

ACAT's Impact



PHOTO REPORT

January to June 2025



Impact and Transformation

South Africa's labour market remains in crisis: by the second quarter of 2025, a staggering 33.2 % of the workforce was unemployed – that equates to nearly 8.4 million people out of work, with almost 43 % excluded entirely from the job-seeking process. For youth, the prospects are even bleaker, with unemployment rates exceeding 60 %. In KwaZulu-Natal, the challenge is even more acute: the first quarter of 2025 saw 104,000 fewer people employed, the sharpest decline across all provinces. Many rural households survive on poverty-line incomes, subsisting on less than R500 per month. It is within this context of systemic deprivation that the ACAT programme emerges as a beacon of hope – its poverty-reducing interventions offering real pathways to resilience, dignity, and renewed livelihoods. For many families, survival depends on informal livelihoods, subsistence farming, or small-scale enterprises.

Why ACAT's solutions matter

Presented against this bleak backdrop, ACAT's poverty-reducing interventions become not just valuable, but transformative.



- Skills training addresses the acute need – especially for youth, who bear the brunt of unemployment.
- Community-based economic projects demonstrate locally grounded, inclusive approaches that tackle poverty at its roots.
- This photo-story report spotlights real human impact – how ACAT participants regain agency, acquire skills, and rebound from destitution.

The impact is best understood through the voices of participants themselves as this report reflects.

“I earn a weekly profit of R700 from my business. This programme opened my eyes to the possibility of sustaining myself without formal employment.”

– Mthobisi Mbali



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: January to June 2025

507

New group members being trained through the Basic Life Skills Course
85% are women
15% are men

216

New group members started income generating activities

192

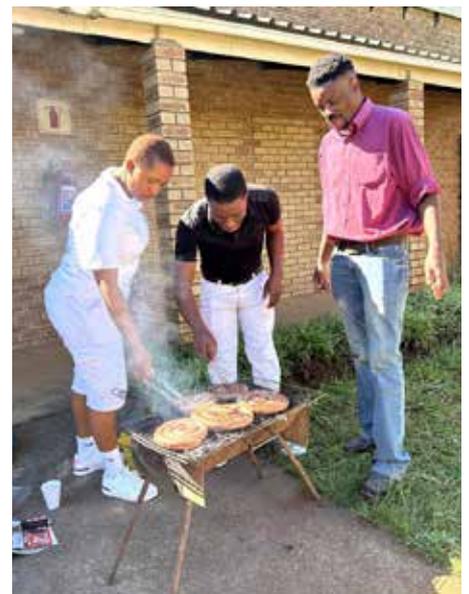
New group members have already started vegetable gardens

58

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



The **Mnambithi Area Implementing Committee (AIC)** is involved in various activities individually, but they also make time to conduct a Savings and Loans Group (SLG) just among themselves so that they can become examples and lighthouses. In the picture above we see them conducting their SLG. They have been able to get substantial amounts of money as dividends, but have also been able to borrow from the SLGs and improve their homes and businesses. They are very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the programme.



During the **Basic Life Skills Certificate-giving day in Watersmeet**, the atmosphere was filled with joy and celebration. For many, the day represents the start of new opportunities – some leave inspired with fresh business ideas, while others are eager to begin planting their own gardens. Many participants are especially excited to have learnt more about God and His plan for their lives. The occasion is marked with laughter, fellowship, delicious food, and a festive braai, making it a celebration day to remember.



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During the **Basic Life Skills Certificate-giving day in Watersmeet**, the atmosphere was filled with



purpose. In 2024, I started a small vegetable garden that allowed me to feed myself and sell some of the produce to the community. I especially enjoyed the business studies component of the course, which inspired me to take another step forward. Since then, I have added layer chickens to my growing enterprises and now I sell fresh eggs in my community. I dream of one day becoming a supplier to large shops.”

