

**ACAT
Annual
Report
2024**



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“

I joined ACAT to get more knowledge in business.

I had always wanted to sell anything that could give me more income.

I have tried many things, but have always failed to make a profit.

After completing the training, I returned to my tuckshop and reopened it.

I set aside a room in my home for the business, and the first thing that came to mind was the record-keeping workshop I had attended.

In the few months since the tuckshop has been open, I have noticed a difference between how I used to run it, and now that I apply business principles. My tuckshop will expand. I am now a member of a savings group and I want to save money for the construction of this tuckshop business.

- Group member Jabu Makhaye

Well done to all who have worked so hard to achieve these amazing results.
All photographs are taken by our ACAT team.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In 2024, ACAT made significant strides in advancing our mission to uplift marginalized rural communities through our Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP). This year marked a pivotal point in our ongoing efforts to promote economic resilience and self-sufficiency, aligning with our vision of transforming the lives of the poor in KwaZulu.

Our flagship ILP, which integrates the Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP) and the Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP), successfully formed 180 new Groups of 5, where participants benefited from training in Basic Life Skills and initiated 751 new home gardens. This initiative continues to foster household food security and offer families a sustainable source of food, even in challenging conditions.

The economic empowerment focus saw 581 new income-generating activities (IGAs) launched, reinforcing ACAT's commitment to stimulating economic growth within communities. Additionally, 149 functioning Savings and Loans Groups (SLGs) are helping members save over R8.5 million, despite the difficult economic landscape.

One of the highlights was the introduction of the Area Implementing Committee (AIC) structure, which has enhanced the effectiveness and efficiency of our community development efforts. The successful pilot across 18 areas promises a more sustainable future, with communities contributing funds towards the ILP's continuation in 2026. Our focus on youth empowerment through the Youth Basic Life Skills (YBLS) course expanded significantly, and we strengthened partnerships to integrate Sexual Reproductive Health training.

2024 is a reflection of the dedication and growth of the ACAT staff, AIC's from all 18 Areas and all our partners whose efforts have been instrumental in the ILP's success. Looking ahead to 2025, we remain committed to empowering communities to take greater ownership of their development, ensuring long-term sustainability, and ultimately transforming lives. Thank you for your continued support.

Dr. Siphon Radebe
Chairman

Overview of ACAT

ACAT was established in 1979 as a Christian development organization committed to improving the livelihoods of the active rural poor in South Africa. Using a self-help approach, ACAT has developed the Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP), which equips families to start sustainable businesses, and savings and loans groups.

The ILP's methodologies are based on robust training and mentoring programmes aimed at equipping the whole family to overcome poverty, and influence, motivate and assist others to do the same. This is achieved through sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurial development, and youth development activities.



Integrated Livelihoods Programme

1 Develop foundations

- Social mobilisation by forming groups and training participants to increase their knowledge, skills, and capacity
- Strengthening civil society through community structures,
- Spiritual upliftment and transformation

4 Independent employment

- Create sustainable employment
- Develop entrepreneurship
- Youth skills and entrepreneurial development
- Youth entrepreneurship
- Inspire those around them



2 Food Security

- Group members develop food gardens to feed their family which results in
- Increased food production
 - Improved health and nutrition
 - Improved income levels

3 Income Generation

- Group members
- Start small income generating activities
 - Access savings and loans groups

Partner with ACAT by:

- Investing in ACAT's Youth Programme
- Investing seed capital into Savings and Loans Groups
- Sponsoring training in sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurial development
- Sponsoring a salary
- Contributing to general expenses

All contributions are:

- B-BBEE relevant under Socio Economic Development, Enterprise and Supplier Development and Informal Skills Development
- Deductible in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act

DIRECTOR'S REFLECTIONS

I feel an overwhelming gratitude for all the people God has used, and is still using, to bring **AFRICA CO-OPERATIVE ACTION TRUST (ACAT)** to where it is today. I feel a gratitude for all the challenges ACAT has overcome in the past that gives us a boldness to believe He will do it again. I feel gratitude every morning when I walk into the office for the focus and clear vision of those who came before me that have laid a firm foundation on which we build. I feel gratitude that no matter how dark the world becomes, we as children of light, and co-labourers with Christ, were created to let our light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father.

