

BESG is in solidarity with communities to navigate a complex context, by supporting 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 private and public sectors, in meeting their needs

Info

ANNUAL REPORT 2024
 BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT GROUP
 (BESG) & BESG DEVELOPMENT
 SERVICES (BDS)

2

Contents

WELCOME	2
MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	3
YEAR IN REVIEW - 2023/2024	6
MILESTONES	7
BESG'S STRATEGY 2022-2025	8
YEAR IN REVIEW – LIVELIHOODS TENURE SECURITY	10
SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS - LTS	11
YEAR IN REVIEW – HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING SUPPORT	12
SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS – Human Settlements	13
YEAR IN REVIEW – MOVEMENT AND ALLIANCE BUILDING	20
YEAR IN REVIEW – LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	21
YEAR IN REVIEW – PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME	23
GOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME	25
BESG DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (NPC)	27
ASIVILEKANE CAMPAIGN	27
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FOR THE YEAR	29

WELCOME

It is with immense pride and gratitude that we invite you to reflect on a transformative year of advocacy, innovation, and collaboration. This report captures not only the milestones achieved but also the unwavering commitment of BESG to the communities we serve and the ideals we uphold.

Our journey began 40 years ago in 1983, when BESG was established as a volunteer initiative within the University of Natal's Department of Architecture and Allied Disciplines. From defending communities against evictions in urban informal settlements to our current role as a champion for justice, BESG has grown into an organization rooted in empowerment, advocacy, and sustainable development.

This year, we celebrated an incredible milestone: BESG's 40th Anniversary. The occasion was marked with the launch of an inspiring commemorative booklet, capturing the essence of BESG's journey through the voices of staff, past employees, board members, and stakeholders who have been part of this extraordinary legacy.

Amidst this celebration, BESG has remained steadfast in addressing urgent social challenges. In July 2023, we proudly launched the Presidential Employment Stimulus Public Employment

Program (PEP), a significant initiative that has created meaningful opportunities and impacted countless lives. Our participation in the Asivikelane Campaign, monitoring water and sanitation issues in informal settlements within eThekweni Metro, has been a vital step towards ensuring basic human rights and dignity for all.

As Paulo Freire aptly stated, "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." This philosophy resonates deeply with BESG, driving our commitment to continuous learning and encouraging all – from staff to community partners – to question, engage, and grow.

This report chronicles our diverse projects and initiatives, which have been guided by our 2024 strategic framework. Whether through: Livelihood and Tenure Security Training (LTS), Housing Support, Local Economic Initiatives, Climate Change Adaptation and Awareness programs, or Governance initiatives ensuring access to basic services, each effort has reflected our commitment to building sustainable, inclusive human settlements and advancing environmental, gender, and economic justice.

This year has also been a testament to the power of collaboration and solidarity. By fostering trust and care with stakeholders, we have strengthened our organisational culture and embraced the principles of participatory democracy and citizenship development.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our donors, partners, volunteers, and community members. Your support has fueled our programs, inspired our team, and enabled us to transform lives. Your belief in our vision reminds us of the collective strength required to create a just and equitable society.

As you read this report, we hope it inspires you as much as it inspires us. Within these pages, you will find stories of resilience, accountability, and transformation. You will witness the enduring impact of participatory practices and collective action in advancing dignity and justice for our community partners.

Looking ahead to 2025, BESG remains committed to amplifying the voices of the marginalized, deepening our impact, and creating lasting change. Thank you for walking this path with us. Together, we will continue to champion justice, sustainability, and equity for all.

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am honored to present **BESG's 2024 Annual Report**, a reflection of a year defined by progress, resilience, and transformation. As an advocacy and social justice organization, we continue to push boundaries and generate unstoppable momentum toward creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

2024 was a year of celebration and reflection, as we marked **BESG's 40th Anniversary**—a milestone that honored our journey from a volunteer initiative in 1983 to a leading voice for justice in KwaZulu-Natal. This year, we captured this legacy in a commemorative booklet that celebrates the invaluable contributions of staff, past employees, board members, and stakeholders over four decades.

Amid the celebrations, BESG stayed rooted in action. **Our praxis, grounded in trust, respect, and solidarity—remains our constant amidst ever-changing external challenges.** Through a culture of reflection and learning, we deepen our commitment to the communities we serve, making sustainability not just a goal but a way of being in all our work.

This year presented both challenges and opportunities. **We reinvigorated community-driven development**, focusing on housing, local economic initiatives, and environmental justice. These efforts, alongside the **revival of partnerships** with key organisations, have strengthened our ability to achieve remarkable results. The launch of the **Presidential Employment Stimulus - Public Employment Program (PEP)** in July 2023 stands as one of our proudest accomplishments in this current economic environment, creating meaningful employment opportunities while addressing pressing community needs.

BESG also joined the **Asivikelane Campaign**, addressing critical water and sanitation challenges in informal settlements within eThekweni Metro. This initiative is a testament to our ability to amplify marginalised voices and advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable.

We must also recognise and celebrate the unwavering support of our funders, without whom none of this would have been possible. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to **Community Chest, MISEREOR, and the Heinrich Böll Foundation**, who have stood by us as trusted partners. **KZN Slots**, in particular, deserves special mention for their enthusiasm in supporting our efforts to train youth in plumbing techniques—an initiative that not only empowers young people but also addresses critical skills shortages in our communities.

Our work to promote **gender equality and women's empowerment** has dismantled barriers, fostered leadership, and amplified the voices of women and girls. At the same time, our

commitment to **environmental sustainability** has driven initiatives to combat climate change, conserve resources, and secure a sustainable future for all.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the collective efforts of our incredible team, generous donors, dedicated volunteers, and steadfast partners. Together, we form a network of change-makers, united in our belief in the power of **advocacy and social justice**.

As we celebrate these successes, we remain aware of the challenges ahead. Yet, even in the face of adversity, BESG's resilience shines through. **Our praxis of action and reflection fuels our journey**, empowering us to navigate complexities, embrace opportunities, and create lasting impact.

As we look to 2025, I invite you to join us in building a future defined by dignity, justice, and opportunity for all. Let this report serve as both a celebration of our achievements and a call to action for the work that lies ahead.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Together, we can continue to create lasting change.

