

ACAT's approach

ACAT's
Integrated
Livelihoods
Approach

FORM GROUPS OF 5

The foundation of an individual's development journey



TRAIN

group members in the ACAT Basic Life Skills Course



HOME FOOD GARDENS

The first step towards addressing home food security



GENERATE INCOME

Through small business and through Savings and Loans Groups



Impact in 2024

900

New group members trained though the Basic Life Skills Course 85% are women 15% are men Baseline statistics

81% identify as Christian76% unmarried41% are youth (age 35 and under)

92% do not generate income

90% are on a government grant82% of these are child support grants

50% have achieved grade 1213% are practising a form of savings

45% do not have a door size garden

52% do not have crops

7

New group members have already started vegetable gardens

576

New group members started income generating activities

149

Total Savings and Loans Groups (SLG) with a total amount saved of R8,5 million 890

Youth trained in Basic Life Skills – including reproductive health, career guidance, vegetable gardening and basic business skills

ACAT's Impact

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 benefitted from training in Basic Life Skills and initiated 763 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 576 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, AICs 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.







Ntombikayise Blose of Mgangeni zone, joined Sifundukuthula group in March 2024. She says she is grateful to ACAT for giving her the opportunity to be part of this year's Basic Life Skills Course held in the area. After the training she went back home and put into practice what she learned. She says she no longer buys vegetables from town, but eats from her own garden. She also earns an income through her sewing business which is going very well, earning her about R3000 a month.

"I never thought that I would be able to grow anything in my garden because it has so many rocks. I was so surprised to harvest a good crop from the hopeless ground."

> Babhekile Bhengu attended the Basic Life

Skills Course in March 2024. After being taught about business skills, she joined a group of women who work with beads, and now she knows how to do beadwork. She then started to work with someone who owns a shop that sells beadwork, and now has a monthly target to reach. Currently, she makes earrings that earn her about R1500 monthly. She

has started saving through a Savings and Loans group so that she can buy fencing material so that she can start and protect a garden.

Nobuhle Ntuli from Emkhukhwini zone joined the ACAT programme in 2022. The name of her group is Eyethu. Before she joined the ACAT programme, she didn't know how to grow crops and vegetables. Now she grows a variety of crops and vegetables, and has planted banana and pawpaw trees. She doesn't spend money on buying vegetables, but gets them from her garden, and sells the surplus to her neighbours. She joined the Savings and Loans group in November 2023. As a group they found someone to teach them how to sew. They helped each other to buy a sewing machine by contributing R200 per person per month. There are 15 of them. Her dream is to be a successful business lady. She keeps chickens and goats with the aim of growing and selling them.



Anacleta Mthiya from Egugwini zone joined the ACAT programme in 2020. Her G5's name is Thandanani. Her business has many challenges because there is a lot of competition, but she makes R100 – R200 a day depending on the situation. Her garden is small, but she feeds her family from it, and they no longer buy vegetables from town.



Nikeziwe Dube from Emkhukhwini zone joined the programme 2022. Since then, she has not looked back, and she makes sure that she grows vegetables. She started her own nursery where she grows and sells seedlings to her community, as well as to other G5 members. She earns R600 a month, mostly in winter, because it is the time when most vegetables are planted.

Nomathemba Zungu joined Zamokuhle group in 2021 at Bhekumbali zone. She is an active Community Volunteer in the area. She said she was motivated by the vegetable garden of Mrs Goba who is the Community Extension Officer (CEO) in her area. Now she plants a variety of crops and vegetables to feed her family and sells the surplus. She saves monthly in her Savings and Loans Group. With the money from her savings, she was able to buy fencing material.

After attending the Basic Life Skills Course, **Thokozani Mayendisa** joined the programme to improve her lifestyle,. Now she grows vegetables all year round. Her family enjoys eating healthy vegetables and an improved lifestyle. She joined the Savings group, and is saving monthly to extend her house.

"My life is always improving since I joined the ACAT programme."

Hlengiwe Joyisa of Isijoti zone joined the programme this year, 2024. She was influenced by Thembisile Vilakazi who is a G5 member with a garden which produces good crops throughout the year. She started by attending area workshops on how to grow vegetables in a sustainable way using sustainable practices. Now she grows crops and vegetables for home consumption and for selling to her neighbourhood. Her dream is to have a big piece of land so that she can grow more vegetables to supply supermarkets.

Thabisile Joyisa is a new G5 member who joined the ACAT programme in 2024 with the aim of learning to produce crops and vegetables to feed her family, since there was no one earning an income in her family. She attended area workshops and the Basic Life Skills course in the area, which motivated her to start growing crops and vegetables. She says











[&]quot;I encourage others who are living in poverty to join the programme, in order to come out of poverty"



These **Sector Group** members display bottles of flu mixture that they have learned to make. Their business workshops are held in the area right through the year to encourage members start their own small businesses. These women are so glad to be in the programme and they spoke of how God has worked through ACAT to change their lives. They say being part of a group, helps them lighten their burden by focusing on Christ only.



Sizwe Dlamini, a Youth Basic Life Skills graduate, has a passion for farming. The three days of the course was enough to bring change to this youngster from Highflats. He says,

"I want to upscale my farming techniques because all along agriculture has been on my mind. I just needed to get some skills and motivation. I want to study agriculture at the University and the career guidance section in the course confirmed that I would be well suited to pursue Agriculture. During the training, after the home food security workshop, all the participants were given some seeds to plant at their homes and that was a great help to me. After attending the course I planted a lot of vegetables in my garden. I want to be able to buy some new clothes with my profit. My parents are very proud of me, and our homestead is known in the community because many people come to buy our vegetables."