Africa

A continent of boundless potential, yet one often marked by complexity, instability, inequality, and poverty. It serves as a powerful reminder that no situation is beyond God's reach. In the face of hardship, resilience rises. In the midst of struggle, hope endures. And through it all, we witness that God can do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or imagine. Africa's story is not just one of challenges but of transformation. It is a land where faith flourishes, where communities come together in strength, and where new possibilities emerge against all odds. Here, miracles unfold—not always in grand gestures, but in the quiet perseverance of those who refuse to give up, in the hearts of those who continue to believe, and in the hands of those who work tirelessly to create change. It is in this very contrast—between hardship and hope, struggle and breakthrough—that we see the undeniable truth: God is at work, and His plans for Africa are greater than we can ever comprehend.

Co-operative

Remaining relevant and resilient begins with understanding that ACAT is just one contributor to the greater mission of poverty alleviation. At no point can we claim this work as ours alone. True progress requires a spirit of humility and teachability, where we actively seek collaboration with like-minded partners who share our vision. Whether we are solving challenges, strengthening our programs, expanding our reach, or fostering unity within our team, our focus must always be on partnership. The questions we should continually ask are: Who can we collaborate with? How can we work together to create deeper, more effective solutions to complex issues?

By embracing cooperation, we unlock greater impact – because lasting change is never achieved alone.

Action

In a world where time has become one of our most precious commodities, we have embraced action as a guiding principle—a filter that ensures our efforts remain purposeful and impactful. Every decision, every initiative, and every strategy we implement must lead to tangible outcomes. We recognize that good intentions alone are not enough. Vision without execution is meaningless, and ideas without action remain unfulfilled potential. That is why we remain focused on activities that drive real progress, create measurable change, and bring us closer to our mission. By using action as our standard, we ensure that our time, energy, and resources are directed toward what truly matters—turning aspirations into reality, transforming challenges into opportunities, and making a lasting difference in the communities we serve.

Trust

Building trust is an ongoing journey—one that requires consistency, integrity, and genuine relationships. Whether within the ACAT family, the communities we serve, or our partner organizations, trust remains a cornerstone of lasting impact. Without it, true collaboration and progress are impossible. If we are to see communities take ownership of their development, trust must be at the heart of everything we do, fostering confidence, unity, and shared purpose in the pursuit of sustainable change.





INTEGRATED LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME (ILP)

ACAT's Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP) serves as the overarching framework under which the Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP) and the Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) are implemented. These programmes both promote self-sufficiency, economic resilience, and sustainable community development. This section provides a combined summary of the 2024 progress and achievements of both SAP and EDP. As a foundation for all interventions, it is essential to reflect on ACAT's Vision, Mission, and Values, which guide every aspect of our work and ensure alignment with our long-term goals.

ACAT's Vision

Our Vision is to see ACAT as an instrument in God's Hand in the transformation of the people of KwaZulu from their spiritual, mental and physical poverty into a sustainable lifestyle which is God-centred and people orientated.

ACAT's Mission

ACAT's mission is to design and implement training and mentoring programmes aimed at equipping people to be sustainable in every aspect of their lives and to influence, motivate and assist others to achieve the same.

ACAT'S Values

ACAT's values derive from the received word of God as contained in the Bible. These values do not vary over time, even though the circumstances and socio-economic environment in which they are put into effect in day-to-day activities may change. Key elements of ACAT's values are:

- Total trust and obedience to the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and the holding of the name of Jesus Christ above all names.
- Actively to seek and apply God's perspective in all our decisions and behaviour.
- Love and compassion in all our dealings, with a keen appreciation that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, without condoning sins and errors, yet not judging those who commit them.

- To ensure that, as far as it lies within ACAT’s power, all it does leads to sustainability at the spiritual, mental, physical and material levels among ACAT’s target people, as well as within ACAT itself, and in any organisation with which ACAT associates on a partnership basis.
- A commitment to excellence in ACAT’s governance and in its stewardship of all human, financial and physical resources placed by God at ACAT’s disposal, and being fully accountable for the use thereof. This implies not accepting shoddy work or mediocrity in ACAT’s world view.
- In all circumstances, to maintain the highest levels of ethical and moral behaviour, to be transparent in all dealings and not to be drawn into efforts to use the ends, however noble, to justify the means which do not fit with ACAT’s values.

ACAT’s Ethos

ACAT’s ethos is God-centred and people orientated.

