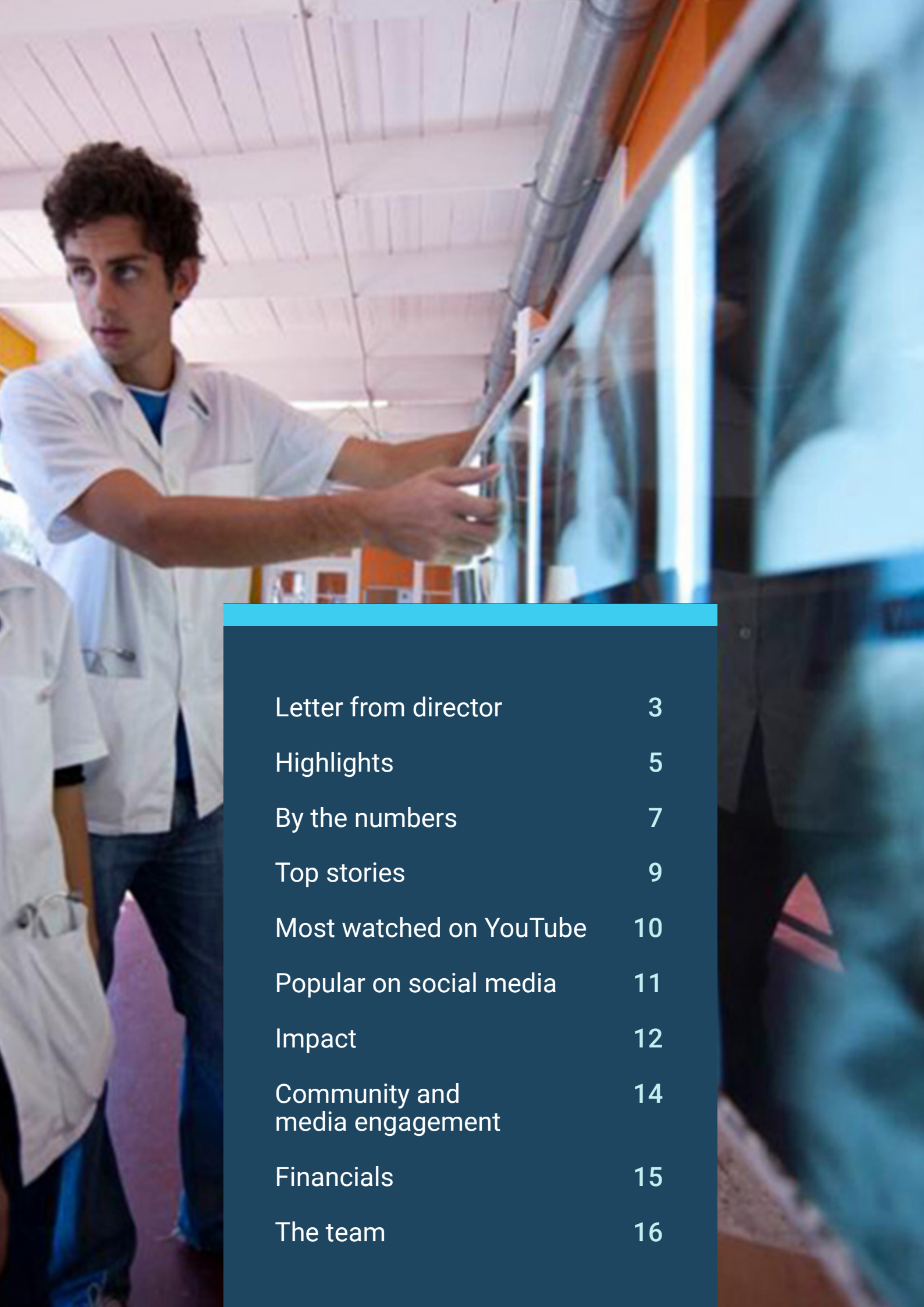


BHEKISISA
CENTRE FOR HEALTH JOURNALISM

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23

[BHEKISISA.ORG](https://bhekisisa.org)



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In June of 2022, more than two years after the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation, we shut down our COVID-19 and vaccine tracker. It was a turning point for South Africa and the world.