Foli Mhlanga completed her Basic Life Skills course

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Before joining the Basic Life Skills course, Nomasonto Hlatshwayo felt that her life was hopeless. But everything changed when she learned about God during the course. She says,

“My heart was filled with hope and a renewed sense of





in 2024. Inspired and motivated by what she learned she started her own vegetable garden immediately. Since then, she has expanded it gradually and now the garden not only feeds her family with fresh, healthy produce, but produces enough to sell the surplus to her community. Foli particularly enjoyed learning about proper nutrition during the course. Having a vegetable garden has allowed her to put that knowledge into practice. She too dreams

of one day supplying her produce to larger markets. Her husband (*right*) supports her endeavours, having seen the benefits of the programme.

Zethembe Ngcobo completed the **Basic Life Skills** course in 2024. She says,

“Before joining the programme, I felt as though my life had no clear direction. However, since completing the course, I have started a



small vegetable garden, which has provided fresh, healthy food for my family. I have sold the surplus, to community members. Building on that momentum, I have expanded my efforts to include selling clothes as part of my growing business. I am determined to keep moving forward, and I dream of owning my own shop in the near future.”

Mandlakhe Mhlongo joined ACAT in 2024. He started by planting a small garden, and through hard work and applying what he had learned, he expanded his garden and eventually produced enough to sell to the community. Mandlakhe is committed to saving a portion of his income to invest in growing



his enterprise. Selling his produce has helped him take better care of himself, make plans for development, and have a strong hope for his future.

Gcinile Ndaba joined the ACAT programme in 2020 and has been producing vegetables ever since. She now sells her produce to the local community and recently managed to sell a great harvest of sweet potatoes. Gcinile is very grateful that she can feed her family with fresh vegetables straight from her garden. Her dream is to expand her garden and increase her production, but access to water remains a major challenge.

Loraine Ndlovu is a relatively new member of the ACAT programme, having joined in 2024. Since then, she has launched a small income-generating initiative, selling sweets, chips, and snacks at a local school. As her confidence and customer-base has grown, she has

After finishing the Basic Life Skills (BLS) training in April 2025, Zone Facilitator **Xolisile Sithole** was scheduled to conduct a gardening workshop at the Makhoba home. This workshop aligns with the programme requirement for all group members to establish home vegetable gardens.



This savings group, which began participating in the ACAT programme in 2012, has been a pioneer in savings. This photo, taken in May 2025, captures the moment when interest was distributed to the 9 remaining members. The R60,000 profit for the year 2024/2025 is a testament to their dedication. The members expressed gratitude for their success, which has made them a model for other savings groups in the Ethekwini area. Despite starting with 13 members, the group now has 9 members due to unfortunate losses and other circumstances.



A community **sector group** in the Ethekwini area has made significant strides in improving living conditions and fostering unity among residents from different zones. Gathering in the Mkhukhwini zone, they began meeting in October 2023 with a shared goal: to learn sewing. Through collaboration with Boni's Fashion Designing, they negotiated a training agreement, committing to R100 monthly fees per student. Starting with 15 students, they successfully completed their training by January 2025, graduating with new skills. The group has since secured agreements with neighbouring schools to sew children's uniforms, paving the way for sustainable income generation.

In May the Jonsson Foundation visited Ethekwini area to witness the ACAT programme's operations in rural communities. This sewing **sector group** gathered at their meeting square, showcasing their sewing projects. Each member played a role in demonstrating their work, highlighting the programme's collaborative spirit and benefits. The visitors were impressed by the group's savings and loan records, offering encouragement and praise for the programme's success.



Lameni Shozi, joined the programme in 2020 and her group's name is Sizakala from Egugwini zone. Despite health challenges with her feet, Lameni's determination led her to join a savings and loan group in 2021. In 2025, she ventured into raising broiler chickens, borrowing funds from her Saving and Loan group to purchase 50 chicks. She successfully raised and sold them to neighbours for R120 each. With growing demand, Lameni plans to expand, aiming to buy 200 chicks to meet customer needs



Buyisiwe Florence Mkhize, joined the ACAT programme in 2024 with her G5, Siyaphambili, in the Sjoti area. Previously a working individual with no experience in gardening, Buyisiwe credits the programme with introducing her to vegetable cultivation and savings. Despite initial challenges, including lack of fencing, she's successfully grown her own vegetables and is now exploring ways to expand, including growing seedlings for her neighbours and using pots. Buyisiwe's journey highlights the programme's positive influence on her life and community.