Overall objectives of the ILP

ACAT’s long-term objective is to transform the lives of marginalized rural communities in South Africa by unlocking economic opportunities through entrepreneurship and sustainable climate resilient agriculture. Our flagship initiative, the Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP), equips vulnerable rural families to break the cycle of poverty, igniting a ripple effect of positive change throughout their communities.

Objectives include

- Become members of sustainable community structures.
- Achieve self-reliance and sustain an ever-improving quality of life, including the reconstruction of families.
- Address the causes of poverty.
- To become food-secure by having at least a basic food garden, using sustainable agricultural practices, which will mitigate against climate change.
- Run a profitable income generating activity, using sustainable business practices.
- Be aware of, understand and actively address HIV and AIDS, and any other pandemic, with a special focus on causes, symptoms, transmission, avoidance, stigma, alternate lifestyle, management of the virus and the provision of community-based support and care.

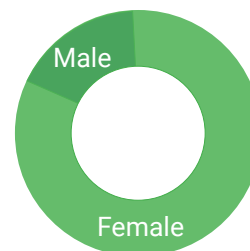


These objectives are achieved through the following activities:

Formation and Training of Groups of 5

There were 180 new Groups of 5 formed in the ILP in 2024. All groups were trained through the Basic Life Skills course. Data from a Baseline Survey of 900 G5’s showed us the following:

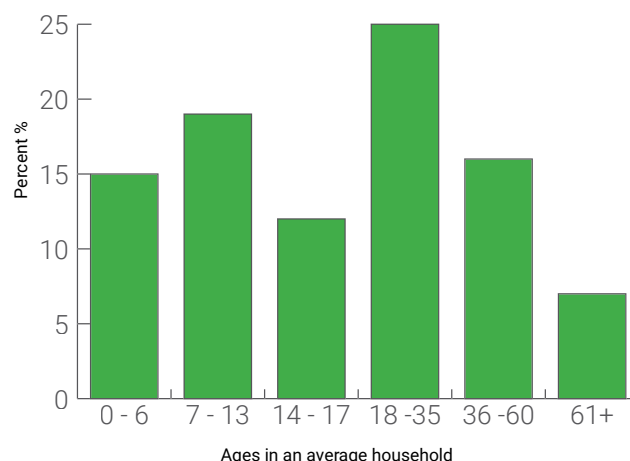
ACAT G5 groups are comprised of 15% male and 85% female.



Group members’ household statistics:

- 7 Average number of people in a household
- 3 Average number of people in the household receiving a grant
- 84% Children go to school

The ages in the household point to a young majority:



The demographics of ACAT’s Group members:

- 81% identify as Christian
- 76% unmarried
- 41% are youth (age 35 and under)
- 92% do not generate income
- 90% are on a government grant
- 82% of these are child support grants
- 50% have achieved grade 12
- 13% are practising a form of savings
- 45% do not have a door size garden
- 52% do not have crops



Promote, Teach and Facilitate Household Food Security

Establish New Home Gardens

During this reporting period, G5 members established 751 new food gardens. These gardens offer vulnerable families a reliable opportunity to grow their own crops, even in challenging climatic conditions. By utilizing cost-effective production methods that do not depend on expensive external inputs, these gardens also help protect families from financial hardship.

HFS Garden Workshops

During 2024, a total of 619 Home Food Security training workshops were held, with a total attendance of 3,524 people.

Stimulate Economic Activities and Establish Profitable Income Generating Units

Start-up of 'income generating activities'

ACAT encourages every Programme participant to start an 'income generating activity' (IGA) of their own, however small the scale. During this reporting period, 581 new IGAs were started by adult participants.



Savings and Loans

There are currently 149 functioning Savings and Loans Groups (SLGs) in the Integrated Livelihoods Programme, with a total membership of 1,408, and a total amount saved of R8,5 million.

Savings and loans will be a key focus in 2025 as we look to strengthen this catalytic aspect of the ILP.

Business Skills Training

A total of 820 one-day income generation workshops were conducted by Community Volunteers (CVs) during this reporting period, reaching 4,685 participants. These workshops serve a dual purpose: reinforcing key principles and practices from the BLS income generation module and introducing advanced business concepts to entrepreneurs who are managing or expanding their businesses. The advanced concepts are detailed in the Community Volunteer training manuals, which are provided to participants attending the CV1 to CV5 training at the ACAT Centre.