These **new group members** from Highflats attend their 10 day Area Basic Life Skills training course. They are excited to be in the programme, and delighted by the fact that they now have their own bibles. They say they will take them to their different churches on Sundays. The spiritual part of ACAT's programme kept them very active during the training week. They even commented that they wished that all the community members in their area could join ACAT's programme so that they can also get the good news about Christ and be born again just like them.



Grace Dlamini says she has seen a great improvement in her life since she joined the programme (2024). In the past, each time she received her grant, she used it to buy vegetables from town. Her involvement in the programme made her realise that some of the fields that her husband used to plant were lying fallow. She had stopped using them some years back, because she never thought farming could "bring money to the table". Now she is a well-known farmer and everyone is buying vegetables from her. She says meeting ACAT is a blessing to her and that "Hard work is the mother of success"





After **Jabulile Dlamini** joined ACAT in 2023, her life changed. Entrepreneurship is one of her primary passions. For the time being, she's focused on her tuckshop business – she says foreign immigrants have occupied almost all vacant stores that are rented out, posing a threat to her.

Rather than despising these immigrants, Jabulile finds it fascinating to find out how they run their establishments, and thinks it is a talent that should be learned.

She is a member of a savings club, and she's saving toward growing her tuckshop business. She wants to stock the shop to meet the needs of the people in her community. She says the groups in these areas want advanced business training.



Phumizile Molefe became a group member of ACAT in order to learn new methods to care for animals, as well as for growing crops, fruit trees, and vegetables. Her group are enterprising individuals who, along with their spouses, operate various businesses, such as selling firewood that they collect from the forest. The Impendle Area Implementing Committee reasoned that since the ACAT programme is largely for the poor, we would not spend time with these individuals.

However, Phumizile disproved this theory by demonstrating her love, enthusiasm, and dedication to her community. In 2025, she was recognized as a Community Volunteer, as she had recruited many group member during the year. Thanks to her diligence and compassion for others, she is a living example of dedication, diligence and compassion.

Her firewood business is expanding as a result of the application of the business ideas she learnt in the workshop. She sells a wheelbarrow load locally for R100 each day, generating about R2000. Her ability to keep records has allowed her to recognize the potential of her enterprise and she takes the lead and encourages her group members to think about loans and savings; her house serves as a hub for these gatherings. This new zone will serve as an example of how to save

for the future.

Nqabelani Miya is committed to ensuring that her family's quality of life improves in every aspect. She is quite active and participates in development-promoting activities. Her primary motivation for joining ACAT was to learn more about growing her quilt business. She says that although there is a market for her quilts, she has consistently failed to earn a profit from all her hard work. Now she believes that the time has come to expand her business. So she decided to make aprons and pinafores specifically for women, since they are busy at home getting ready for family gatherings and other events around Christmas.

"With the orders you see in the photo, I will get about R2300 in revenue. I will put this money into my savings club to buy industrial machinery. This is a very difficult aspiration that requires complete financial self-control."



Phakamile Zuma joined ACAT to learn more about expanding her baking business. She learned about ACAT from another group member who gave her an overview of the programme's content. She was thrilled to learn that entrepreneurship was taught as one of the modules, so she signed up to be one of the participants in the training. After completing the training she decided she'd risk trying to revive her old business in baking. She says

"I always thought that I needed a lot of capital to continue my baking business, but at the training I learnt that I need a stove and money to buy flour and the relevant ingredients, for the variety of cakes I want to bake. I used some of my child's grant money and made R300 on my first transaction!"

She was asked to consider training other G5s who were interested in baking. They started a baking club, so they could learn as they worked. They also established a savings club, and their goal is to get in touch with a lender who will provide them with baking supplies so they can realize their ambition.



Jabu Makhaye says,

"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."

Another factor that was hurting Jabu's previous attempts was customer service; now, she is attempting to satisfy her consumers because she knows that her business will fail without them. She is also concerned about the foreigners who have taken over many stores in the area. She has observed that they fill their stores like a tiny supermarket, and rivalry is fierce.



Phumla Ndadane from Nqabeni zone grows lots of vegetables to feed her family and sells the surplus to the community members. What fascinates her the most is that she does not go around carrying a basket to sell her vegetables, but the community members come to her home to purchase her produce. She only buys food that she cannot produce. She says she has saved a lot by being able to feed her family and save into her Savings and Loans Group. In the picture she is with the CEO of the area, Ntokozo Malunga.



Ziningi Mdunjana is a Community Vsxolunteer in Izingolweni. She is a very hard working poultry business lady who always says that she wants to lead by example as a trainer and CV. She joined the programme in 2023 and was the first G5 person to start a business in her group. She said that the benefits of joining a Savings and Loans Group always brings a smile to her face as she took the initiative of loans from her savings to start her poultry business. A local exposure visit to one of the old Savings and Loans Groups in the area really motivated her to quickly start her savings in order to have capital for her dream business. Her market is the local community, and one of the B&Bs at Izingolweni.



This **sewing Sector Group** operates in the Mbangweni zone at Izingolweni. These ladies joined the programme in June 2024, and quickly started their sector group after learning about the advantages when group members with the same interest are working together to fulfil their mission. Before joining ACAT's programme the ladies were working individually in their different homes. However with all the skills and knowledge they obtained from the area trainings and workshops they decided to start a sector group.

The sector group says that they are very happy and they enjoy working together and now they are able to meet the targets whenever they get some big orders from some local schools.





These women from Hlomendlini zone formed a **sector group**, and they grow crops like amadumbe, beans, maize and vegetables. They work together as a team in their bean field and in the vegetable garden to grow vegetables commercially as a living. Their target market is the local community and the local Boxer supermarket in town. Their motto is:

"Together we can fight poverty!"