Nobuhle Ntuli, from G5 Eyethu, joined the ACAT programme in 2022. She is very active in community development issues and part of the sector group that meets at the Church. Those who visit the church go to her garden to see how her planting programmes are going. She says that since she joined the programme, she has continued to grow vegetables that help her feed her family, selling the surplus to her neighbours. She says that being a member of the group has helped to learn, and meeting others encourages them to share ideas on how a person can make a living.



Anaclea Mthiya, has diversified her business ventures by following the ACAT programme. After facing challenges with her Tuckshop due to local competition, Anaclea joined a sewing sector group, discovering a new passion. She's now sewing children's T-shirts, with each one priced at R130. Though just starting out, Anaclea's hopeful about her new venture, inspired by customer demand and payments.



At Highflats, a group of children gathers with energy and excitement as they take part in the **Youth Basic Life Skills Course**—an initiative that has become both popular and deeply valued by the local community. Loved by children and appreciated by parents alike, the programme offers far more than just education. It provides young people with essential life skills that help them grow in confidence, character, and resilience. From communication and problem-solving to self-awareness and teamwork, the course equips children with tools they will carry with them for life. What makes the programme truly unique and impactful is its integration of spiritual teachings, which help guide the youth in building strong values, discipline, and a sense of purpose. For many families, this course represents hope – a safe, nurturing environment where their children are supported not just academically, but emotionally and spiritually as well. It’s a place where young lives are shaped for a brighter, more grounded future.

This young man **Mpendulo Tenza** is reaping what he has sown, and is a shining example of the transformation made possible through ACAT’s agricultural training. With skills gained from the programme, he now tends to his harvest with knowledge and confidence, preparing his produce for market. Beyond just farming, he is cultivating a future rooted in self-reliance, economic opportunity, and pride in meaningful work. ACAT’s commitment to equipping rural youth with practical, income-generating skills continues to sow seeds of lasting change across communities.



“**Baking is in my blood**”, says **Nomjabulile Cele** from Highflats as she displays an array of beautifully baked cakes. She explains that this phrase perfectly reflects the passion that drives her craft. After joining ACAT’s development programme, she was able to refine her skills and gain the knowledge needed to turn her passion into a thriving home-based business. Through training in entrepreneurship, financial management, and product presentation, she learned how to market her cakes and manage her earnings wisely. Today, her baked goods are not only bringing joy to her customers but also generating reliable income for her household. Her kitchen has become more than just a place for cooking – it’s now a space of empowerment, creativity, and opportunity. Her journey is an inspiring reminder that when talent is nurtured with the right support, it can rise – just like her perfectly baked cakes!



These women from Highflats area are from a **sector group** doing a baking business. They say that the Basic Life Skills Course has been an eye-opener for them, empowering them to view life and their potential in a new light. The baking business has also opened doors and opportunities for them. Their products are now regularly supplied to local tuck shops, and they also provide baked goods for community events – demonstrating how skill development translates into sustainable livelihoods and strengthens the local economy.



ACAT's Development Programme empowers group members to gain financial responsibility. **ACAT's groups** in Highflats area at Magugu zone were equipped with essential financial literacy skills designed to promote long-term economic stability. A key focus of the programme is teaching practical strategies for saving money, including encouraging participants to save the profits they earn from their sales instead of relying on borrowing from money lending institutions. Through ACAT's programme, participants learn the importance of keeping their savings accessible at any time without the burden of interest payments. To support this, ACAT provides money boxes where individuals can securely store their earnings, helping them develop the habit of saving in a safe and convenient way.



A young man **Philani Silangwe** carries two freshly harvested heads of cabbage from his thriving vegetable garden – evidence of his determination and the skills he gained through ACAT's development program. Faced with limited job opportunities, he attended several workshops where he learned practical, sustainable farming techniques. Inspired by the training and support he received, he decided to put his knowledge into practice by starting his own garden. Today, he not only grows food for his household, but also sells his produce to earn a steady income. His story reflects the impact of ACAT's approach: equipping individuals with the tools they need to create their own livelihoods, build resilience, and take control of their future.



