, for church services, weddings and other community events



Year in Review:

Objective 5:

Objective 5:



Year in Review:

HELP : The Household Economic, Livelihood Participatory Programme



This project was developed as a pilot programme, aimed at addressing community and household needs within the broader objective of building sustainable communities. It is a high impact participatory programme towards local economic development that aimed to incorporate water security and financial literacy for 15 poor households (initially was for 30, but scaled back due to funding restrictions), nutrition and food security, co-operative economic development and agro-ecology. It distilled knowledge on how to optimize use of scarce resources, and help develop resilience and self-reliance among the participants. The praxis can be readily disseminated to other indigent communities in the District although resources may be scarce. We have built on the concept of Asset-Based Community Development, which encouraged communities to look within their own environment for various resources. The indirect beneficiaries are the people who benefited at household level, either from the participants practicing their learning at home (based on an average family size of 4.5), or households identified as particularly vulnerable and have been recipients in the food garden outreach component of the programme.

Denmark – Slangspruit, Ward 13, Msunduzi Municipality



Figure 1: Before establishing garden



Figure 2: After 3 months – the first crops

Denmark is a community that was established following with devastating floods that affected parts of Pietermaritzburg in 1987, many people died during this time. Following the devastation, churches from Denmark donated funds to rebuild the communities by building houses for diseased members of the community. Denmark is located within uMsunduzi Municipality, where citizens have been protesting about basic service issues recently. BESG has worked with this community for a number of years, supporting advocacy, mapping the community and understanding challenges that face the community as a collective. This work has resulted in a community that understand their rights as it relates to access to basic services. During their time of working with BESG, the participants gained valuable knowledge. The implementation of the HELP project is part of BESG's ongoing interventions in that community.

In the first 6 months of the Project BESG facilitated the following:

Water Security and Conservation

BESG facilitated a workshop aimed at strategies to support the group in mitigating the impact of water shortages. The options of recycling water was one of the ways shared with participants, together with rain water harvesting were introduced to as another water source.

Nutrition and Food Security

Approaches about the correct way to cook vegetables were shared and the importance of this was shared with the participants. Sustainable gardening was promoted as well as techniques such as mulching to prevent watering plants too frequently. Farming methods that use no chemicals were encouraged as these are not harmful to the environment and take into consideration the health of human beings.

Household Budgeting

Participants learnt about the importance of writing a budget and sticking to one, and that doing this can help one meet most of his or her needs. As budgeting looks at what money you have against what your expenses are. Budgeting was encouraged as a means to help participants manage their money.

Community Garden

As part of the Local Economic development (LED) aspect of the project, the community was supported to reflect on possible economic development activities that would be of benefit for them. The general consensus was that the community has identified a piece of land that could be used as a communal garden. Activities linked to LED, are as follows:

- Community partners cleared the identified field
- BESG assisted by purchasing fence and fencing materials
- The community group jointly fenced the selected area
- Seedlings (spinach, cabbage, lettuce, kale, china spinach, beetroot, chilli, onion) were purchased and planted by the community group
- Gardening tools were purchased, including hosepipe
- Ongoing monitoring and irrigation
- After 3 months of growing vegetables, the group has started selling some of the vegetables

Following workshops, BESG undertook to monitor the gardens on a monthly basis. At its own cost, BESG brought in an expert in agro-ecology, Senzo Mkhize to assess the gardens, to advise on the quality of the soil and which seasonal vegetables to plant that will be sustainable for the next 6 months. His approach sought to reconcile the agriculture and the community's natural processes for the common benefit of the gardens and people's livelihoods.

Since the inception of the HELP project, concrete headway has been made, enabling the community of Denmark gain skills in conceptualizing and managing a small-scale business. The collaborative work necessitated by the communal garden has strengthened teamwork amongst team members. The project has also enabled BESG to understand the varying talents amongst group members, and how to leverage on these abilities for the benefit of the project. It was encouraging to note that 68% of the participants were women, aligned to our objective of building women leadership due to the high incidence of female-headed households.

The dedication and hard work by the group has further demonstrated their commitment to their selected LED project. The selling of the fresh vegetables is supported by community members within Denmark. This further puts into action the anticipated multiplier effect of the project, as local families and individuals now have access to fresh vegetables.

Being a pilot project, we were over ambitious in undertaking this project with a limited budget. The time and resources needed for this endeavor has been way over the budget and some of the costs have been borne directly by BESG. However, will continue to support this community in this agro-ecology endeavor and is currently liaising with other community members towards expanding the garden, seeing the important role food gardens play in advancing food and nutritional security while also strengthening the provisioning of numerous ecosystem services i.e., plant biodiversity, microclimate, water runoff, water quality, human health.

Community gardens are part of an increasing number of small-scale, bottom-up projects being led by community groups and individuals that collectively have the potential to engineer large-scale social change



Senzo Mkhize assessing the soil and quality of the produce