**PRESS RELEASE**

Assmang and Zutari win Gold Award at 2021 Facilitation Impact Awards for iKhaya housing policy

**As a new benchmark for dealing with complex issues, Assmang’s new iKhaya housing policy proves that a collaborative design approach is possible in the mining sector**

**4 November 2021:** [Assmang](https://assmang.co.za/)’s new iKhaya housing policy has been recognised with a Gold Award at the 2021 Facilitation Impact Awards (FIA). [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com), a leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm, partnered with Assmang as technical advisor and facilitator for the ambitious co-design project.

“This award is dedicated to all the members of the iKhaya Steering Committee who stayed committed to this collaborative process of co-creation. *Ke a leboga*,” says **David Selemo**, Executive Operations, ARM Ferrous. Local mining company Assmang (Pty) Ltd. is jointly owned by African Rainbow Minerals Ltd (ARM) and Assore Ltd. The project involved Assmang’s mining operations in the Northern Cape at Black Rock, Khumani and Beeshoek, with 5 000 permanent employees.

“Through this journey, Assmang and Zutari have become co-creating partners with impact – inspired to connect differently with stakeholders in the world of mining. Taking a collaborative approach to co-design a new housing policy was a very bold step,” comments **Wim van Schalkwyk**, Creative Director at Zutari.

Home ownership and accommodation among mineworkers has historically been a sensitive and controversial issue in South Africa, often resulting in opposing parties locking horns and paralysing production. This is despite the housing and living conditions standard for the minerals industry requiring mining rights holders to assist their employees in facilitating homeownership. However, finding a way to do this that satisfies both mineworkers and mine owners is a complex challenge.

In 2017, Assmang established the iKhaya Steering Committee, consisting of the three trade unions represented at the mine, Assmang senior management and representatives from Assmang’s major shareholder ARM to drive the housing policy initiative. When the project started, only 60% of employees could access Assmang’s housing benefit scheme in the formal towns of Kathu, Postmasburg and Kuruman, with 40% not qualifying for the housing subsidy as they preferred to reside in tribal areas.

After a two-year-long journey, the new iKhaya housing policy was launched in March 2020. It now offers all Assmang employees a set of six housing benefit options to choose from. This flexibility ensures employees can choose where they want to live and how they access support for owning their own homes. These changes mean each of the approximately 5 200 Assmang employees is assisted on their journey to become homeowners, ensuring no one is left behind.

The impact of the project does not end there. Apart from becoming a benchmark to the broader mining community dealing with similar issues, the project also introduced new ways of working collaboratively to minimise risk and maximise buy-in. Assmang has since adopted similar co-design processes for other complex challenges it deals with. The trust built during this project between management and trade unions has laid a solid foundation.

The Awards honour organisations that have used facilitation to achieve a measurable and positive impact, as well as the facilitators who worked with them. As a professional association with members in more than 65 countries, the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) is well-placed to recognise the power of facilitation worldwide. For more than 20 years, it has been a strong advocate for the power of facilitation in helping organisations address challenges and achieve results. The Awards honour organisations that have used facilitation to achieve a measurable and positive impact.

Zutari was appointed as consultant to assist Assmang with all aspects of this ambitious project. The project was engineered from the outset as a co-design project, and relied heavily on Zutari’s mature facilitation and engagement capabilities. The Zutari project team included a diverse collective of experts from facilitators to stakeholder engagement specialists, communication experts, town and regional planners, information designers, project managers, civil engineers, asset management practitioners and legal and risk advisors.

To address the challenges posed by the project, the team applied practical tools from the fields of Design Thinking, Systems Thinking and Lean Thinking. Zutari refers to this dynamic solution-finding process as the Impact Framework, which guides its approach to co-create impactful solutions. Assmang saw Zutari’s facilitated co-design approach as a fresh way to bring opposing parties together. It enabled people, irrespective of their role or level, to have an equal opportunity to provide input and be heard, creating a safe environment for potential conflict to be resolved.

Read more about this project at <https://www.zutari.com/solutionist/case-story-1/>

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Assmang**

Local mining company Assmang (Pty) Ltd. is jointly owned by African Rainbow Minerals (ARM) and Assore Ltd. Assmang has mining operations in the Northern Cape at Black Rock, Khumani and Beeshoek mines, with approximately 5 200 permanent employees.

**About Zutari**

As engineering consultants and trusted advisors, Zutari co-creates an engineered impact that enables environments, communities and economies to thrive. Few others can match our local capacity, long-standing presence and understanding of the challenges required to operate successfully across various regions in Africa.

We have created an impact across Africa for the past 89 years (1932 to 2021) and remain committed to this continent, making us the perfect partner to those less familiar with working in Africa. We are experienced in international projects and our Global Design Centres allow us to bring world-class solutions to our clients.

As a private management-owned company, our commitment is true and we have vested interest in our clients’ success. Our strong relationships allow us to connect the right expertise, processes and resources to match client’s needs and bring stakeholders that have shared interests together.

We blend the old and the new. We have moved beyond traditional engineering and work collaboratively to integrate technical and creative thinking. This process of co-creation allows us to unearth new opportunities with our clients and partners.

Zutari’s broad collective of in-house, industry-recognised engineering consultants and trusted advisors provide seamless and integrated delivery. This unique ability to offer scaled engagement allows Zutari to solve complex challenges more efficiently.

Grounded in digital engineering, we continuously deliver better results.

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