Feroza Suleman

Executive Director

Meet the BESG Board



Sihle Ndlovu
Chairman



Vincent Myeni
Board Member



Ndabuko Majola
Board Member



Mpumelelo Khoza
Board Member



Feroza Suleman
Executive Director



Ivor Baatjes
Board Member

MEET THE BESG TEAM

The dedicated team at BESG is the driving force behind our commitment to creating sustainable and empowered communities. In 2024, their collective expertise and passion have enabled us to tackle pressing challenges, from improving access to secure housing and advocating for environmental restoration, to fostering resilience in communities facing economic and social hardships.

Through their tireless efforts, BESG has continued to innovate, lead, and collaborate—building bridges between urban and rural stakeholders, amplifying the voices of vulnerable groups, and turning challenges into opportunities. This section celebrates not just the individuals behind the work, but the shared vision that unites us: creating a future where everyone has access to dignity, justice, and sustainable livelihoods.



Feroza Suleman
Executive Director

"I find this purposeful work, creating a positive impact by supporting and working in solidarity to help protect the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalised in our society"



Duduzile Radebe
Programmes Coordinator

"My work within BESG keeps me grounded on the daily struggles of marginalised people. I get to pledge my solidarity and to be part of progressively transforming the lives of those relegated to the margins of society"



Fezeka Ludidi
Facilitator

"BESG allows me to fulfill my purpose of serving communities by giving hope to those who have lost it, and by creating opportunities for people to live with dignity and inclusivity"



Nomtha Sikhosana
Facilitator

"Though it has its challenges, working in this line of work I get to see firsthand the benefits of all the work we put in. The gratifying rewards at the end of a project/task help me stay motivated"



Peace Ndlovu
Project Assistant

"Working at BESG has given me an opportunity to give back to rural and informal settlement communities that are usually overlooked when it comes to basic service delivery (waste, water and sanitation)"



Willem Steenkamp
Accountant

"I really enjoy working at BESG, lovely people to work with, very friendly and helpful in working together to face the many challenges"



Devika Ramdhany
Office Administrator

"Each member of staff is valued for their input and strengths. The work done by the organisation is very humbling and I often find myself re-evaluating the things I take for granted in my everyday life"



Dudu Mhlongo
Office Support

"I learnt that BESG is involved in gardening projects, and the staff encouraged me to have a garden. Having spent so much time working for BESG, I have never been disappointed"

YEAR IN REVIEW - 2023/2024

Over the past four years, BESG has leveraged its extensive knowledge of land, housing, the built environment, basic services, local government, and sustainable livelihoods to address critical challenges and support communities in KwaZulu-Natal. Through deep relationships of trust with 26 communities and a commitment to co-creating solutions, we have continued to foster resilience and restore dignity under increasingly complex conditions.

Navigating Challenges in a Changing Landscape :

South Africa faced significant challenges during this period, marked by severe economic hardship, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and a deepening energy crisis. Communities grappled with soaring food and housing costs, inadequate service delivery, and environmental degradation. Simultaneously, issues such as backlogs in infrastructure delivery further strained the country's social fabric. Despite these challenges, BESG has remained steadfast, empowering communities to advocate for their basic human rights while promoting innovation and resilience.

Driving Impact through Community-Led Advocacy:

BESG's respectful, process-driven facilitation methodology has enabled community leaders to lead transformative initiatives, resulting in tangible improvements in the quality of life.

Key outcomes include:

Empowered Leadership: Developing a critical mass of community leaders equipped with knowledge of housing policies, service delivery processes, and their basic human rights. This empowerment has fostered community agency and strengthened advocacy efforts.

Advocacy and Action: Through strategic engagements with municipalities and persistent advocacy, communities have achieved measurable as:

- installation of additional **standpipes**, improvements, such ensuring access to water for underserved areas;
- Repairs of long-neglected **water leaks** and improvements in daily water delivery schedules;
- Construction of **sanitation infrastructure**, including new toilets and the consistent servicing of chemical toilets;
- Building of tarred roads with speed humps and **stormwater drainage** to improve mobility and safety.

Restoration of Dignity: A notable achievement includes compelling Msunduzi Municipality to resume emptying toilets, following advocacy efforts supported by the South African Human Rights Commission.

This year, BESG has not only supported communities to challenge systemic failures but has also highlighted the transformative power of collaborative action. Together, we have demonstrated that even amid adversity, communities can achieve meaningful progress, laying the groundwork for a more equitable and sustainable future.

MILESTONES

This year, BESG has not only supported communities to challenge systematic failures but has also highlighted the transformative power of collaborative action. Together, we have demonstrated that even amid adversity, communities can achieve meaningful progress, laying the groundwork for a more equitable and sustainable future.

BESG achieved significant milestones during the year, reflecting our commitment to empowering communities, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and fostering resilience in the face of complex challenges:

BESG successfully launched the **Public Employment Program (PEP)** in eThekweni, creating employment opportunities while addressing pressing community needs. This initiative showcased our ability to combine job creation with impactful projects, such as environmental clean-ups and infrastructure improvements.

A landmark achievement this year was the establishment of **Imbumba Yabahlali (People's Alliance)**. This coalition brought together community partners, civic organizations, and stakeholders to amplify collective advocacy efforts. Together, they have engaged with state institutions to address systemic failures and secure access to essential services, demonstrating the transformative power of collaboration.

This year, BESG continued to empower community leaders through capacity-building initiatives. As a result, communities strengthened their ability to advocate for their rights and hold municipalities accountable, fostering long-term resilience and improved quality of life.

BESG, supported by the Pietermaritzburg and District Community Chest, implemented the **Social Entrepreneurship for Youth Empowerment Project (SEYEP)** in Mpumelelo, uMgungundlovu District. This initiative equipped youth with plumbing skills to address household repairs, including leaks and blocked drains, while creating opportunities for income generation and supporting sustainable livelihoods in their community.



Mpumelelo youth learn basic plumbing skills, May 2023

BESG'S STRATEGY 2022-2025

Over the past 40 years, BESG has developed substantial knowledge on land, housing, the built environment, basic services, local government, and livelihoods. Informed by its integrated strategy, **Theory of Change***, and using a methodology of process facilitation*, BESG has, and continues to, accompany poor and marginalised communities, often under complex and difficult conditions, in their struggle for basic rights, including the right to live in dignity. The right to human dignity is enshrined in section 10 of the Constitution: 'everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected.' BESG assists and supports its community partners in building community agency to hold the state accountable to meet its constitutional obligations. Development through community participation is core to BESG's vision.