With a bright, proud smile, **Bajabulile Damoyi** stands in the middle of her flourishing vegetable garden, surrounded by over 500 healthy cabbage heads she planted herself. Her journey began after participating in ACAT's development programme, where she received hands-on training in sustainable farming techniques, garden planning, and financial management. Armed with new knowledge and a renewed sense of purpose, she turned a small piece of land into a productive garden that now serves as a vital source of income and food security for her family. Her smile reflects more than joy – it represents independence, hard work, and hope for a better future. What was once an uncertain path has become a thriving livelihood, proving that with the right support and determination, transformation is possible.



A group of determined women from **Nhlamvana zone** in Highflats work side by side in a vegetable garden, united by a shared goal: to fight poverty and improve their livelihoods. Through the support of ACAT's development programme, these women have formed a strong cooperative where they help one another by rotating their efforts from one member's homestead to the next. This spirit of teamwork ensures that each member establishes a successful vegetable plot, creating a reliable source of food and income for their families. Their collaboration is a powerful example of how community-driven action can break the cycle of poverty and build a foundation for lasting change.



Nomvuyo Tenza is so proud of her produce!



Phumzile Molefe stands as a living example of what dedication, hard work, and community spirit can achieve. As a committed community volunteer, she doesn't just speak about change - she lives it every day. Her efforts quietly echo the values of self-reliance and sustainability. What started as a small business with a few birds has grown into a small, thriving poultry project that supports both her family and the local market. Her story inspires others around her to believe in the power of small beginnings and the impact of leading by example. Through her work, she's proving that true leadership starts at home – in the soil, in the coop, and in the unwavering service to her community.



Dumisani Shoba and Bongi Shoba are a devoted couple working this quiet field where their dreams have taken root. Bound by a shared vision for a better tomorrow, they've poured their hearts, hands, and hard-earned savings into their land, believing that small beginnings can yield great harvests.

With a portion of their savings, they invested in essential farm inputs to improve their productivity and bought two goats, hopeful that these animals would multiply and become a source of sustainable income. Their journey is an example of unity, sacrifice, and the power of working together – building not just a farm, but a future.



Impendle Area Implementing Committee members gather for their monthly meeting to openly discuss key issues affecting their neighbourhood. By coming together every month, residents are not only identifying challenges, but also working collectively to implement sustainable solutions and drive positive, inclusive development within the community.



Mthobisi Mbali from Isibonelo G5, who joined the programme in March 2025 says,

“I am extremely grateful for the ACAT programme, which opened my eyes to the possibility of starting a business that could sustain us without needing formal employment. I have always dreamed of running a tuck shop but was hesitant to get going in my area because of the rural location with limited population and high unemployment rate. However, after participating in the Basic Life Skills training in March 2025, I felt motivated and started purchasing retail goods in April. Although my business isn’t booming yet, I earn a weekly profit of R700, which enables me to restock according to customer demands.”



Sinenhlanhla Ngwane, a 24-year-old member of the Ekuthuleni group, joined the programme in March 2025. After completing school, she couldn’t pursue further studies. However, the Basic Life Skills programme inspired her to start growing and selling vegetables, catering to neighbors who couldn’t do so themselves. Through hard work, she’s now saving money by not buying vegetables, and has a growing customer base. Although her earnings are modest, she dreams of expanding her production to increase her income.



Ntokozo Mjaja, a 25-year-old member of the Zizamele G5, joined the programme in 2024. She says

“I am so grateful to my grandmother, Ndadane, for introducing me to the programme. My eyes were opened to the benefits of planting. At first I was skeptical, but I soon discovered that cultivating vegetables could provide food for my family, and a potential source of income through sales. My harvests have motivated me to expand. I am looking for larger spaces to plant and sell to my community.”

Nomvula Mphofu joined the ACAT programme in 2020 and gained valuable knowledge through the Basic Life Skills training. She says

“As a single mother of two, relying on child grants, I was motivated to improve our situation. With my brother’s support, I started a garden, which not only provided food but also sparked entrepreneurial ideas in me. I invested the grant money in a lawn mower, and started a lawn mowing business. Although it’s a seasonal income, this venture led me to diversify by purchasing a sewing machine. I now offer machine repair services, and earn a monthly profit of around R1000, despite fluctuations.”