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

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.

Xolisile Shezi says,

"I went from laziness to making some money. I was one of those people who was proud of nothing, and had nothing to do with gardening. I now know that it was just foolishness and childish thinking. I felt pushed by my neighbour into joining ACAT in 2024, and I was especially disappointed when heard that ACAT doesn't give handouts and thought they were not a good NGO, and that they would rob us. My neighbour never gave up on me, and even helped me start a garden."

Now Xoli is known is a happy person, and she thanks her neighbour who persisted and encouraged her to at least try something. She told us that after this season she will be fencing the garden and planting some vegetables.

Before she joined ACAT in 2024, **Philile Hadebe** says she used to just clean the house. Her main income was a child grant. But now she says,

"My life has taken a different direction. I did not know how to start a business, and gardening is something I never wanted to do. But being in a group challenged me to start a vegetable garden. The ACAT training opened my eyes. I can now see that poverty is in the mind and a cancer that can finish someone. My garden is not the best, but I am improving it. I am happy with the results so far. We have grown some green vegetables and for the first time we will harvest potatoes from our garden. I have heard about the savings and loans group, and I would love to join in 2025."

Philile is very active and has learnt to network with other organisations that support, advocate and promote development in their area.

Londiwe Manyoni, with her 3 children, depended entirely on the social grants. She says in the past she always asked others to give her vegetables to feed her family. Over time she observed how members of ACAT always worked in their gardens, and so one day she asked them how she could become part of their movement. She was encouraged to join in 2024, and enjoyed the support of other members. Through training, she received plenty of encouragement, especially from the older members. Londiwe fenced a small vegetable garden and planted potatoes. She says,

"I am so happy to find a family so caring and encouraging like ACAT. They came to my rescue, and now I can see how the garden can contribute to food security at home. I am very optimistic to do much better going forward with planting and selling vegetables. The next step is to join the savings and loans group with a goal to invest for unforeseen circumstances."







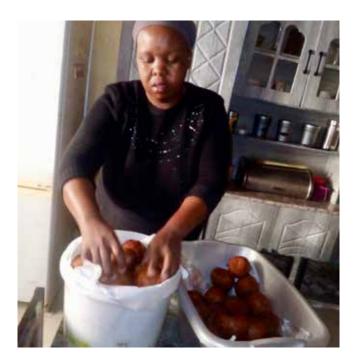


Lawrence Mthembu joined the ACAT programme in June 2024. The name of his group is Insindiso. He has just started his garden which will feed himself and his family. He is thankful that he does not have to spend too much on buying vegetables. His dream now is to plant enough to be able to sell to the community.



Nomasonto Hlantshwayo of Nkululeko Group really enjoyed being part of the Basic Life Skills training. She says,

"I always wondered why my egg-selling business did not make a profit. When I learnt about bookkeeping through the course, and I followed the principles. Now I am seeing the improvement. I have also planted a vegetable garden, and am very happy about not wasting my money buying what I can plant."



Nkululeko Makhwaza joined the programme this year. She says that after attending the Basic Life Skills training, she was able to start a business selling vetkoek. She also planted a small garden so that she could grow vegetables. Even though she had a small garden before, she says this new garden shows a great improvement over her previous one because she was able to implement what she learned, especially with seeding to make seedlings.



Siyabonga Kunene joined the Emarondweni group in September this year. He has always loved to plant, but says he had no knowledge. He started his garden, and now has a business where he buys and sells potatoes. His desire is to plant a big field so that he can sell to the community.



Gcinile Sithole did the ACAT Basic Life Skills course in 2023. She says,

"My life has never been the same. I have always been business-minded, but things were not improving because I lacked basic skills. After attending training I saw amazing changes. My brick-making business is starting to grow. I thank God for bringing ACAT to me because it was the answer to my prayers. She also has a small garden from which she eats with her family. She says this is key to her success because by eating fresh vegetables, I get all the energy I need for my long day."



Sipho Sithole of Siyathuthuka group joined ACAT in June 2024. He has started a garden and planted a variety of vegetables. He always had chickens, but had never thought of making a business out of them. He says that ever since he joined ACAT, his business mind was activated.



Mveli Maphanga of Siyathuthuka group joined the programme in 2024. He planted his own garden and is happy to have healthy vegetables that are good for him. He says learning about being healthy was very good for him too. He also keeps chickens and is hoping to turn this into a business because ACAT has taught well about business. He is part of a sector group that sells fast food.



Siphiwe Dlamini of Impumelelo group is very excited to have been part of the Basic Life Skills training. He says enjoyed learning about God. He now has a garden where he plants spinach, onion, beetroot, cabbage and more. He saves a lot of money as he does not buy most vegetables anymore, and his family is enjoys eating, fresh organic food. He also sells the surplus to the community. He is very grateful for everything that he learnt.



Making the most of the available space. **Xolisa Ntombela**, is a new G5 member from Mondlo. She joined the ILP programme in June 2024 and did not allow the limited space at her homestead stop her from growing vegetables. She uses available containers like old dishes and tyres to grow her vegetables to feed her family.



Sifundo Magubane of Siyabuswa group at Mondlo joined the ACAT ILP programme in April 2024. She started her own vegetable garden immediately after attending the Basic Life Skills course. She said that at the moment she is only growing vegetables just to feed her family with safe and healthy grown food, and will think about selling to the community in 2025. She says that she has experienced the health benefits of eating vegetables in that she has not been as sick as before.