*** BESG's integrated strategy** is focused on increased and ongoing conceptualisation, alignment and integration of objectives and programmes. BESG embraces working in a rhythm of planning, action, documentation/reporting, reflection, and learning to make sure its strategy is achieved (this is in keeping with its methodology of process facilitation).

***Theory of Change** is a methodology or a criterion for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation that is used in organisations including not-for-profits to promote social change. Theory of Change defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary pre-conditions.

Wikipedia

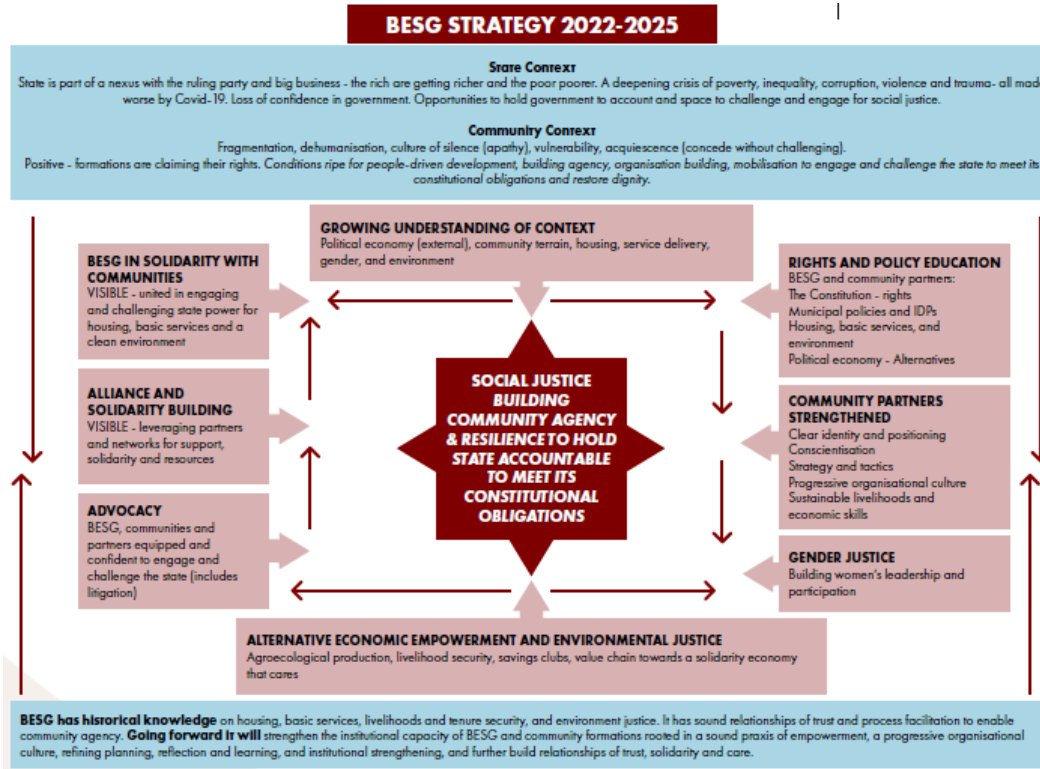
The Theory of Change enables BESG to have a strong analysis of the external context at the following levels: the broader political-economic-social context; the specific context of housing, services, impact of environmental/climate justice and; the complex community terrain.

*** Process facilitation** is the practice of a development practitioner holding space, typically at community level, for participants to carefully reflect on issues that undermine their dignity and rights, support them in the process of analysing the underlying issues, and in collectively coming up and agreeing on steps needed to address these issues.

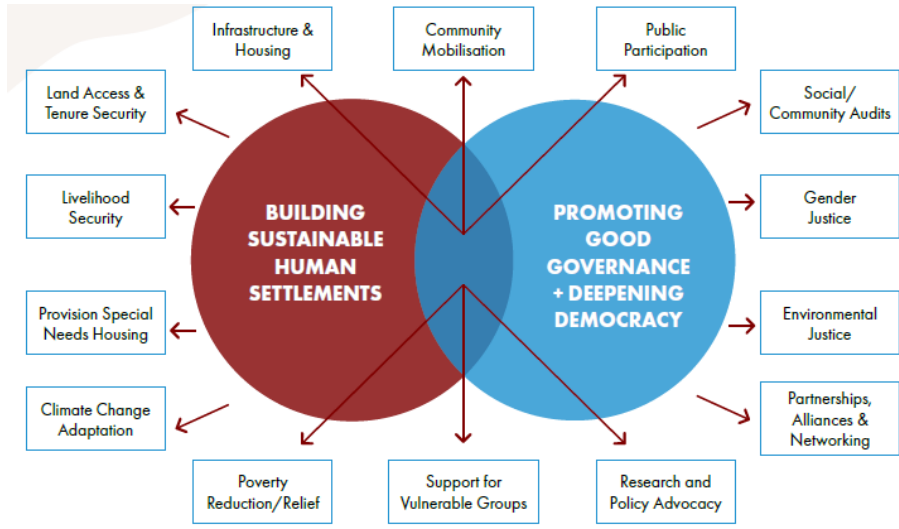
It is deemed a process, because we understand our work not to be that of seeking to produce instant results, but that it is a *journey* on which our role is to accompany our partners towards *them* addressing issues towards an agreed purpose.

Dudzile Radebe (Programmes Manager)

BESG's methodology of process facilitation includes creating reflection spaces for deepening people's knowledge, human rights awareness and education. These, in turn, lead to mobilisation and action to challenge and engage the state for the realisation of rights.



BESG’s work is guided by two interlocking core programs—**Building Sustainable Human Settlements** and **Promoting Good Governance & Deepening Democracy**—which form the foundation of all its interventions. These programs are driven by six strategic objectives: ensuring **Livelihood Tenure Security (LTS)**, providing **Housing Support**, fostering **Movement Building** for collective advocacy, advancing **Local Economic Development (LED)**, championing **Environmental and Gender Justice**, and strengthening **Institutional Planning and Organisational Development**. Together, these objectives enable BESG to address complex socio-economic and environmental challenges, promote resilience, and empower communities to secure sustainable livelihoods and dignified living conditions.



