

# What we stand for

**BLACKSASH**  
MAKING HUMAN RIGHTS REAL



Our vision is a South Africa in which human rights are recognised in law and respected in practice, and in which the government is accountable to all its people and meets its obligations to the poor. Our belief is that through individual and collective non-violent action for change, people have the power to influence their own situation and society. Our aim is to enable all - with emphasis on the needs of women - to recognise and exercise their human rights, particularly their social and economic rights, and to create a society which has effective laws and delivery systems including comprehensive social security provision for those most in need



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Making things happen

Why we're still around



Helping the poorest

We will strive to achieve this by

- informing and organising targeted beneficiaries and civil society so they can claim their rights;
- working towards achieving efficient and honest administration in government; legislation that works;
- promoting budgetary allocation to social security;
- contributing towards the effectiveness of others impacting on our sector;
- building excellence in our own practice; and
- protecting the integrity of the Constitution.

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With the birth of the new South Africa, many things changed and we did too - today the Black Sash is a registered trust, a non-party political, non-profit organisation dedicated to ensuring the recognition and protection of all our citizens' human rights - by law and in practice. Formed in 1955, the Black Sash began as a women's anti-apartheid movement opposed to the gross human rights violations practised under apartheid. "The conscience of white South Africa" is what Nelson Mandela called us - we fought apartheid through protest vigils, marches and advice offices for those deprived of their basic human rights.



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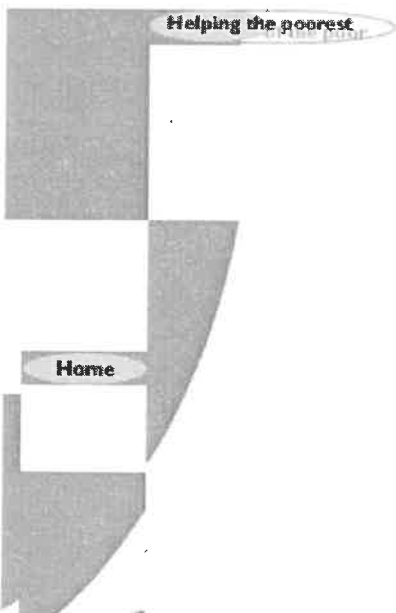


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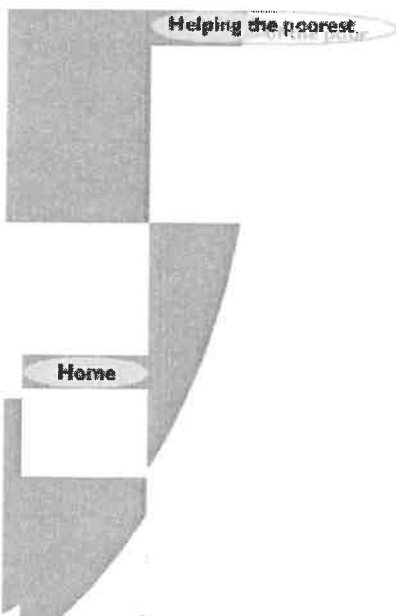
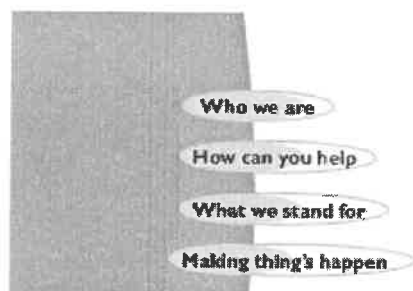


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We have the advantage of being able to take our on-the-ground experience and information to a policy and legislative level within government, and then ensure the measures are implemented. For example, as a result of our assistance, over R5 million in social security benefits reached those for whom it was intended in KwaZulu/Natal and the Eastern Cape during the year 2000. If it had not been for the work of the Black Sash, this revenue would not have been generated for these areas, nor would it have reached the people who needed it so desperately. As an example of policy and legislative influence, the Black Sash has played a key role with other organs of civil society in the establishment of administrative justice as a constitutional right.

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Visit our offices and you'll see how busy we are today. Much has changed since the collapse of apartheid but one great injustice remains: poverty. Until it is alleviated, many of our people will continue to live in inhuman conditions, where they're not only deprived of their dignity, but also their basic human rights. More than just being morally wrong, poverty threatens our economy and respect for the rule of law. It tears at the very fabric of our young democracy. So for us, the quest for social justice is vital not just for the poor, but for the good of all South Africans.

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