Thandi Xaba is truly a shining light in her community. After completing her Basic Life Skills (BLS) training a few years ago, she started a vegetable garden. She uses the fresh produce to feed her family and sells the surplus to community members. In addition, she plants a significant amount of maize, which she also sells. Thandi is very happy that the ACAT programme boosted her confidence, enabling her to sell her produce and earn extra income. This additional income has been a great help in supporting her family's needs at home.



Mr. Vusi Mahlobo is one of the longstanding members of the programme. Even after many years, he remains happy that he participated in the training. He grows fresh vegetables, which he enjoys with his family, and sells the surplus to community members. Recently, he began planting oyster mushrooms, which he also sells.

In addition, he has started rearing pigs and plans to sell them within the community, aiming to supply local shops and 'shisanyamas' in the area. The training has helped him build his skills and confidence, allowing him to create multiple sources of income, while supporting his family and contributing to the community.



Mzwandile Khoza is another young member who completed the Youth Basic Life Skills (YBLS) training and was very happy with what he learnt. After the training, he started his own garden where he planted cabbages, spinach and potatoes. He sold some of his produce to the community, using the bulk to feed his family. Mzwandile is now looking forward to growing further and pursuing his dream of becoming a businessman.



Bongiwe Hadebe from Nkomokazini Zone in Loskop joined the programme because of her passion for planting. However, she struggled as her crops did not thrive due to her limited knowledge about soil fertility. After attending the training, she was able to identify areas where she needed to improve, and this has made a great difference in her gardening. Today, she grows cabbages, beans, spinach, and other crops successfully. Bongiwe also enjoyed learning business skills, as she dreams of expanding her production to a point where she can supply big shops. She says being part of the programme has not only improved her farming, but has also boosted her confidence in pursuing her goals.



Neliswa Mazibuko is a young member who has greatly benefitted from the programme. She was very happy to attend the Youth Basic Life Skills (YBLS) training, where she learned about God and business. She especially enjoyed the business lessons, which inspired her to start her own snack-selling business to earn some money for herself. Neliswa has since become a positive example in her community, demonstrating initiative and determination. Her participation in the YBLS training has had a visible impact on her personal growth and her ability to contribute meaningfully to her family and community.



Minenhle Mazibuko, from Nkomokazini Zone in Loskop, is one of the newer members of the programme. She thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Basic Life Skills training in her area, which inspired her to take the bold step of starting a small business. Minenhle now sells different types of snacks to community members, and this has helped to supplement her family's income. She is grateful that she is now able to contribute towards meeting her family's needs. Minenhle shared that the highlight of her training was learning about business record keeping, which she believes will help her manage and grow her business effectively.



Nosipho Magubane from Mvuzini says,

“You have to treat pests with care and wisdom. Not every pest requires a chemical solution - often, a little attention and some manual control can go a long way. You have to observe before you act. Not every problem in the garden needs poison.”

By putting observation before intervention, Nosipho is a true example of thoughtful, responsible farming. She not only protects her crops but also ensures that the food he grows is as natural and safe as possible.

She says,

“I always check the level of infestation first. Sometimes, if it’s just a few bugs, I’d rather pick them off by hand than use any chemicals that could harm the environment or our health.”



Gogo Zethu Sangweni, an 82-year-old grandmother from Mondlo, believes the secret to her strength and health lies right in her backyard. While many old ladies of her age rely on chronic medication and spend their days resting indoors, Gogo Thandi wakes up with the sun and heads straight to her garden, where she diligently tends to rows of spinach, tomatoes, onions, and maize. She says,

“Working the soil, planting my vegetables, and feeling the earth in my hands, has kept my body moving and my heart joyful. I don’t even remember the last time I had to go to the clinic. My medicine is here - sunlight, soil, sweat, and a little bit of prayer.”



These Children from **Phumeceleni zone** at Emondlo area proudly carry seedlings they nurtured during a seed bed workshop facilitated by the field team in Mondlo. These youngsters are not being left behind. This initiative, aimed at teaching children how to grow their own vegetables from an early age, has been warmly welcomed by parents. They appreciate the programme not only for its educational value, but also for how it keeps their children engaged, off the streets, and strengthens family bonds as kids now spend more time at home rather than with their peers.