YEAR IN REVIEW – LIVELIHOODS TENURE SECURITY

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 regarding water, fuel, shelter, insecurity, waste, domestic hazards, and to initiate projects to address livelihood and environmental challenges.

To the end of February 2024 we have conducted **Livelihood and Tenure Security (LTS)** training with 212 participants of the 240 planned for a 3-year cycle. The current numbers were achieved from the 11 communities workshopped in year 1 and year 2. The LTS programme was conducted with participants from Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The communities include Kwa-Nonzila, Manzamnyama, and Kwa Nyavu. The modules conducted were **Water security, Energy security, Nutrition and Food security, Health and Safety, Household Budgeting, Tenure Security, Recycling, and Climate Change**. Contact meetings have been made with these community groups; Tweedie, Nottingham Rd, Samsen, and Mbubu has been identified as our current groups.

The LTS work supports agroecological production, water and community safety, energy innovation, household budgeting, mitigating against fire-hazards, health and safety in the home, climate change awareness, waste recycling, and tenure and asset security including the importance of having a will.

The LTS programme historically shows a high level of impact in terms of household behaviour change and replicability. Participants have reported that they are able to utilise what they have learned from the LTS programme 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.



SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS - LTS

Nonzila Impact:

Training of Care workers by Sinani Survivors of Violence. Past activities undertaken have yielded positive results, with Sinani Survivors of violence training 5 people to do care worker activities in the area. Stipends will be provided once full timework starts. Liaison with Cogta who is waiting for recycling budget is promising.

Manzamnyama Impact:

The group felt strongly about clean water and preserving water resources as they are neighbors to Nagle Dam, uMngeni river, and Msinsi resorts. BESG supported the community in applying for the advertised Msinsi appeal for support and donations. The objective is to clean local streams, the river and surrounding natural water resources because they give them access to water when their taps run dry. Currently people are polluting rivers, dumping used napkins and other dirt in areas when people collect drinking water.

KwaNyavu Impact:

The Kwa-Nyavu group is also part of the communities in the Msinsi request for assistance. The group felt strongly about cleaning, sharing preservation knowledge, and protecting streams that run closer to homesteads. These water resources are useful to humans and livestock.

*Six months after the workshops, participant evaluations revealed:

- 88% reported practising water saving measures. This was made up of savings on water costs from a time and labour perspective, 89% indicated reusing grey water, and water harvesting.
- 86% reported practising energy saving measures by using different sources of energy and savings methods.
- 82% reported positive behaviour change on improving health and safety practices within their households, viz: safe electrical connections, avoiding overloading, preventing accidents.
- 61% reported they have a basic awareness of climate change and will adopt practices to mitigate certain behaviours.
- 30% indicated they have initiated recycling waste practices.

***BESG Report February 2024**

In Year 2 - this reporting period there were 101 evaluations (88%)



YEAR IN REVIEW – HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING SUPPORT

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 the state's inability to provide sufficient access to basic services relating to human settlements for marginalised communities and community formations. For this reason, a bulk of BESG's community partners are supported within this programme.

In the words of a facilitator on HS at BESG:

“do process facilitation for nine community partners at different stages of their struggle for adequate housing and access to basic services. Some are at a stage of engaging the municipalities for inclusion in their Integrated Development Plans. Others are fighting for the prioritisation of their housing project. A few of our community partners are being supported in developing enhanced People's Housing Process (ePHP) business plans for their housing projects.”

For many years, BESG, other NGOs and social movements have strongly advocated for community-driven development in the field of housing, and against the top-down centralised government/corporate-driven 'turnkey contracting' approach. A number of policies and programmes are in place including ePHP. However, 'on the ground', community members are often met with indifference or hostility and nearly always a paternalistic mindset by the powers that be.

As stated by a previous staff member of BESG, Khulekani Mfeka:

“The main challenges are the unresponsiveness of government and the decreasing sense of activism in the communities due to the politics of patronage. The officials are not keen on public participation and when communities invent their own spaces to engage the state reacts with brutality. The ruling class uses its resources to buy support from poor communities. In that way the poor fear to raise their voices for fear of being overlooked for the few opportunities, e.g. tenders, expanded public works programme jobs, that are controlled by the state.”

Despite this, BESG continues to provide ongoing support to community members as they engage with local and provincial government around their development needs.



Eshowe – Introducing Fezeka to the group



SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS – Human Settlements

Bhambayi, Ward 52/57 eThekweni Metro

BESG supported the community in monitoring water and sanitation access, using data to inform a submission to the eThekweni Metro through the Asivikelane network.

Three meetings were held to discuss the Public Employment Programme (PEP) by eThekweni Metro, aimed at employing 84 residents. These engagements included advocacy with ward representatives and addressing delays in the PEP rollout.

In August 2023, BESG facilitated a site visit to the Pat Marshal housing project to address community concerns about its progress. During the visit, a BESG technician assessed the project and educated residents on its technical aspects. BESG also worked with community leaders to navigate decision-making processes in the absence of a functional steering committee, leading to a formal request for eThekweni Metro to establish a new steering committee.

Additionally, a workshop in partnership with Corruption Watch engaged 23 participants in addressing governance and accountability issues within their settlement. Through these initiatives, BESG continues to empower the Bhambayi community to advocate for improved living conditions.

Bruntville Hostel Dwellers Association, Ward 1 Mpofana Municipality

In May 2023, in response to the request for support from the Bruntville Hostel Dwellers

Association, BESG conducted a community visit to assess the living conditions of the 81 families residing in the Mooi River Town Hall. These families have endured deplorable conditions for the past six years, following the destruction of the Bruntville hostel by fire.

In June 2023, a meeting was held with the Mpofana Municipality's social development official to discuss the situation. The official expressed the municipality's willingness to provide housing for the hostel dwellers, but noted internal resistance within the municipality. In response, community leaders were supported in drafting a letter requesting a meeting with the Municipal Manager to clarify the municipality's position.

In August 2023, a joint program with Corruption Watch on land corruption was held in the community, attended by 23 participants. During the workshop, community leaders actively shared how land corruption has directly impacted their lives, further highlighting the need for transparent and accountable processes in land and housing allocations.