Sector/Interest Groups

In 2024, 26 new Sector Groups have been established. A Sector Group or Interest Group is formed when farmers or business owners within the same industry or with shared business interests come together to leverage economies of scale, improve market access, or enhance their services. These groups may consist of members from multiple Groups of 5 who share a common goal. Within the ACAT programme, the creation of a Sector Group serves as a key indicator of entrepreneurial growth.



Identify and capacitate Community Volunteers to assist in implementing the ILP

We are pleased to report that, in 2024, 62 NEW Community Volunteers (CVs) were identified, and began their training by attending the CV1 course at the ACAT Centre in April. Of these, 55 went on to complete the CV2 course in June, and 51 attended CV3 in August. 78 CVs attended CV4 (including 2023 CV) in Oct, and 77 attended CV5 in November/December.

There were approximately 150 CVs submitting monthly reports at the end of the year. This has increased the workload of those CVs who remain in the Programme. There are currently 17 Community Extension Officers (CEOs) assisting the ACAT ECs with implementation of the Programme in their respective communities. Assisting them in 2024 were 31 Zone Facilitators (ZFs). In some areas, a Children’s Facilitator (CF) has been appointed, who focusses on activities relating to the children of G5 families. There were 5 CFs assisting in the Programme in 2024.

A Community Training Team typically consists of the CEO, 2 ZFs, and at least 2 CVs who themselves have undergone additional training to equip them to train participants in the BLS and YBLS courses. This is in addition to their normal Programme activities carried out in 2024, a summary of which is presented below:

Activity	Number	Attended by
G5 homestead visited	3267	N/A
Combined group meetings	471	7300
One Day Workshops		
Home Food Security	619	3526
Income Generation	802	4723
Causes of poverty addressed	498	3225
Health, HIV/AIDS meetings	311	2244
Screenings of DVDs	91	491



Promote and Facilitate the Establishment of Sustainable Community Structures

In 2023, ACAT conducted an internal assessment of community structures across all programme areas, revealing that some ZSICs were not fully functional. These findings were further validated by an External Evaluation. After exploring various solutions, ACAT, in collaboration with 18 communities, decided to enhance the effectiveness of community structures by focusing on a single structure per area, known as the Area Implementing Committee (AIC).

The AIC consists of members from existing ZSIC’S, including the EC, CEO, ZF, CF, and active CVs, and is responsible for implementing the Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP) in each area.

In 2024, this new structure was piloted, beginning with two five-day AIC training sessions held in February. These sessions confirmed community approval of the new approach, leading to the implementation of four additional training weeks later in the year. The existing ZSICs have all reverted to SLGs, which now fall under and support the AIC.

At the end of 2024 we can confidently say that this has been a successful pilot project with all 18 areas expressing that rollout of the program has become more effective and efficient, and that they feel more supported as they serve their own communities.

This new community structure also provided a foundation for engaging in meaningful discussions with communities about their path toward greater independence in



Integrated Livelihoods

collaboration with ACAT. These conversations focused on empowering communities to take greater ownership of their development—both in terms of decision-making and contributing to the costs associated with their progress.

In 2025, AICs will take a significant step forward by launching their own “AIC income-generating activities”, marking a pivotal moment in their journey toward self-sufficiency. The funds generated will be ring-fenced and saved throughout the year to help finance the costs of the ILP in 2026, reinforcing their commitment to sustainable community development. Should all areas meet the targets they have set, this will see a total of almost R400,000 being contributed by communities to the rollout of the ILP in 2026.

This initiative has been met with a mix of nervous anticipation and determined excitement, as AIC members recognize that the future of poverty alleviation in their communities now rests more firmly in their hands. This shift not only empowers them but also fosters a stronger sense of ownership and accountability, ensuring that long-term progress is driven from within.

Youth Basic Life Skills (YBLS) training

For the first time in the history of YBLS, all 18 programme areas successfully received a YBLS course in 2024, marking a significant milestone in its reach and impact as we saw 890 Youth trained.

This year also saw a strengthening of our partnership with Zoe-Life, as we piloted a Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) training in two areas. The positive feedback from the AICs has led to a strategic decision to expand this initiative and roll it out across all 18 areas in 2025, further enhancing the programme’s holistic approach to youth empowerment and well-being.