Our reporting shifted. We followed the parliamentary discussions on the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme as those lagged and loadshedding as it spiked, threatening food and water supplies and costing lives at hospitals. In April, floods hit Durban, leaving 448 people dead and thousands without homes. It was a frightening reality check on the impacts of climate change, a coverage area which will increase when our reporter completes the Oxford Climate Journalism Network programme later this year.

We held our first in-person event in May with an Open Society Foundations-funded workshop for decision-makers on writing solutions-based op-eds about the much-deliberated NHI. Our team also moderated and spoke on local and international panels on everything from solutions journalism and the role of the media in international development to rural healthcare and ARVs.

While the pandemic waned, its effects linger. So does the credibility and trust we built with public health officials across the country. Both were underscored when the chairperson of the Western Cape's COVID-19 committee emailed to ask us about booster shots for immunocompromised people – information she said was not available from the national health department.

Our team's work was recognised with a National Press Club award for "fearlessly reporting the facts and science of COVID while being mercilessly trolled on social media". A report by Media Monitoring Africa and Africa Data Hub found our COVID-19 reporting outperformed the other nine major African media organisations they analysed.

But it was only in November when I was asked to speak at the annual *State of the Newsroom* report, that it struck me. Bhekisisa was now considered a fully-fledged player in South African journalism, just two years after splitting off from the *Mail & Guardian*.

– Mia Malan, executive director and editor-in-chief

INTRODUCTION

R **R** **LGBTQI**
R **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS**
R **DRUG ABUSE**
R **COVID-19**
R **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**
R **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS**
R **MENTAL**
R **HEALTH**
R **HEALTHCARE WORKERS**
R **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
R **CANCER**
R **INFECTIOUS DISEASES** **AIDS** **PREP**
R **HIV PREVENTION**
R **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**
R **HEALTH JOURNALISM**
R **VACCINES**
R **NHI**

HIGHLIGHTS

Our team spoke on and moderated 23 panels, including a discussion alongside the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Tedros Ghebreyesus and the European Investment Bank's Werner Hoyer; a [Cambridge University panel](#) about the media's role in international development; and at the International Science Journalism Forum alongside editors from *Science* magazine, *Nature* and *Stat News*.

Our TV programme Health Beat relaunched in August, [breaking a story](#) about 44 new National Health Insurance (NHI) jobs for economists and public health experts, even though the Bill had not yet been signed into law. We also secured an [exclusive interview with the first African head of Pefpar, John Nkengasong](#). We talked with [Ayoade Alakija](#), WHO's special envoy for access to COVID-19 tools accelerator, who spoke about institutional racism in the global health system.

Editor-in-chief [Mia Malan](#) won the Standard Bank Sikuville Journalism Award for column of the year about [the Omicron travel bans](#), a piece that was used by the Canadian High Commission to help convince its government to drop the ban and quoted at a WHO council meeting to explain why the restrictions were discriminatory and unscientific.

Media Monitoring Africa and Africa Data Hub's [report](#) found our COVID-19 reporting outperformed nine other major African media organisations, including *The Conversation*, *Africa Check*, *The New Humanitarian* and *Nigeria's Premium Times*.

In a [Harvard Kennedy School paper](#) about journalism schools in Africa, Bhekisisa was used as an example of nonprofit media groups doing some of the best work in investigative journalism amidst the decline of mainstream media.

The [National Press Club honoured Bhekisisa](#) for "fearlessly reporting the facts and science of COVID while being mercilessly trolled on social media", our fifth award for pandemic-related reporting.

Reporter Mohale Moloji and multimedia manager Dylan Bush presented at the continent's largest investigative conference about [how Bhekisisa tracked and illustrated COVID-19 infections](#).

2022-2023



“You’ve set a high bar for medical journalism in SA (and probably the world). Well done. Continue to excel.”

– André Rose, deputy director, South African Population Research Infrastructure Network at the SA Medical Research Council on Bhekisisa’s COVID health reporting

THE NUMBERS

ARTICLES

181

Average page views per month on Bhekisisa's website 38 494

Total page views on Bhekisisa's website for this year 461 928

Total page views from republication partners for this year 1 755 960*



REPUBLISHING PARTNERS: News24, Daily Maverick, Mail & Guardian, Financial Mail, El País, SAMA Insider, TimesLIVE, Vrye Weekblad, Zambezi News24, HeraldLIVE



53

VIDEOS

154 386 views**

PODCAST

6

episodes

On average, people listened to 80% of our podcasts before they stopped listening



NEWSLETTERS

3 200

subscribers



AVERAGE OPEN RATE: 32%



5 episodes

286 623 views***

HEALTH BEAT

IN THE NEWS

Other media using Bhekisisa as a resource 16

Other media interviewing our team as experts 59

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

 Twitter 21 781

 YouTube 10 606

 Facebook 9 441

 Instagram 2 931

 LinkedIn 1 012

* This reflects all content, including articles and videos, from News24, Daily Maverick, Mail & Guardian, El País, and BusinessLive.