Cedara– uMngeni Municipality

BESG has been actively addressing critical socio-economic challenges affecting the community. In June, recurring blackouts caused by illegal connections led to conflict between township and informal settlement residents. BESG reported the issue to the

ward councilor, who facilitated a community meeting and engaged Eskom to disconnect the illegal powerlines. Despite these efforts, residents reconnected the lines, highlighting the need for sustainable solutions. BESG plans to advocate for solar power as an alternative while tackling broader issues such as social ills, crime, teenage pregnancy, and community care for public services.

Concerns about potential Transnet evictions also arose in the area, prompting BESG to involve Abahlali baseMjondolo from the Jabavu community. This collaboration helped empower residents with resistance strategies and education about their rights, fostering community resilience against displacement.

Additionally, water supply challenges emerged when district authorities failed to refill tanks for two weeks. Local community worker Zandile Khoza, in partnership with BESG, facilitated discussions with water delivery personnel to restore supply. While water access was re-established, issues of resource misuse and tank maintenance became apparent. Zandile noted that the community's population has tripled, necessitating the installation of two additional tanks to meet demand.

Through these interventions, BESG continues to work closely with the Cedara community, striving for sustainable solutions to their pressing challenges and advocating for their long-term empowerment.

Dakota Informal Settlement

In June 2023, BESG visited the area with CLP colleagues, to ascertain whether there is any leadership in the area that we could connect with after a fire had destroyed over 200 shacks in this community. The second visit was to meet with the leaders in the settlement and it was established that the community lacks agency and is almost totally dependent on the Councilors, who become gatekeepers for all development work in the community.

Denmark, Ward 13 Msunduzi Municipality

In July 2023, the community was supported in mobilizing for action against ESKOM after a transformer failure left them without electricity for an extended period. Members of the CBO were elected to represent the community in negotiations with ESKOM, and community leaders received support in engaging with the media on the issue. This collective action ultimately led to a resolution between the community and ESKOM, highlighting the power of community-driven advocacy in addressing service delivery challenges.

Additionally, in July 2023, community leaders were supported in preparing for and participating in the Tshintsha Amakhaya dialogue. This platform provided an opportunity for Denmark leaders to connect with activists from across KZN, fostering the exchange of valuable lessons and strengthening their capacity to advocate for sustainable housing and human settlement solutions.

Foreman Road, Ward 25 eThekweni Metro

BESG supported community leaders in monitoring access to water and sanitation services throughout 2023, enabling them to collect data and advocate for improved delivery.

From June to August 2023, BESG engaged the community on the Public Employment Programme (PEP), aimed at creating local job opportunities. These engagements included discussions with community leaders to address delays in the programme's rollout and ensure its alignment with community needs.

Additionally, between September and November 2023, BESG collaborated with residents to monitor the implementation of emergency housing interventions in the settlement. This included tracking progress and advocating for transparency in project delivery to meet the urgent housing needs of the community.

Imbali 13-Msunduzi Municipality

BESG supported the rate payers' group to collate and consolidate a full technical report of their challenge to be ready in time for submission to lawyers' offices for litigation.

Jabavu – uMngeni Municipality

In May, BESG submitted a youth livelihood and capacity development proposal to the uMngeni Municipality Youth Desk. This initiative targeted self-identified drug-using youth, focusing on capacity building, life skills, wellness, and rehabilitation. Rights-

based training and community-led engagements featured prominently, with Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) introduced as a solidarity organization in the local struggle.

BESG supported the Jabavu community through planning sessions with partners like the Community Works Programme (CWP) and EDTEA. In July, the first cleanup campaign coincided with our Durban Public Employment Program launch, strengthening partnerships with CWP for our LTS programme.

Jabavu residents collaborated with BESG to assist Cedara community members facing electricity issues, service delivery challenges, and potential eviction by Transnet. A WhatsApp group now connects key local Abahlali leaders with Cedara residents, promoting advocacy for their rights.

Kennedy Road, Ward 25 Ethekewini Metro

An engagement was conducted, together with CLP, with two community leaders after a fire that destroyed 1000 shacks in that community in July 2023. The assessment of damage was conducted with the assistance of the local activists of Abahlali baseMjondolo. A subsequent visit to ascertain the nature of assistance still required. It was agreed that 20 households were to be supported in acquiring building materials to rebuild their shacks. In August 2023, the 20 households identified through a community process were supported with building materials.

London Farm – eThekweni Municipality

In May 2023, BESG launched the People's Employment Programme (PEP) in eThekweni Municipality, creating job opportunities for local youth, men, and women. The launch, attended by the Ward Councilor and officials from eThekweni Municipality and the Provincial Department of Public Works, marked a strong start to the initiative.

In August, BESG, in partnership with Gift of the Givers, conducted a 2-day accredited First Aid training to equip PEP participants with valuable skills. Additionally, a Land Dialogues workshop facilitated by Corrup.30tion Watch educated communities on combating land corruption and using the Constitution to advocate for their rights.

As part of the EPHP Alliance, London Farm community members attended a workshop in Mahlongwa, focusing on land tenure and municipal intervention. BESG will continue working with the community to utilize this knowledge in addressing their land and housing needs effectively.

Madadeni P46, Ward 14 Newcastle Municipality

In June 2023, the community group was supported the community leaders to think through the process of engaging the community in sourcing a land survey to assist with boundaries. This is community initiative to better manage their informal settlement. The process of collecting contributions from households, through a banking account, is underway. They have collected a total of R45,000 to date.

In July 2023, the community group was supported in a reflection after a community

action that had resulted in three members of the community arrested by the South African Police Service. The members had been arrested for carrying out a community decision to demolish the unoccupied shacks that the owners were using as means to access a subsidies house without a real need for one. A thorough reflection was held with the group and points of oversight in the action were identified and a clear strategy for engaging community members agreed upon.

In July 2023, the community group was assisted in thinking through livelihood security strategies. Seedlings and farming equipment were sourced through Amajuba Development Association. Seven household gardens have been started.

Mahlongwa – eThekweni Municipality

BESG supported the Mahlongwa community's housing plans by assisting the PSC in drafting a Constitution and Programme Plan. Phase 1, completed in July and August, included a Needs Assessment, identifying vulnerable beneficiaries, and numbering households for the 458-unit project. Phase 2 will refine the list, focusing on long-time residents and self-built homeowners, while exploring the development of local amenities.