Staffing

The Extension Coordinators demonstrated strong teamwork and took on specialized portfolios, leading to a more structured and cohesive approach in their work. This strategic shift enhanced efficiency and improved coordination across different programme areas.

The Farm Staff also experienced significant growth, with a renewed sense of focus and energy directed toward developing the centre into a model farm. Their dedication and hard work have laid the foundation for sustainable agricultural best practices that can be replicated in the communities we serve.

Meanwhile, the Finance, Administration, and Catering teams adapted to any new processes and approaches introduced throughout the year. Their ability to provide essential support services was instrumental in ensuring the successful rollout of the ILP, demonstrating their flexibility and commitment to ACAT’s mission.





CENTRAL SERVICES

The specialized Central Services - comprising leadership, governance, strategic management, Centre training, fundraising, and administration - remain essential to the effective functioning of any organization. Once again, these services have been provided from our Training Centre in Lidgetton, located 60km from Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Administration

The administration team plays a vital role in ensuring smooth operations. Their responsibilities include procurement of supplies for catering and training (both at the Centre and in communities), donor and Board reporting, data collection and analysis, computing processes, secretarial and consultancy support, reception services, and general office duties. Their support has been instrumental in enabling both the Centre and field teams to function effectively. Additionally, training manuals were procured for each training course conducted throughout the year.

Strategic Management & Human Resource Services

ACAT's Leadership Team has played a crucial role in ensuring the efficient operation of both the Centre and the Programme throughout the past year. Strategic management services have provided leadership and direction in the following key areas:

- *Daily Operations and Programme Oversight*
Managing ACAT's daily affairs through Leadership meetings, including agenda setting, minutes, and

follow-ups to monitor field and Centre-based programmes.

- *Strategic Review of the ILP*
The Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP) remains a dynamic initiative, continually evolving in response to internal and external changes. The Leadership Team has actively reviewed and adjusted key aspects of the ILP to enhance its effectiveness.
- *Collaborations*
Seeking mutually beneficial partnerships with other organizations to maximize programme impact. Overseeing and monitoring the implementation of partnership-related activities.
- *Staff Development*
Organizing and facilitating training workshops for staff that ensures a healthy organisation culture and capacity.
- *Organisation health and safety*
Ensuring the health and safety at the centre and at infield activities.
- *Financial Management*
Overseeing donor funds, income-generating activities, investments, retirement funds, and medical aid schemes.

Central Services

- **Board Implementation**
Executing decisions made by the Board and its sub-committees.
- **Donor Engagement**
Maintaining regular communication with our dedicated contractual donors, who themselves face increasing challenges in securing funds amid global economic pressures such as wars, inflation, and humanitarian crises.
- **Corporate Sector Funding and Compliance**
2024 was dedicated to ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements for fundraising through this avenue. This has provided a foundation for 2025 fundraising activities.

Fundraising activities

Each year, ACAT compiles a wide range of reports, most of which are submitted to donors. These reports are essential for maintaining strong relationships with existing funders and demonstrating accountability. In 2024, funding proposals have been submitted to both current and potential donors, with additional applications still in progress.

Key fundraising and financial management activities included:

- Ongoing engagement with funders, primarily via Zoom and email, to strengthen relationships and explore new opportunities.
- Submitting detailed proposals and budgets to secure funding for 2024 and beyond.
- Ensuring compliance with donor agreements, including meeting all contractual targets and reporting obligations.
- Managing donor tranche payments to minimize cash flow disruptions and sustain programme activities.
- Compiling essential reports, including the 2024 Annual and six-monthly reports, to keep stakeholders informed.
- Completing the 2023 annual statutory audit in a timely manner. ACAT's bookkeeping and accounting team ensured all records were accurate, enabling auditors to finalize the 2023 Audited Financial Statements before the March 2024 Board Meeting.
- Successfully conducting Bread for the World audits, with thorough financial reviews for both the June and December reporting periods.
- Strategic investment planning, guided by the Board's Investment Committee and two independent Investment Advisors, to safeguard ACAT's financial sustainability.

By maintaining rigorous financial oversight, transparent reporting, and proactive fundraising, ACAT continues to build trust with donors and strengthen its long-term financial resilience.