** This includes Bhekisisa's YouTube from March 2022 to February 2023, News24, BusinessLive and the Mail & Guardian from March to December 2022.

*** This reflects all Health Beat videos, inserts and segments from Bhekisisa's YouTube and website and from News24, BusinessLive, Daily Maverick and the Mail & Guardian for the year.

As COVID restrictions lifted, our journalists were able to attend more live events. In May, the Open Society Foundations asked us to train 10 activists on crafting op-eds. Following that training, we received similar requests. We created a training template that we can customise depending on a group's needs. This has become a new revenue stream.

EVENTS

Bhekisisa events*

2

Panels spoken on

15

Panels moderated

8



TRAINING

Op-ed training:

- Decision-makers and health activists with support from Open Society Foundations
- Researchers at the South African Institute of International Affairs
- Writers and practitioners at Discovery Health
- Researchers from King's College in London and Wits University's Developmental Pathways Health Research Unit

Media training:

- Bhekisisa partner Eh!woza learners about visual storytelling
- Researchers from the Centre for Evidence-based Health Care at the University of Stellenbosch
- Online security webinar session for Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism and the International Women's Media Foundation

* This includes one webinar and one Twitter Space event.

TOP READ STORIES

- [Kids are having sex. We need to help teen moms, not punish them](#)
- [A junior doctor's battle to keep death at bay for state patients](#)
- [A torchlight tragedy: Inside a Joburg emergency room during loadshedding](#)
- [Abortions 101: Here's which pills, tools and terms to know if you plan to terminate](#)
- [When will COVID end? Prof Abdool Karim explains](#)
- [The cruel collusion that devastates young doctors learning how to deliver babies](#)
- [What the latest COVID stats can tell us – and what they can't](#)
- [Blood on the floor, drips in the dark: Johannesburg is crumbling. Here's how it affects hospitals](#)
- [SA's moonlight sonata: The illegal cash cow draining specialist care at state hospitals](#)
- [Inner condoms can increase your sexual pleasure – and protect you](#)
- [It's your last shot at getting a Pfizer vaccine. Here's how South Africa's roll-out is changing come July](#)
- [Magic melanin: Everything that makes Black skin unique](#)
- [One, two, three, buy! Here's who is in charge of buying medications in SA](#)
- [What is the use of anti-HIV injections when those who need it most can't use it?](#)
- [How to know if you're exercising hard enough](#)
- [Four ways SA's latest COVID surge is different](#)
- [Fake abortion providers are online too. Here's how to spot them](#)
- [44 experts to design details of NHI scheme from January 2023](#)
- [When all else fails: Why people opt for backstreet abortions](#)
- [Could nurses track domestic violence from stomach pains and headaches?](#)

STORIES

MOST WATCHED



IN SOUTH AFRICA, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO GET AN ABORTION UP TO 12 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY.

AFTER 12 WEEKS, AN ABORTION CAN BE DONE IN SPECIAL CASES.



OUR HEARTS ARE PUMPS.

THE BLOOD THEY PUMP TRANSPORTS OXYGEN AND MINERALS TO THE REST OF OUR BODIES.

AN INNER CONDOM IS INSERTED INTO A PERSON'S VAGINA OR ANUS BEFORE SEX.

EH!WOZA

... WE LAUNCH THOUSANDS OF TINY ROCKETS INTO THE AIR AROUND US.



WHEN?

THREE MONTHS AFTER TWO DOSES OF PFIZER.

TWO MONTHS AFTER ONE JAB OF THE JOHNSON AND JOHNSON (J&J) JAB.