In May, BESG launched the People's Employment Programme (PEP) to create local job opportunities, followed by accredited First Aid training in August. A Land Dialogues workshop, led by Corruption Watch, raised awareness of land rights and corruption. In September, the PHP Alliance facilitated a

workshop on constitutional advocacy, empowering the community to address housing challenges.

Maqongqo – Mkhambathini Municipality

After extensive advocacy by BESG and the community, the municipality authorized the continuation of the abandoned housing rehabilitation project in July. The full council endorsed the initiative, appointing an implementing agent and sub-contractor. At a beneficiary meeting, BESG was introduced as the housing support provider, and the implementing team engaged with the community.

Mpolweni, Ward 10, uMshwathi Municipality

In June 2023, the community-based organization (CBO) reflected on the Indigent Registration Drive conducted by Mshwathi Municipality, where they felt marginalized despite their expertise and experience to lead such initiatives. In response, the CBO was supported in developing an engagement plan with the Ward Councillor and Mshwathi Municipality, emphasizing a people-centred approach to indigent support that empowers local communities in decision-making.

In July 2023, the community received assistance in accessing the UMDM Free Basic Services documents. Additionally, the community group was supported in preparing a submission for the land issue at the Operation Sukuma Sakhe War Room, advocating for fair land access and addressing critical human settlement

challenges. This ongoing support aligns with our objective to foster sustainable, inclusive housing and human settlement solutions.

Mpophomeni – uMngeni Municipality

In Mpophomeni, uMngeni Municipality, the mayor has prioritized the township, channeling more services to this historically underserved area. Under the current leadership, there has been notable progress in water and infrastructure projects, even in areas previously hindered by service delivery challenges and limited support from ward councilors. This renewed focus has brought hope for improved living conditions in the community.

Implementation challenges arose as vulnerable beneficiaries were not prioritized, and rebuilding began randomly. By September, six houses had passed the surveyor stage, with a target of 10 houses per month. Ongoing issues are being addressed by the task team and war room, with a progress meeting pending to find solutions.

Nkanini, Ward 7 Umlalazi Municipality

BESG has fostered meaningful dialogue and strategic action to advance the community's housing advocacy efforts. In July 2023, community leaders participated in the Tshintsha Amakhaya dialogue, connecting with activists across KZN to

exchange insights and strategies for social justice.

In August 2023, BESG supported community leaders in formulating an engagement plan with the KZN Department of Human Settlements and uMlalazi Municipality for a planned housing project. This culminated in a meeting with the Nkanini Traditional Council to align efforts and strengthen advocacy for the project's successful implementation. These initiatives have empowered the community to take proactive steps in shaping their development priorities.

Nkungumathe, Ward 1 Nkandla Municipality

A visit was made, together with members of the housing alliance, to the community in July 2023. The aim of the meeting was to think through a possible way forward regarding the “stuckness” on the housing project. The meeting agreed on a plan to engage the Nkandla Municipality to prioritise the Nkanini housing project.

In August 2023, the community was assisted in writing a letter to request a meeting with the head of department of the KZN Human Settlements department.

Nonzila – Mkhambathini Municipality

BESG's Livelihood and Tenure Security training unlocked new opportunities for the Nonzila community. Partnering with Sinani Survivors of Violence, we facilitated the training of five Care Workers, equipping them with skills in practical surveys and needs

assessments. Each Care Worker will be stationed across the community and will receive stipends once fully operational, addressing youth social challenges highlighted in the area. In a significant step forward, three male drug users found healing and rehabilitation through the local St. John's Church. Additionally, Nonzila was selected for Cogta's Recyclers Support programme, and a women's recycling group from the community was interviewed for potential inclusion. These efforts highlight Nonzila's commitment to community resilience and social transformation.

North East Sector, Ward 38 Msunduzi Municipality

A housing consumer education (HCE) session attended by 88 participants was held in June 2023. This session was conducted jointly with officials from Msunduzi Municipality Human Settlements. The aim of the HCE programme was to prepare the community for the 284- unit housing project that is about to go into construction phase. This community has a long history of working with BESG towards their right to adequate housing. A joint HCE programme between Msunduzi Municipality and BESG was a major milestone for all stakeholders involved.

Nyanini- uMlalazi Local Municipality (Eshowe)

In Nyanini, BESG has empowered community leaders to take an active role in advocating for improved services and overseeing critical housing developments.

In July 2023, leaders were guided through the housing process as their 500-unit project entered the construction phase. By August, BESG facilitated an inspection of the show house with community leaders and project steering committee members, equipping them to assess compliance with building standards. These initiatives have strengthened the community's capacity to ensure accountability and quality in service delivery.

Samsen-eThekwini Municipality

The People's Employment Programme (PEP) was successfully launched in Samsen, eThekwini Municipality, with the community actively participating. In partnership with Gift of the Givers, BESG conducted a 2-day accredited First Aid training for PEP-recruited youth, equipping them with essential skills for upcoming programme activities.

Livelihood Security training is also planned for this community, with initial meetings held to schedule block-based sessions. BESG continues to run interrelated programmes in South Durban communities, including Samsen, to address their development needs comprehensively.

SACCA-Msunduzi Municipality

The SACCA community was concerned about the unannounced Vather's (landowner) visit to the area and reported to BESG. We discussed the community's dissatisfaction about Vather's visit, taking photos. Those people have security of

tenure. BESG in the past worked on their tenure security and advocated against eviction without alternative settlement land.

Shiyabazali – uMngeni Municipality

Progress on housing remains slow due to the wastewater treatment plant needed for the Khayelisha housing project. The municipality and district are negotiating funding for this critical infrastructure, which is the key barrier to advancing the development where Shiyabazali is a beneficiary.

Thuleleni Farmers Association, Ward 1,3,4 &6 Endumeni Municipality

In July 2023, community leaders from the Thuleleni Farmers Association in Ward 1, 3, 4, and 6 of Endumeni Municipality were supported in preparing for and participating in the Tshintsha Amakhaya dialogue. This platform enabled Denmark leaders to connect with activists from across KZN, fostering the exchange of valuable insights and lessons learned in advocacy.