Londeka Zulu joined ACAT's programme in May 2024 because she was inspired by seeing one of the Community Volunteer's garden that looked very good and attractive with fresh vegetables. Before joining ACAT's programme she used to buy vegetables from the other people, and never grew vegetables herself. After joining the programme and attending the Basic Life Skills course, and top-up workshops in her zone, she realised that she could also plant vegetables. She has also started seeing profits from selling her vegetables.



Kuhlekonke, Liyabongwa and Awethu all are from the Nkabinde family in Mondlo. They were born into a family that believes strongly in hard work. In this family they farm and sell their produce. These children are very involved and are the ones who help their granny in the garden and sell the produce. When they've sold produce, their granny gives them some of the profits. They consider selling fresh produce as their hobby.



Nomkhosi Mhlongo from Mondlo KwaMaria Zone joined the programme in June 2024. She is among the first group members that wasted no time after attending the Basic Life Skills training. She started her small vegetable garden in order to feed her family with healthy food and sells any surplus to the neighbours. With the profit she earned from selling produce, she joined the Savings and Loans group to save towards the needs of her family.



Minenhle Maseko carries spinach that he has harvested from his vegetable garden. He is among the children that participated in a Youth Basic Life Skills training course during the June 2024 school holidays at Mondlo. He planted the vegetable seeds that he was given during the training. It is very encouraging to see such young kids interested in farming, and his parents are so grateful to ACAT for being very helpful to the youth in their area. They say many children changed their lifestyle through the programme.

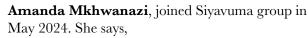
After joining the programme in 2023, **Zweli Buthelezi** from Phumeceleni zone started his own vegetable garden even though his garden was not properly fenced. But that didn't discourage him, he decided to collect the used empty maize meal bags to fence his garden. This strategy of fencing helped him a lot. He is now able to plant and sell the produce and make money to support his family.



Busisiwe Zungu joined the Thembalihle group in March 2024 and says,

"I do not regret joining the ACAT programme because of the benefits I received. The teachers who taught me have love and patience, and are willing to explain what we don't understand well so that we all can understand.

What impressed me the most was to learn about the origin of the Bible, the importance of accepting Jesus as your personal Saviour, and that all of us human beings can choose to walk in God's ways so that we can live a life that pleases him as our creator. I accepted the Lord during our Basic Life Skills training, and I am so grateful that I have learned how to make a garden. I thought that this is something I could never do because of the animals that roam around in our area. Now I have a vegetable garden from which we eat, and we sell the surplus. Everyone at home is happy with its



presence."

"I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of Basic Life Skills training this year. As a young person, I really thought that planting was only done by adults. The only thing I knew was to look for a job. During the training I realized that age doesn't matter, a person needs to choose for herself what she does with her life. I started my own garden and planted cabbage. When I saw my first crop I was so encouraged that I decided to plant a variety of crops and vegetables in order to support my parents. My parents are very happy about the change they see in me and they have promised to buy fencing material for me to prevent chickens from entering into my garden.





Bonakele Goge is 49 years old. She joined the programme in June 2022 and belongs to the Uthi group where she learnt different ways of planting crops, and started a business.

"My aim is to stand on my own and even to expand my business. I have no need to buy meat, because I've got Zulu chickens which we eat and sell. I use 10% of the profits from the business to save into my Savings and Loans Group in order to save towards my children's higher education. I am also very thankful to get spiritual lessons. Although I was a Christian before, I have grown more about knowing Jesus as my saviour. I am now bold to improve my home through knowledge."







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) used to plant in her way, but 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. She 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 cardboards, for doing that, they paid her R1600 a month.







Lindiwe Duma from

Dingimbiza zone at Mzumbe joined the programme in July 2024. She said that she was knitting just for fun before she came across ACAT. However, learning about the business principles during the Area Basic Life Skills course opened her mind. She used to knit for her grandchildren and for her relatives but now she is doing it for business.



Vicky Khumalo,

who joined a group, is a broiler production farmer. Her parents used to raise broilers and she never paid attention to their business. But things changed when she learned about record keeping. She said that she can still recall that her grandmother used to write everything down whenever she purchased for the business or sold something. She is so



grateful to have participated in the Area Basic Life Skills training because she will be able to see if she is making a profit or running at a loss. She continued to say that she has started keeping some records of her business.

ACAT's programme develops people holistically. This picture was taken during one of the **Bible studies** at Mzumbe. What is so interesting to new group members is that people do not only benefit by learning home food security techniques or business principles, they even get to learn more about Christ, and most of them end up finding places of worship.



"Baking is what I do best" says Nosipho Mthimkhulu from Eyethu group at Mzumbe. She joined the programme in August 2024. Previously she had been in the baking business for some time but never saved the profit from selling cakes. She has now joined a savings and loans group in her zone where she saves her money monthly and she is proud to see her savings growing every month.



ACAT's Brian Miyanda teaches the youngsters from Dingimbiza zone in Mzumbe area during one of the **Youth Basic Life Skills** courses.

"Shaping the future generation for the battles ahead. Teach them while they are still young."

Through the course, the children are exposed to many useful skills like starting their own home food security gardens, basic business principles, spiritual lessons and career guidance.





This youngster by the name of **Hloniphani Khomo** from Mzumbe works in his vegetable garden. He participated in the Youth Basic Life Skills course at Dingimbiza zone. He is watering his plants grown from the seeds that he acquired during the training. It is very encouraging to see the young kids interested in farming, and his parents are so grateful that this young man is able to plant a garden all by himself with nobody pushing him.



This is a farming sector group from Nyonyana zone at Mzumbe. The group members joined the programme in 2023 and they were not active for that whole year. However, something clicked in their minds after attending one of the workshops in the area in April, where group members were trained on the benefits of belonging to a sector group rather than working individually in these challenging times. They now grow and sell vegetables together.