POPULAR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

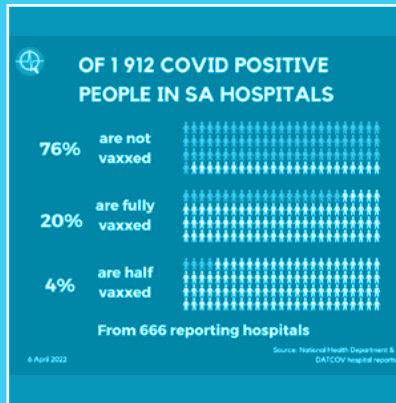
THE BHEKISISA PODCAST

Why SA can't afford to vaccinate 5-11 year olds

Mia Malan
Bhekisisa editor-in-chief

Nicholas Crisp
Department of Health director-general

21:29 — — — — — -3:32



PORTRAIT OF A MODEST TRAILBLAZER

"I truly believe we became well known as leaders in the field of violence against women globally, having built the field here in South Africa as well, although our policymakers don't always take note of us."

Gender-based violence researcher and activist, Rosemah Abrahams

BHEKISISA

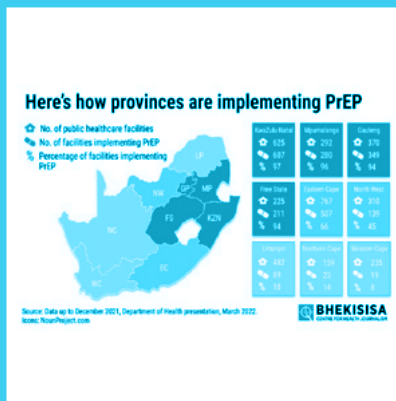
MOONLIGHTING

Moonlighting or dual practice is when doctors (and many other state employees) work for both the public and private sectors.

Dual practice was originally meant to supplement low salaries offered by the public health sector to prevent doctors from leaving state hospitals – by allowing them to earn extra from private work.

However, many senior and specialist doctors abuse the system by working both jobs at the same time, resulting in the quality of specialist care at state facilities dropping.

BHEKISISA



INSIDE A JOBURG EMERGENCY ROOM DURING LOADSHEDDING

In July, loadshedding left Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital without a CT scanner, a machine that allows doctors to get a 3-D image of a patient's brain.

As a result, doctors in the emergency unit couldn't assess a patient with a serious brain injury.

This is a common problem in public hospitals, sources say, because the machine takes huge amounts of electricity to operate and can sometimes fail when its source of power changes from the Eskom grid to the backup electricity.

BHEKISISA

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SAFEGUARD THE NHI FROM CORRUPTION?

"It's important to design out the incentive to steal by making the NHI very transparent ... If the public can see everything that's going on it will be far more difficult to defraud the system."

Nicholas Crisp, the health department's deputy director for South Africa's National Health Insurance

BHEKISISA

Could nurses track domestic violence from stomach pains and headaches?

A long forgotten plan would have helped clinic nurses trace the signs of domestic violence and get people help.

The policy was drawn up in 2001, but never made it off the page. Now, researcher Lisa Vetten says it's time for the document to be resurrected.

Research shows South Africa's health workers want to help their patients who are experiencing abuse, but they don't know how.

BHEKISISA

#RURALHEALTH

HOW TO GET DOCTORS TO WORK OUTSIDE CITIES

BHEKISISA



After we published a piece by news editor Joan van Dyk and reporter Jesse Copelyn about public sector doctors [moonlighting](#), the South African Medical Association (SAMA) issued a [press release](#) urging health workers to comply with remunerative work rules. The article was also featured in its monthly journal, the [SAMA Insider](#), and used at the Hospital Association of South Africa's annual conference as proof that there is a doctors' crisis in the country.

Tim De Maayer, a paediatric gastroenterologist from Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital and a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, shared our [moonlighting](#) article on [Twitter](#). This, and his subsequent suspension and reinstatement, made him an important healthcare influencer.

Media Monitoring Africa and Africa Data Hub's [report](#) found our COVID-19 reporting outperformed nine other major African media organisations.

Following our story about a [medical student who watched a patient die](#) at a state hospital due to loadshedding complications, the Health Professions Council of South Africa urged government to stop hospital power outages.

Reporter Mohale Moloi and multimedia manager Dylan Bush explained how [Bhekisisa tracked and illustrated COVID-19 infections](#) at the continent's largest investigative conference.

Produced in collaboration with the TRIAD Trust and the Foundation for Aids Research, our [Where to Care map](#), which provides free access to counselling, post-assault care and family planning services, was featured at the 2022 International Aids Conference.