In August 2023, the community group received assistance in understanding housing rights and developing a strategic approach for engaging with the government regarding the challenges of the ineffective land restitution process. This support empowered them to advocate more effectively for their land and housing rights, contributing to the broader goal of securing sustainable human settlements.

YEAR IN REVIEW – MOVEMENT AND ALLIANCE BUILDING

An African proverb: *If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*

BESG's work with communities engaged in housing projects within the pipeline revealed a critical need for a space that fosters joint reflection, collaborative action, and mutual support. **The Enhanced People's Housing Process (ePHP)** was identified as a unifying focus for this engagement.

To address this need, BESG facilitated a participatory workshop on movement-building, aligning with Objective 3 of the new organisational strategy. The workshop targeted selected communities where the Enhanced PHP is planned, supported by BESG. Leaders and activists from community groups advocating for ePHP were brought together to reflect collectively, plan strategically, and develop a mobilization strategy.

Following workshop deliberations, an alliance was formed through consensus among the community formations present. **This alliance, named Imbumba Yabahlali-KZN**, was officially established. Its core objective is to enable community groups to advocate collectively for sustainable human settlements through the effective implementation of ePHP

This initiative marks a significant milestone in BESG's commitment to empowering communities and fostering solidarity for impactful advocacy.

During the course of the reporting period, Imbumba Yabahlali undertook a number of capacity building and advocacy activities across the 5 communities in KZN.

Community engagements took place in Bhambhayi, Ward 99 in uMkomazi, Dundee, Newcastle and Nkungumathe.

In addition to this, the Alliance dedicated time for supporting the advocacy work of Endumeni Civic Association (ECA) in Dundee. The advocacy concerns the court case lodged by ECA to challenge the unjust manner in which houses were allocated or not allocated to deserving and approved applicants. The department of Human settlements and Endumeni Municipality are the respondents in the case.



Alliance engagement – August 2023

YEAR IN REVIEW – LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An The declining economic state in South Africa continue to impact impoverished communities, including the communities supported by BESG. The entry level work conducted by BESG through the LTS provided us with ample data to inform the work that was initiated to contribute in addressing peoples inability to afford the basic necessities of everyday life.

The focus of **BESG's local economic development** interventions have had a 95% participation of females, further shedding light into the gender disparities that are entrenched in economic depravity within under-resourced communities across the province. In the current reporting period the following communities were supported:

Denmark – Msunduzi Municipality

The work within this community entailed the establishment of an agro-ecology communal garden, which commenced with BESG bringing on board an agro-ecologist to educate participants on relevant skills. Practical skills transfer included intensive rehabilitation of the soil through the digging of trenches, filling them with organic matter and preparing these for planting. Planting of selected vegetables took place as planned with the intention of selling 90% of the produce and for the remaining 10% to be shared amongst the 4 group members, to provide fresh and nutritious food to their households.

Shiyabazali – uMngeni Municipality

Ee extended our support to the Shiyabazali community following intensive work on housing consumer education, livelihoods, tenure, and security. Recognizing the community's request for assistance in income generation, BESG collaborated with the group to explore sustainable economic opportunities.

In agreement with the community, BESG facilitated negotiations for access to a piece of land within a local church's premises. This land was transformed into a communal agro-ecological garden through a rigorous soil preparation process undertaken by the group. The garden was planted with carefully selected seedlings, intended to serve dual purposes: household consumption and income generation.

The initiative bore fruit as the harvested produce was sold to local residents, contributing to improved food security and providing the community with a sustainable source of income.



Shiyabazali communal garden

Mpumelelo

BESG’s local economic development activities in Mpumelelo emerged from our work with the community to address pressing water and sanitation challenges. As part of this initiative, a program was conceptualized to equip local youth with basic plumbing skills. This training aimed to transfer essential skills to empower local residents to provide plumbing services within the community at an affordable cost, fostering both self-reliance and economic



Plumbing skills workshop at Mpumelelo

Nkanini

The women involved in Nkanini project continued to work towards their block-making project. BESG supported the project with a 5000-litre water tank, to assist with bringing water closer to their project site. Support also included 40 cement bags so that they may create a stand for the tank and a 15-metre platform for the manufacturing of bricks.



Installation of the much-need JoJo Tank at Nkanini

Ophokweni

In taking forward the support provided to this group, BESG was requested to provide agro-ecology support, as the group already had pieces of land within their homesteads. The support for this group located in a rural setting, was therefore different from previous agro-ecology support, as work took place in each member’s yard.



Meeting with Ophokweni (uBhuhle boMkhambathi Group)

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.

YEAR IN REVIEW – PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

On the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change anomalies, including the devastating floods of 2022, impoverished households—particularly those residing in informal settlements and rural areas—were among the hardest hit by these cascading disasters. Each of these crises further exacerbated the fragile unemployment rate in the eThekweni Municipality, the economic hub of the KZN region.

In response, the Presidential Employment Stimulus was adopted to support Social Employment, emphasizing the need for a whole-of-society approach to tackling unemployment. This strategy recognized that there is no shortage of work needed to address South Africa’s many social challenges. However, many individuals remain excluded from economic activity, disproportionately affected by unemployment, economic discouragement, and marginalization.

The Public Employment Programme (PEP), an integral part of this strategy, was approved at an eThekweni Municipality Council meeting, with the resolution signed on 13 December 2022. The project aimed to contribute to the region’s economic recovery following the pandemic, the July 2021 unrest, and the 2022 floods by creating meaningful employment opportunities in industrial and business areas, townships, and informal settlements across the metro.

Given BESG’s specialist capacity, proven track record, and long-standing partnership with eThekweni Municipality, BESG entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the municipality. This agreement positioned BESG as a participant in implementing the PEP, funded by conditional grants from National Treasury. These grants prioritized upgrading informal settlements through targeted activities, including: Cleaning and greening public spaces, Community safety, Environmental services and management and Food security.

BESG’s approach in this project aligned with its core mission: standing in solidarity with communities and delivering impactful interventions, especially during times of crisis. Through the PEP, BESG aimed to not only provide temporary employment but also contribute to sustainable livelihoods by equipping participants with skills and experience that could improve their long-term income prospects.

Commencement and Launch: Planning and preparatory activities were undertaken from December 2022 to February 2024, ensuring all structures and partnerships were in place. **Implementation:** Active project implementation took place from March to June 2024, with participants working across various categories to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

This program underscores BESG’s ongoing commitment to addressing unemployment while fostering community resilience and economic recovery.

