PRESS STATEMENT
21 OCTOBER 2019

SERI AND ABAHLALI BASEMJONDOLO LAUNCH RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS ON INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

On Monday, 21 October 2019, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI) in partnership with Abahlali BaseMjondolo hosted the eThekwini launch of four research publications on informal settlements in South Africa. The reports emanate from SERI’s research series entitled “Informal Settlement: Norms, Practices and Agency”.

The three site-based research reports are on Siyanda informal settlement in KwaMashu (eThekwini Municipality) which was produced in partnership with Abahlali BaseMjondolo and will be foregrounded in this launch; Ratanang informal settlement in Klerksdorp (City of Matlosana); Marikana informal settlement in Philippi (City of Cape Town); and a fourth Synthesis Report that pulls together findings in each of the themes (tenure security and land use management; political space; access to basic services and economic life) across the three sites.

Informal settlements have been part of the South African urban landscape for decades. The Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) provides a strong policy framework for improving the lives of informal settlement residents. There are however few if any examples where municipalities have upgraded informal settlements in keeping with the policy. This research provides qualitative, evidence-based insights to assist government officials, practitioners, planners and community members to strengthen the implementation of in-situ upgrading.

According to Stuart Wilson, executive director of SERI: “The persistence of informal settlements in South Africa is a painful reminder of the state’s failure and the market’s inability to provide poor households with affordable accommodation options in well-located areas. These reports provide a deep insight to informal settlements in South Africa. We hope that these reports will assist in developing a better approach towards informal settlement upgrading in South Africa.”

The launch took place at the Diakonia Centre, 20 Diakonia Ave, Durban Central, Durban.

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