Mzumbe Zithobeni Savings and Loans group in action during their monthly meeting. Among the members is the Zone Facilitator Sibongile Cele, Community Extension Officer Sibahle Mkhize, Chwane Sithole, and Mrs Hlongwane. They are all group members from Nyonyana zone. The group members greatly acknowledge coming across ACAT's programme because they learned lot of things that are of great help to them. They realized the ACAT's Savings and Loans group methodology is so unique and different to the commonly known stokvels in that members save their money in the community for future use and they can access it any time.







Learn by doing ... Group members at Nquthu from **Mathambo zone** are working together to fight poverty.

This group is planting vegetables as a partial fulfilment of the Basic Life Skills course following the theory they learned during the training in class. They want to make sure that all members at least have one home, one garden, and they will do this by helping each other. They buy seedlings in bulk every time and plant together, and move from one garden to another in order to get 100 percent garden establishment before the end of the year.

Teaching children while they are still young!

Hoeing, digging, and planting is now in the vocabulary of these young children. Their parents decided not to leave them behind when working in the garden because they believe that learning to work is also an important part of parenting. They do not view it as child labour but rather a positive contribution to family with the assumption that they will continue to do so in future, thus save the nation with healthy vegetables and crops.

Mshikashika Motlong, is from Mashesheleni Zone in the Nquthu area. What excites him the most is that the cabbages in his garden is his first crop, grown by him with his own hands. He joined ACAT's programme in March 2024. He was inspired by seeing a Community Volunteer's garden that looked very good and attractive.

Before joining other group members, he used to think that farming was for old poor people but now he is seeing the benefits of growing vegetables and his mindset has completely changed. Before joining ACAT's programme he used to grow only crops like amadumbe and maize, but he never grew vegetables. So after joining his group of five and attending workshops in his zone, he realised that everyone can plant vegetables.



Agrineth Molefe is in her vegetable garden. She is one of the hard working and successful women in the programme. She joined the programme in April 2024 and has been doing very well ever since. She is business oriented, and counts each and every vegetable seedling that she has planted and has kept records of all the costs the way that she was taught in the business section of the Basic Life Skills course. Moreover, she has also identified her customers and she is always updating them on when is she going to start selling the vegetables. She said that before joining the programme she used to grow cabbages in a very small single plot just to feed herself and never used mulch in her garden. However, now she has expanded to 15 door size plots and that excites her the most.

Passing the skill to others. In the picture the group members practise the new farming techniques that they learned at the ACAT training centre. This sector group sent only two representatives to a two day special farming workshop at ACAT training centre to learn how with just using a hoe they could ensure food self-sufficiency. And when the two representatives came back from the training they organised a workshop and taught the others the simple technology. In the picture they have dug some holes to plant maize without disturbing the soil.

Farmers are so excited about the new system and they say that they will no longer hire tractors to till the soil since they now know the side effects of tilling the soil.

Bongisipho Buthelezi from Nquthu area at Vulamehlo zone works in his broiler chicken project. He said that the business lessons that he obtained from the Basic Life Skills course is what fascinated him the most out of all the lessons. This chicken project is his first business. Mr Buthelezi joined the programme in March 2024 and attended the 10 days training in August 2024. Moreover, he also attended some other business workshops in the area in order to sharpen his business skill more. He went on to say that he is proud that he is the first person from his G5 to start a business, and he is keeping his records up to date.







Thulani Richard Motloung from Mashesheleni zone at Nquthu area attended the Basic Life Skills course in April 2024. The training really shaped his farming skills, especially the technique of deep trench gardening, since he comes from a very dry area where the rainfall is very scarce and they have a very limited source of water. Just after completing the training, he started a garden with two plots, and now he has planted in 10 door size plots.







Linelizwi Mbozana is in the ACAT/KNH children's programme. She likes to work in the garden and to bake, and teach other children how to bake. Her friends come and learn how to bake from her. We organized a deep trench planting and baking workshop in her area, and the children were so excited about this workshop. Two of them came home and asked their parents to buy baking ingredients so that they could practice what they learned during the workshop.

The **Sibambise group** joined ACAT in 2019. They grow and sell vegetables, and save. Their lives have changed a lot, and they are out of poverty. They tell those who have not joined the ACAT programme, that it is possible to live better if you join this programme. During this workshop they taught one of the new G5 members, who is living with a disability, how to plant using sustainable practices. He now says,

"Even if I walk with crutches, I will not fail to plant."

Maria Ntuli joined ACAT in 2022, she is a retired nurse. After receiving Basic Life Skills training she was motivated to grow vegetables and to start a business. Now she grows a variety of vegetables and has a business where she sells chickens and fruit from her own orchard. The ACAT programme taught her about healthy food. She says,

"I used to eat carelessly, now I am very careful what I eat.

I enjoy homemade juice from my fruit trees."





Ayanda Shabalala is a new group member who joined the ACAT programme in 2024. The name of his group is Genesis. He says that after the Basic Life Skills Course, he sat down and thought about business opportunities in his area. Now he sells chickens, and also grows vegetables to sell.

He has taught his family about healthy eating. He says he used to eat and throw away orange or apple pips, but now he plants them and has fruit trees. He is very grateful for the ACAT programme because he is now able to take care of his family with the money he earns from his business.



Senamile Khumalo joined the ACAT programme in 2023. The name of her group is Kuyenzeka (meaning it is happening). She says she learned a lot from her mother, Princess Khumalo, who joined the ACAT programme years ago. She learned how to farm, sell and sew for income. Her mother taught her how to sew.

She said that after receiving ACAT's training, she went to complete her sewing course at college. Now she continues with her sewing business, sewing uniforms and tracksuits for her local school. She also sews clothing and sells it to her community, and her business is doing well.