Programme monitoring

The results presented in the ILP Reports were compiled from various monitoring and reporting tools developed by ACAT and in line with ACAT's logic model. These include:

- **Monthly Progress Chart**
This valuable tool is reviewed at leadership each month to track programme progress toward annual objectives. The chart draws data from reports submitted by Extension Teams, including:
 - CV Reports with signed attendance registers
 - Area Reports
 - Activity Reports
 - Travel Returns
 - Training Reports
 - Income Generation Reports
- Continued refinement of *data collection processes*, ensuring cleaner data for more accurate decision-making.
- **Savings and Loans Groups (SLG) Reports**
These provide insights into financial activities within communities, helping assess economic empowerment efforts.
- **Technology-Based Monitoring**
Since 2012, over 7,000 GPS readings have been collected from homesteads of participating families, enhancing geographic tracking and impact assessment.
- **Module Sales and Bibles Reports**
These reports are generated using ACAT's accounting software, managed by the Accounting and Resource teams, ensuring financial accuracy and resource tracking.

Finance, cash flow and sustainability

ACAT remains committed to strong financial stewardship, ensuring the organization's stability and sustainability. A key focus has been maintaining healthy cash flow to support ongoing programme activities without disruption. This requires careful financial planning, ensuring that all invoices are paid promptly and that sufficient funds are available across various fund and bank accounts. Given the timing of donor tranche receipts, ACAT has strategically managed resources to buffer against financial fluctuations, preventing delays in programme implementation. By prioritizing budget discipline, and responsible financial oversight, ACAT continues to operate efficiently while safeguarding long-term sustainability.

Centre trainings

The training centre is created in order to host activities that serve the vision of ACAT and ensure that impact is scaled. Full board and lodging as well as relevant resources are provided for all attendees of the following courses:

- *Leadership Course*: 3-5 day course held twice a year designed to equip leaders wanting to roll out the ILP.
- *Pastors' Course*: 5 day course held twice a year designed to equip local grass root church leadership from the areas we serve.
- *Sunday School Course*: 5 day course held twice a year designed to equip local grass root Sunday School teachers from the areas we serve.
- *Community Volunteer Course*: 5 day course held 5 times a year designed to equip G5 members to be become a community volunteer. There are two groups that are trained during this course hence there are a total of 10 weeks of training that takes place.
- *Community structure training*: 3-5 day course held 5 times a year designed to equip and mentor members of the community structures in the roll out of the ILP in their communities. There are two groups that are trained during this course hence there are a total of 10 weeks of training that takes place.
- *Specialised courses*: These are 1-2 day trainings that are held on an ad hoc basis throughout the year on specific areas of interest to our target groups and/ staff.

Resources Management and Distribution

ACAT ensures that essential resources - such as training materials, training aids, Bibles, and other related materials - are readily available to support both Centre-based and field training. These resources play a crucial role in equipping trainers and participants with the necessary tools to implement and sustain programme activities effectively. To maintain efficiency, ACAT follows a structured process of ordering, packing, and timely delivery of these materials. Careful planning and coordination ensure that resources reach the right

locations without delays, enabling smooth training sessions and uninterrupted programme rollout. This proactive approach enhances the overall impact of ACAT's training initiatives.

Governance

Strong governance is essential to ACAT's stability and effectiveness. The Board of Governors meets three times a year to provide oversight and strategic direction. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in March each year to review ACAT's overall progress and financial position following the completion of the previous financial year. In addition, ordinary Board Meetings take place in March, July and November, focusing on policy, planning, finance, and partnerships. To ensure financial accountability, the Finance and Audit Sub-Committee convenes three times a year to oversee statutory audits, financial management, investments, and reporting. Their work lays the foundation for informed decision-making by the full Board. These governance structures reflect the Board's commitment to transparency, accountability, and sound financial stewardship, ensuring that ACAT continues to operate effectively and sustainably.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 2024 has been a transformative year for ACAT, marked by significant strides in community empowerment, economic resilience, and sustainable development. Through the dedication of our team and the active participation of our communities, we have been able to continue the impact across all aspects of the ILP, from the formation of new Groups of 5, the establishment of food gardens, and the initiation of income-generating activities, to the development of sustainable community structures. Our commitment to ACAT's vision, mission, and values continues to guide us in our work, ensuring that our interventions are not only impactful but also aligned with our long-term goals.