Winnie Byanyima, the executive director of UNAids, shared an [op-ed we published about anti-HIV injection, CAB-LA](#) as a "must-read" with her [248.9K followers](#).

After we [broke a story on Health Beat about](#) the health department's decision to advertise 44 new roles for economists and public health experts – even though the NHI Bill had not been signed into law – other major media outlets followed, reporting on the legality of the issue.

Reporter Zano Kunene's article about [tracking COVID-19 in wastewater](#) was featured in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health newsletter.

IMPACT



“Bhekisisa sets a consistently high standard of quality reporting.”

– Africa Data Hub and Media Monitoring Africa report

COMMUNITY AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Bhekisisa reporters spoke widely with other journalists and media groups, appeared on panels, and participated in webinars. Here are some of the local, regional, and international groups and publications we worked with.

BusinessLive | [Cape Talk](#) | [Daily Dispatch](#) | [eNCA](#) | Daily Maverick | [El País](#)
eNuus | [EWN](#) | [Financial Mail](#) | Global Investigative Journalism Network | [KykNET](#)
[Mail & Guardian](#) | [Kaya FM](#) | Johns Hopkins University's Global Health NOW
[The Citizen](#) | The South African | [News Central TV, Nigeria](#) | [Newzroom Afrika](#)
[Power FM](#) | [Vrye Weekblad](#) | Salaamedia | [SAMA Insider](#) | News24
[SAFM](#) | [Radio Sonder Grense](#) | [Radio Islam](#) | [Radio 702](#) | Journalism Studies

[Advancing Rights in Southern Africa](#) | Hospital Association of South Africa
African Investigative Journalism Conference | [Bulungula Incubator](#)
[Cambridge University](#) | Digital Forensic Research Lab | [Daystar University, Nairobi](#)
[Commonwealth Foundation](#) | Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
International Women's Media Foundation | [Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institute](#)
[Global Health Strategies](#) | [Government Communication and Information System](#)
Global Fund for HIV, TB and Malaria | [Freedom Park](#) | [Harvard University](#)
[Nation Media](#) | Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Biopharmaceutical Accelerator
[Rhodes University's journalism department](#) | [Fray College](#) | Civic Tech Innovation Forum
[Fraymedia](#) | Rural Doctors Association of South Africa | [Goalkeepers](#)
HIV & TB Health Care Worker Hotline | [Discovery Rural Health](#) | Project Syndicate
[Internews Network](#) | SABC's 48 Hours | [JAMFEST Unplugged](#)
King's College London | [Rand Merchant Bank](#) | [Drug Discovery and Development Centre](#)
[Imperial College London](#) | Department of health's social listening committee
International Science Journalism Forum | [TRIAD Trust](#) | Discovery CSI
[International Society for Evidence-Based Health Care](#) | [UNAids](#) | [Broadreach Group](#)
[11th Hour Project](#) | South African Health Technologies Advocacy Coalition | [Ogilvy PR](#)
South African Association of Campus Health Services | [Wits Justice Project](#)
[Wits Centre for Journalism](#) | Western Cape Parliament's COVID-19 committee
[University of the Witwatersrand](#) | [South African Institute of International Affairs](#)
[The Journalism and Media Lab](#) | Southern African HIV Clinicians Society
South African National Editors' Forum | [National Centre for Disease Control](#)
[Oxford University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism](#) | [Eh!woza](#)

FINANCIALS



TOTAL
REVENUE:
R16 365 163

86%
PROGRAMMES

14%
GENERAL &
ADMINISTRATION

BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*

givengain



National
Research
Foundation

Donors

Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation:
R14 817 704

Individual donations,
GivenGain:
R4 989

NRF COVID-19
Africa Rapid
Grant Fund:
R24 000

BHEKISISA TEAM





BHEKISISA
CENTRE FOR HEALTH JOURNALISM

BOARD MEMBERS

Vinayak Bhardwaj, health economist,
Wits University School of Public Health

Nicholas Dawes, executive director, *The City*

Hoosain Karjieker, chief executive officer,
Mail & Guardian

Mia Malan, executive director and editor-in-chief,
Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism

Okyerebea Mwaba, general manager,
Group Legal, MTN Group

Kanya Ndaki, director of communications,
The Aurum Institute

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