Sihle Shoba joined the ACAT programme in 2019 and the name of his group is Asethembe. He joined in 2019 but got tired on the way, and stopped doing his group's activities. He said that when he was depressed and sitting at home without work, he remembered ACAT again. He first got together four other people, then he contacted the CEO and the group was registered. They received training, and then re-established a garden that had been dormant for years. They also learned how to plant seedlings. Sihle visits different government departments e.g. Municipality to ask for help. The Department of Agriculture gave them seedlings, fertilizers and corn seeds. He says that now when he looks back, he regrets the time he wasted by leaving ACAT, and is very thankful that this year he was able to finish his Community Volunteer 5 training.

Johannes Msomi (44) joined the programme this year, to give him something to do as was at home because he had lost his job as a security guard. Losing his job made him very sad because he had to ask his nephews and younger sisters for money to survive. After attending a Basic Life Skills course he started his own garden where he planted vegetables in order to also contribute to his home. He also started selling spinach, at R10 a bunch and this enabled him to buy his needs and soap. Now he buys and sells basic needs that his neighbors want such as sugar, salt, and matches.

"I'm very grateful to God for this opportunity that I have received, and I want my business to grow so that one day it can be a supermarket."

Nokuthula Makhanya (58) joined the Enkanini group this year and she really enjoyed learning about spirituality as a Christian. It greatly impacted her life. After completing training she told other church members at her church about what she learned. These lessons really helped her a lot because she no longer only cleans the church, she also teaches about the God and the Bible and that is an achievement. She is grateful to God for what she has become after attending these ACAT courses. Their Bishop gave them a place to plant a garden. The best thing about this place is that it is already fenced and has water. Nokuthula is also a member of a Savings and Loans Group and saves R100 per month.

Njabulo Khumalo (31) joined Enkanini group this year. He has a friend who works with him in building houses. He said that when he told his friend about the ACAT programme he got very interested because he is a business person. Njabulo has a tuckshop business. The lessons have helped him a lot because he can see a difference, because previously he did not pay any attention to bookkeeping. After being trained he got a lot of inspiration on how to deep trench, and now his garden is producing a good harvest.

"I wish my brothers and sisters would stop complaining that there is no employment. God gave us brains and hands."

Sizakele Mdluli joined her group this year, She is a person who works hard and during training she never missed a single day. She said she has got the opportunity she wanted because working is something that makes her happy. She says

"Attending the Basic Life Skills course helped me as there were people who encouraged me and I found out that they are doing handwork like me. I have two businesses: farming and making sleeping mats. My mats are also divided into two parts, making them with ikhwani and incema. Some cost R100, some R250, and some cost R400. Record keeping helped me a lot. I can count the time I spend making sleeping mats and add to costs."











Nonhlanhla Ngema joined the programme in 2024, her group name is "Fighters". Now she grows vegetables for her family's consumption. She says, "I have got my own vegetable garden which was something impossible in my mind, and now my family enjoys eating fresh and healthy vegetables".

Velezizweni Dlamuka is a new G5 member who joined the programme in 2024. He was motivated to join the group after realizing that some of his neighbours were involved in producing their own vegetables and running their small businesses. They told him that they were trained by an organisation called ACAT. He was unemployed, and had no idea how to grow vegetables. After attending the 10-day Basic Life Skills training he started putting implementing what he learned from ACAT. Now he is involved in growing many different types of vegetables.





Bacashile Khoza joined Zamokwakhe group in 2019. After attending the Basic Life Skills training, she went back home and practiced what she had learnt from ACAT. She says:

"Before joining ACAT I was involved in gardening, but my vegetables were not as good as they are now. At ACAT we learned how to improve soil fertility using sustainable agricultural principles, such as making compost and mulching".

She grows crops and vegetables which she sells to her neighbours and says she is so thankful to God for bringing ACAT to her area.

Gloria Mabika joined the Sizophila group in 2024 and planted her first garden soon after attending training. She is very excited to eat fresh vegetables from her own hard work. She always thanks ACAT for "waking her up from her ignorance". The money that she saves from not buying vegetables from supermarkets, is now saved into her Savings and Loans group.





Nonkululeko Zulu is a new G5 member who joined the programme in 2024, her group name is Lethukuthula. She heard about the ACAT programme and decided to join in order to improve her family's quality of life. Since then, she has developed a backyard garden where she grows different types of vegetables to provide food for her family. Being in the ACAT programme has improved her family's health and they now eat fresh vegetables harvested from her garden.

Bathokozile Ntuli joined Nqobani group in 2017 because she wanted to have gardens like the other group members' gardens which were green all year round. Because of her interest in vegetable production, she attended agricultural workshops in the area to learn new farming skills. Now she grows and sells vegetables, green maize, green and dry beans, pumpkins and has fruit trees. Her family enjoys a good quality of life and a balanced diet. She makes and sells or hires out traditional attire and her business is doing very well. She saves monthly in a Savings and Loans group for her future.



Nomusa Ndlovu from Power Zone is a great "lighthouse". She plants maize, potatoes, vegetables and beans and sells to the community. Last season she made over R6000 just on potatoes. She also has sheep that she keeps for business. She also saw the need for a crèche in her community and started one. Through her Savings and Loans Group involvement she has improved her homestead greatly. Mrs Ndlovu is a true example of what this programme can achieve over the years





Fikile Mabaso is a new G5 member from Shayamoya. She attended the course this year in August and has just started her garden. She has also started a mat-making business. She says attending the ACAT programme has really helped her to regain her confidence especially when it comes to business as she needs the money. She also says she wishes she had joined much earlier.