OVERVIEW OF THE PEP PROJECT – PROJECT INITIATION:

On signature of the MOA in May 2023, BESG undertook to source the necessary PPEs and the requisite consultants/trainers for the various categories. In July 2023 BESG launched the PEP Project in all five communities:

Launch in Bhambayi, Ward 51, eThekweni Municipality:



Various stakeholders addressing participants in Bhambayi: Representatives from BESG, Department of Public Works and eThekweni Municipality.

Launch in Foreman Road, Ward 25, eThekweni Municipality:



Various stakeholders including representative from Department of Public Works. BESG stating the purpose of the Project to the participants of Foreman Road.

Launch in Ward 99 – aMahlongwa, Samsen Farm and London Farm, eThekweni Municipality



Various stakeholders including representatives from eThekweni Municipality, Ward 99 Councillor, Bishop of the area and BESG addressing the participants from aMahlongwa, Samsen Farm and London Farm

GOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

BESG's **Good Governance Programme**, funded by the **Heinrich Böll Stiftung**, aimed to empower targeted communities in informal settlements to advocate for free basic services and hold the state accountable. The activity goal included increasing community capacity for monitoring service delivery, raising awareness about climate change impacts and mitigation, and fostering gender sensitivity within communities. By addressing these interconnected challenges, the programme sought to build resilient, informed communities capable of driving sustainable improvements in their living conditions. The programme targeted communities living in informal settlements in KwaZulu-Natal, aiming to equip them with the knowledge, networks, and capacity to secure improved access to municipal water and sanitation services. By empowering organized citizens with tools and alliances, the program enabled them to interrogate the use of public finance and advocate for enhanced basic service provision and social welfare.

The programme commenced with a comprehensive situational analysis, establishing baseline data in each targeted community to assess the adequacy of existing services and set measurable improvement targets. Community leaders and volunteers underwent extensive training, focusing on the Municipal Systems Act, interim basic services policy for informal settlements, leadership and engagement skills, social audit methodologies and community mapping

techniques. These efforts aimed to strengthen their ability to navigate governance systems and advocate for improved services effectively. Participants received training on municipal budgeting at district and metro levels, enabling them to formulate informed submissions for Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). These submissions focused on improving access to water and sanitation services and ensuring maintenance standards were upheld.

Through a participatory process, community leaders and volunteers developed tools to monitor water and sanitation service provision. Volunteers implemented these monitoring strategies, reporting monthly on municipal performance against community-defined targets. The leadership compiled these findings into reports submitted to local councillors, District Water Services Authorities, and Municipal Public Accounts Committees. BESG collaborated with these communities to conduct mapping and monitoring exercises, documenting the state of shared water and sanitation services. This work supported emergency responses initiated by the National Department of Human Settlements, Water, and Sanitation during the hard lockdown.

This programme exemplifies BESG's commitment to empowering communities, enhancing governance systems, and advocating for equitable access to essential services. Through these initiatives, significant strides were made toward securing sustainable improvements in water and sanitation provision in informal settlements.



Figure 1 : Amahlongwa



Figure 2 : Samsen Farm



Figure 3 : Jabavu



Figure 4 : Mpumetelo



Figure 5 : Nyanini

BESG DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (NPC) ASIVILEKANE CAMPAIGN

In 2023, BESG Development Services strengthened its commitment to addressing critical service delivery challenges by partnering with International Budget Partnership (IBP) as part of the Asivikelane Campaign. This initiative focuses on amplifying the voices of informal settlement residents, ensuring that their concerns about water, sanitation, and other basic services are brought to the attention of policymakers and municipal officials.

Asivikelane, meaning “Let’s protect each other” in isiZulu, is a nationwide campaign that leverages community-driven data collection and advocacy to improve the delivery of essential services in informal settlements. BESG’s participation aimed to monitor and address pressing water and sanitation challenges affecting vulnerable communities in eThekweni Municipality.

The partnership enabled BESG to mobilize and train community members, equipping them with skills to monitor and report on water and sanitation challenges. Community representatives were engaged from across eThekweni’s informal settlements and trained to document service interruptions, infrastructure failures, and the availability of facilities, ensuring that data collected was reliable and actionable. BESG facilitated monthly surveys that gathered information directly from residents about their lived experiences with water and sanitation services. This data was

aggregated and shared with IBP to create visual dashboards highlighting service delivery gaps, patterns, and urgent needs.

BESG acted as a conduit between the voices of community members and municipal officials by presenting evidence-based findings to drive accountability and immediate action. Regular engagements with municipal representatives ensured that the issues raised were acknowledged, and commitments were secured to address them. BESG also encouraged dialogue sessions where communities were supported to identify localized solutions to water and sanitation challenges, fostering ownership and resilience.



BESG’s involvement in the campaign achieved significant milestones. The data-driven approach of the Asivikelane Campaign ensured that water and sanitation challenges in

eThekweni's informal settlements were consistently brought to the fore at municipal and national levels, strengthening advocacy efforts and encouraging data-informed decision-making. The mobilization and training of residents empowered communities to hold service providers accountable. Consistent monitoring identified critical issues such as broken water pipes and overflowing sanitation facilities, which were promptly reported to municipal teams for intervention. Additionally, BESG's collaboration with IBP and other organizations contributed to a national movement advocating for equitable access to basic services for informal settlement residents.

Despite these successes, challenges persisted. Municipal resource constraints often caused delays in addressing reported issues, while navigating informal settlement layouts and addressing resistance from some residents required sustained engagement and trust-building. Furthermore, systemic service delivery gaps, such as aging infrastructure and uneven resource allocation, highlighted the need for sustained advocacy.

BESG remains committed to the Asivikelane Campaign and will continue its work in 2024 to expand monitoring to additional informal settlements, strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations, and collaborate with municipal officials to develop sustainable solutions that address both immediate and systemic water and sanitation challenges. This work reflects BESG's dedication to ensuring that vulnerable communities have equitable

access to the services essential for dignity, health, and well-being. By combining community-driven monitoring, evidence-based advocacy, and collaborative problem-solving, BESG continues to contribute to meaningful and lasting change in eThekweni's informal settlements.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FOR THE YEAR