The introduction of the Area Implementing Committee (AIC) has proven to be a positive move in enhancing the effectiveness of community structures, fostering local ownership, and preparing communities for greater self-sufficiency. Looking forward to 2025, we are excited to see the AICs take further steps towards financial independence and sustainability, reinforcing the foundation for long-term poverty alleviation and transformation.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and community members, whose collective efforts have made 2024 another year we can be proud of. With God's guidance, we remain committed to empowering rural communities in KwaZulu and beyond, ensuring that the legacy of transformation and resilience continues to grow.

Rodney Spencer – Director

Impact of Basic Life Skills training

These new group members attended a Basic Life Skills course in the area at the end of March 2024. They returned home and started to implement what they had learned.



Lucia Mchunu (45) now has 2 deep trenches.



Eslina Zungu (58) has 6 deep trenches.



Bazonzani Ndlovu (63) now uses the ACAT methods. She also sells the seedlings.



Muhle Zungu (60) now has 4 deep trenches.



Nompumelelo Zungu (33) has 5 deep trenches.



Nomusa Ndlovu (58) now has 3 deep trenches.

Nomvula Shange joined the Thembalihle group in March 2024 says,

I am very thankful that I was part of this year's Basic Life Skills course, because I was sitting at home, doing nothing. I couldn't find a job after finishing school. When I heard about the ACAT programme I joined just to find something to do. I was so surprised that the ACAT programme is not only about agriculture and business, but there is also food for the soul, which is the word of God. I didn't take my mother seriously when she asked me to go to church, but after attending the Basic Life Skills course my life is changed. Now I have my own garden which provides my family with healthy food. I never thought of myself as a farmer, but today I feel very motivated because after attending the training I started my own garden which now plays a major role in my family getting healthy food. It motivates me a lot when people pass by and see the beauty of my plants, and ask to buy from my garden. Everyone at home sees the importance of the garden, and they help me by watering and caring for the garden. I want this programme to continue to teach communities, especially young people, so that they can be inspired to stand up and help themselves and know that everything comes from God."

Update: In August Nomvula got a part-time job for 6 months collecting plastic waste and cardboard.





Although **Bongiwe Hadebe** joined ACAT in 2019, she only received formal ACAT training in 2021.

She had however been exposed to new techniques of establishing a garden and some income generating practices in our field workshops.

Bongiwe has shown great commitment to put into practice what she has learned from ACAT over the years. She's fighting so hard to overcome poverty. She says

"ACAT has restored my dignity. I am now one of those people respected in the community. My family has totally been transformed, and my children are healthy and their school needs are met."

Bongiwe has mobilized and convinced others to start a savings group. They want to save as women so that they can achieve their respective goals, they want to be known as women who have helped to transform their area.

Her future plan is to be **"a supplier of vegetables."**



Sindi Hadebe says:

"When I joined ACAT as a group member in 2024, I found it was so rewarding to do something.

I used to just sit at home doing nothing. Life was just a boring thing: wake up, do the cleaning. The same cycle every day.

But now I get very excited. After the training, I realised I had land that had been not used for some years and I decided to plant potatoes.

I borrowed my daughter's grant money and bought potato seeds. I had never wanted to work in the garden – I thought it was a waste of time and reserved for older people.

I now know that farming is a business activity and not restricted to any age group."

Now Sindi is so excited about ACAT's programme, and says that it is designed to assist any willing person.

She plans to fence her garden and **"put on the mind-set of a farmer as an entrepreneur"**.

She is passionate and willing to get more knowledge on how to live her dream.



Phemile Mgaga is a Vukuzenzele group member in Loskop who always shows great commitment to changing her family's life story.

She joined ACAT in 2024. She told us that,

"Before joining ACAT, my labour had always been in vain. This is the same portion of land I used to plant in, but I never got any good yields.

Then I heard about using kraal manure from cattle, goats, chickens, horse and rabbits when I attended ACAT's training. This is the result I got after applying kraal manure to the soil. I really was ignorant!

Although I love farming, I thought I needed more money to buy seedlings and especially fertilizers – and all the time I had cattle and goats at home! I have learned now that kraal manure works wonders!"

Phemile quickly bought fencing material and made use of the available land and planted cabbage.

This small achievement has resulted in great excitement and has motivated her to do much more in the next planting season.