Masiza Khoza is also a new member who says

"I am very grateful for what ACAT has taught me. I always tried to plant, but it did not agree with me. But now things are looking better".

She has planted some vegetables and some crops. She is very proud of how her maize is looking now.



Thandazile Mnqondo of Power Zone is a Community Volunteer that has become an example. She has particularly enjoyed being part of the Savings and Loans Group programme as she has been able to improve her homestead and put her child through school. She also has a beautiful garden where she plants and sells vegetables like spinach, cabbage, beetroot and carrot. She also plants and sells potatoes and maize.

Phindile Njoko from Power Zone plants large quantities of potatoes as she has established a customer base. She plants and reaps a good harvest. She says,

"Thanks to the ACAT programme I no longer fear hunger. ACAT has opened my eyes when it comes to healthy food and how to make some money for myself."

She also plants vegetables like cabbage and spinach which she sells to the community and eats with her family.



Nokuthula Nkala of Power Zone is a grateful member of the programme. She is always beaming with joy when she speaks of the benefits. She is part of the Savings and Loans Group programme and has seen the rewards as she has improved both the house and her garden. She plants cabbages, spinach, potatoes and beans and she sells to the community. She says,

"I thank God for ACAT especially since they taught us the importance of mulching and all its benefits. My garden looks bright and fresh".



Zanele Nxumalo of Asiphile Group in Shayamoya attended her Basic Life Skills training this year. She really enjoyed learning more about God and Business studies. She has since planted her own garden where she plants for her family and then she sells the surplus to the community. She has also started a tuckshop. She says ACAT helped her to see the need in the community and then provide a solution.



Samkelisiwe Njoko of Mahlutshini Zone really enjoyed her Basic Life Skills studies. Immediately after that she started her own garden. She says having her own garden saves her a lot of money as she does not have to buy vegetables, but can rather use that money for other necessities at home. Currently she plants spinach, cabbage, onions and beetroot.



Nelisiwe Mchunu is a Community Volunteer. She plants vegetables which her family consumes and sells the rest to the community in order to make extra income. Being part of the programme has helped her a lot especially by raising her self-esteem since she is able to contribute toward the family needs.





After learning about ACAT from one of the G5 members who underwent training early in our second quarter, **Sindiswa Langa** joined the programme as a group member in September 2024. Sindiswa is delighted to share her account of the impact this training has had on her life. She has also decided to fence a plot where she will plant various vegetables before joining a Savings and Loans group. She says,

"I want to resume my dream of farming after experiencing a spiritual awakening. Poverty is no respecter of a person. Many of us in the community have a mindset of seeking out others to assist us. We sit there and do nothing to improve our circumstances; and this is a fatal syndrome, since we always place the blame elsewhere. However, during this training, I discovered that poverty can be a mental and physical state, and that if you are lazy, why should you eat someone else's hard work. I looked at the possibilities at my homestead and realized that we had not planted since my grandmother died. I said to myself I will plant potatoes because it's potato time."



As a new G5 member in 2024, **Anathi Kunene** joined ACAT primarily to gain knowledge about agricultural initiatives. She came away from the training workshops with some ideas on how to use their land that had been unused for a while. She requested a loan from her grandmother to purchase and plant potato seeds. She is very proud of her crop, and intends to sell any of the surplus. Anathi struggled after her parents passed away, and was not able to complete Grade 12. Since then she has been sitting at home doing nothing as she waits for her grandmother's Old Age pension. She attempted to work as a domestic worker but experienced abuse, working so hard with little money. She says,

"I want to do something concrete through the ACAT programme. I recognize that in order to succeed in life, I must put in a lot of effort. The workshop's main takeaway for me was that hard work beats laziness. I also registered in the newly formed Savings and Loans group in my area."



Zamani Zondi has lived in poverty ever since he was a child, but after joining ACAT in 2024, he has discovered a different perspective. He told us that he has refused to die in poverty.

The opportunity that ACAT has provided through field training and cross visits, has motivated him to do something for living. He started a vegetable garden and slowly he's learning that there are many things he can do with his life rather than just sitting idle. Zamani has taken a further step by joining a savings club. He heard of people doing great things in improving their homes, buying home assets and so on. But Zamani has some other ideas – one of which is to enrol in a college to further his studies in plumbing. He says there is local market available as many people in the community are busy improving their homes, and says,

"I want to cut their expenses to get their products from town."



ACAT's Extension Co-ordinator says,

"Funani Ngcobo kept telling us that she was an old woman and that she couldn't accomplish anything in life at her age of 65. I spent time encouraging her not to be negative and condemn herself for many things that she couldn't do when she was younger. I asked her, "Why are you still alive and not dead?" and she looked at me with a worried expression, unsure of what to say. I went on to tell her that "You're still a child of God and that God has a purpose for you and that God is not done with you, which is why you're still alive."

These words spoke volumes to her, and she used her old age money to buy seed potatoes. She also testifies that the lessons she learned from ACAT have had a significant impact on her life, and she returned to give back to the community. She claims that ACAT put her on a path to self-discovery, teaching her to be positive and not to be preoccupied with death. She realizes that all rural areas need programmes like the ACAT, which set people on a path to self-discovery, but it's unfortunate that people haven't noticed this.

Ntombifuthi Mahlase can't stop talking about ACAT and that she has a successful vegetable garden for the first time. She says she was just sitting and doing daily routine housework, and waiting for the social grants given to her children. When she joined ACAT in 2020 and attended Area training, something within her started to realise that there were so many things she could do that needed very little money – like you need about R100 to buy seedlings for a vegetable garden. She bought some seedlings and asked her neighbour for kraal manure. The result is that now she can feed her family with fresh vegetables, and her school-going children are happy having had something in their stomach. Ntombifuthi has also made an effort to join the savings club to start a business that would add to her income. She told us that the money she generates from the sales of vegetables goes into her savings.



