

IMPACT CASE STUDIES 2

eThekwini

September 2018

IBP South Africa, the SASDI Alliance, and the eMalandeni community begin to see results from ongoing community-led monitoring and engagement with eThekwini Municipality

In September 2018, the International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP South Africa) partnered with the South Africa Shack Dweller International Alliance (SASDI Alliance) – comprising the Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC), the Informal Settlement Network (ISN), and the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP) – to conduct a social audit on sanitation facilities and services in eMalandeni informal settlement in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The informal settlement is home to 5 000 people.

IBP South Africa and CORC carried out the social audit which is a community-led process of engaging government about poor services by monitoring service delivery on the basis of government commitments contained in budgets and other official documents. In 2019 IBP South Africa and CORC produced a report documenting the social audit. IBP South Africa, CORC, and partners then workshopped the report's recommendations with the eMalandeni community leadership, as well as preparing the community to engage with the eThekwini Municipality.

Subsequently CORC and IBP South Africa met twice with the senior management team of eThekwini Department of Water and Sanitation and were extremely pleased when the municipality agreed to implement the recommendations of the audit.

Refurbishment and maintenance of communal ablution facilities

The first concrete impact from the social audit came when the municipality began conducting repairs (including new doors, taps, drains, and cleared blockages etc.) on a number of the communal ablution blocks that serve the informal settlement.

Officials from the Water and Sanitation Department also agreed to a plan of engagement with CORC and the eMalandeni community in terms of the ongoing maintenance of ablution facilities, which is a significant achievement. There were also discussions between CORC, IBP South Africa, the community leadership, and officials about which communal ablution blocks fall under the capital refurbishment programme, and which communal blocks fall under the maintenance team.



The community and CORC have also been engaging with the municipality around fault reporting. This is linked to the challenges of the work of the janitors/caretakers who are responsible for day-to-day cleaning (e.g., improving working their conditions and wages, while also ensuring that they follow through with contract requirements). This is discussed in more detail below.

Future provision of disabled-friendly sanitation facilities and lighting for communal blocks

In 2019, there were important and ongoing engagements between IBP South Africa, CORC, the community leadership, and the department on other issues, including the provision of disabled-friendly sanitation facilities around communal ablution blocks. In terms of the former, the specifications used in Ekurhuleni (which emerged from the social audit carried out there and is explained in our first impact story), were shared with eThekweni officials, as a possible transitional solution for the provision of disabled-friendly chemical toilets. It was agreed that eMalandeni community members, with support from CORC, would collect more detailed information on how many disabled residents there are in the community, where they are located, and where space could be identified for disabled-friendly facilities. This will be the basis for a follow-up conversation with the municipality, which will hopefully lead to concrete action going forward.

We also made progress around the issue of lighting around communal ablution blocks. The municipality agreed to set up a meeting with the eThekweni electricity department, to discuss the electrification of ablution facilities in eMalandeni. These meetings will hopefully take place in 2020.

Engaging with the critical, but politically sensitive, issue of caretakers in eMalandeni

The caretakers/janitors of eMalandeni are key stakeholders in the sustainable improvement of the sanitation service to the community, and as the parties responsible for addressing a number of the issues highlighted in the social audit (including the locking of ablution blocks, cleaning of ablution blocks, and the distribution of toilet paper) it is important that they fulfil their duties.

During meetings in 2019, municipal officials explained to CORC and the community leadership that they had to follow protocol and engage the ward councillor before setting up a meeting with the caretakers. This unfortunately led to a situation where the councillor refused to convene the meeting, which then meant that all other work was put on hold. The community eventually managed to have a meeting with the councillor where they briefed him on the social audit and next steps, and he indicated that he was happy with the process and would provide whatever support he could. However, when a follow-up meeting was requested by IBP South Africa, CORC, the community leadership, and municipal officials, to revisit the action items and next steps, the ward councillor could not be reached. The situation is linked to ongoing political issues in the municipality, related to the previous mayor. Resolving the issue with the ward councillor and caretakers is ongoing, and will be informed by research IBP South Africa recently commissioned on ward councillors in South Africa.