Ayanda Memela says

"Though we had put in a lot of effort as a family to improve our quality of life, things were not going as planned. However, since we joined ACAT, our lives have changed."

Ayanda's entire family now views work ethic differently as a result of her commitment to the programme. She says that doing manual labour at home was not in her DNA and that, to her, seeking employment of any kind made more sense than working from home while receiving no financial compensation. Her first attempt after



attending the ACAT training was to build a small chicken house to sell chickens. She now wants advanced training because she wants to make her poultry business her true occupation! The small portion of vegetables she planted in 2024 changed her mind about being an entrepreneur. In this next year she wants to grow and sell more vegetables to generate money for sugar, bread, and so on. She plans to join a savings club, and save towards a family goal of starting a catering business. Ayanda loves baking and so she wants to invest towards that goal.

After completing the Basic Life Skills course, **Thobi Khasibe** looked around her homestead for opportunities. She already had about 20 chickens, but had never seen that they had the potential to earn her an income. The training

changed her mind-set, and one thing she carried home was a lesson from God's perspective: "What do you see?"

She says realized that being poor was a mind-set that she had. She now wants advanced poultry training as she wants to supply indigenous chickens. Thobi lives with her family of 20, and is currently the bread winner, so she has to work hard to provide for them. At the moment she says they rely too much on social grants and she vows to make this kind of living history.









The **Vulindlela Area Implementing Community** team really worked hard this year to make sure that all the programmes run smoothly. Basic Life Skills training courses were run successfully. At each course the team demonstrated how to establish a moisture deep trench garden. They also had a successful 'Fun Run for the Elderly' which they organized with Qalakancane Luncheon group in KwaMpande.



Nomvuselelo Shabalala of Ngabeni says,

"I always wanted to plant something, but I felt like I did not have 'green hands', as the things I planted did not grow as expected. After interacting with the AIC during training, things have changed. I now plant different types of vegetables. I am very happy that my family can now eat the spinach that I planted myself. I am hoping that I will be able to plant more vegetables soon so that we can also sell any surplus."

Anele Zondi attended the Basic Life Skills training this year and his life has improved drastically. He has planted his garden using the deep trench method and is seeing the benefits. His garden is looking good, and they have already started eating things like spinach and beetroot. His cabbage is still coming up. He has also started selling food like sausages, so that he can make some money to support himself and contribute toward the family needs.



Phakamile Masuku joined the ACAT programme this year and did her Basic Life Skills in Engabeni. She says,

"The highlight of my year was learning about God and getting a new Bible. I also enjoyed learning about basic business principles. In the past I had tried to sell things but was not successful. After the training, I have seen a lot of improvement in my tuckshop business — mainly because I am now bookkeeping and have more control of my stock."



Nelisiwe Zuma really showed interest and was very interactive during the Basic Life Skills training. While she has started a small garden, her real interest is in business. She has started a tuckshop where she sells snacks and her business is steadily growing. Nelisiwe says,

"I enjoyed learning more about God and want to work on my relationship with Him."

Delisiwe Cele joined the programme in 2024 and immediately put what she learnt in to practice by planting a vegetable garden. However her main focus is on her new business. She sells different kinds of snacks to the community. She keeps her books updated, and says that it helps her to know what is going on with her business. She is very thankful for the programme.









Hlanzeka Ntombela says

"I joined ACAT in August 2024 and have really enjoyed being part of the programme. After the training I started my own business selling to neighbours, schools and even at the clinic. I also make traditional attires and clothing which I sell online and through social media. I plant spinach, cabbage, beetroot and potatoes, but want to expand my garden so that I can sell to the community."

Asanda Ntombela is a KNH participant. She really enjoyed being part of Youth Basic Life Skills training. She says,

"I was happy to hear more about growing in God, and loved learning about planting. Since the course finished, I planted my own garden where I grow cabbages and spinach. Mulching really helps me, because water is a big problem in my area."





Mandlakayise Nxumalo is a new group member, having completed his BLS training in 2024. He says,

"I wish I had joined ACAT earlier, as I am now full of knowledge — which I now know I lacked all along. I have now planted some cabbages, spinach, potatoes, beans and other vegetables. I really did not know that I could have such a beautiful garden. Now I can enjoy fresh vegetables with my family. I also make cutting boards that can be used during big events which I sells to the community. I had been doing this as a hobby, but now I am turning it into a business."



Bongekile Shabane is one of the older members in the programme. She loves farming and has now started a chicken business. She was able to build beautiful housing for her chickens where she breeds both layers and broilers.

She is now working on strategies to expand her business, because she has seen that it is possible. She says,

"The ACAT teachings keep me going even on tough days."



Sthembile Mbele was part of the Youth Basic Life Skills training in 2024. She is also part of KNH. She really enjoyed being part of the training because it made her realise that she has so many opportunities in life. She also enjoyed learning more about God. Since the course, she has planted her own garden from which her family can enjoy eating fresh vegetables.



Philasande Nxele is a KNH participant, he was part of Youth Basic Life Skills this year. He enjoyed the garden lessons especially because they have space that he could use for planting at home. After the course, he started his garden. He fenced it properly, and planted cabbage, spinach, beetroot, and onions. His dream is to improve his garden so he can sell to the neighbours.



Hlengiwe Magubane, is a multi-talented person who promotes the establishment of small business and creation of "one home, one garden" to eliminate poverty in her community. She also started a Sunday school class to gather young children that were vulnerable and living on the streets. This young lady teaches children the Word of God while they are still young.