From an early age this **youngster from Mondlo** has learned the value of responsibility and care. Every day, he is always available, helping his grandmother with feeding, cleaning, and checking on the chicks, eager to learn and always ready to lend a hand. With guidance from his grandmother and a heart full of curiosity, this young helper is already growing into the next generation of farmers and business people.





The **Mophela training team and trainees** gather together, demonstrating love and unity.



The **trainers conduct a garden workshop** at a new group member's homestead. They also teach fencing techniques using available materials, to hedge their gardens, showcasing their resourcefulness.



During each Basic Life Skills training session, the trainers **incorporate practical exercises**, such as the ongoing garden training.



Following the training, the trainees apply their knowledge by visiting homes in groups, putting their new skills into practice.



The trainees are **highly focused and attentive**, to the point where they wouldn't even leave the room unless instructed to do so.



Hlengiwe Gumede – their Community Extension Officer – looks at the timetable and reads it to the learners to remind them which subject follows next. Trainers assist each other, demonstrating teamwork.





Salvatoris Phumzile Mthembu shows off her small vegetable garden. She lives in Mophela and joined ACAT in 2025. Despite having a small yard, she established a vegetable garden there. She has also started a small business where she sells clothing and makeup. She says,

“I have a passion for helping people in my community. Since joining ACAT I have seen a significant difference in my life – physically as well as spiritually. I love to share the Word of God with my friends, and I am currently doing the Community Volunteer Course 3 at ACAT.”



Lindiwe Sithole is a 37-year-old talented beadwork artist from Simunye group in One South zone. She has undergone a remarkable transformation. She recalls,

“Before joining ACAT I admit I was quite lazy about reading the Bible. But now I am a radiant and happy person. Despite being naturally shy, ACAT has empowered me to teach Bible studies to church members and community youth. I have a business making and selling beadwork, decor and also collecting tin and bottles to sell to the recyclers. At the moment I haven’t yet started saving in Saving and Loans Group. I put my money into the bank, and also help my mother buy groceries. Oh yes! We have a lemon tree at home, and now I am preparing to plant potatoes with my group. I am also now a Community Volunteer.”



Ntombifuthi Mthembu is 69 years old, and is a member of Sizokwenza group. She says,

“I am very happy to grow my own vegetable garden because I have decided that I am not going to buy veggies any more. For my business I sell wood to the nearby “Shisanyamas”. I was very happy to learn through spiritual teachings conducted during the Basic Life Skills training. I also now have my own bible and I read it together with my family. Now I want to join a Savings and Loans Group.”





A proud new group member **Lindelani Ngobese** from the Nquthu area stands beside his thriving spinach crop – planted shortly after attending the Basic Life Skills training in April 2025. With new knowledge and renewed motivation, he’s turning what he learned into action, proving that even small beginnings can grow into something nourishing and full of promise.



This **young man** is a true testament to resilience and determination. He began his journey with ACAT’s programme at just 6 years old, joining the children’s wing. Although he successfully completed high school, he was not awarded government financial aid to pursue further education. Rather than remain idle while waiting for a relief grant, he chose to take charge of his future by joining the adult wing of the programme and becoming an active group member. Today, he is a shining example of hard work and perseverance, growing and selling vegetables to support himself and serve his community.



After attending a Basic Life skills course offered by ACAT, **Sabelo Mdakane** took a bold step toward building a better future. With limited resources but a clear vision, he started a small business selling chips, sweets, and other goods. What began as a modest venture is now a source of hope and income, and proves that with the right support and a strong will, even the smallest beginnings can lead to meaningful change. Today, he’s not only earning a living, but has also started saving money for the future, showing a growing sense of responsibility and long-term planning.



These young women from **Machanca zone** at Nquthu are sharpening their skills through practical training in baking techniques, business and planning. This photograph captures more than just delicious treats, it tells a story of transformation. These women are part of a growing group who have participated in the area training that was facilitated in the area through the Area Implementing Committee. The goal here is to turn the baking business into a sustainable source of income.



Despite her age and frail hands, this grandmother **Mrs Mdakane** from Phumqashe zone at Nquthu continues to make sleeping mats by hand, pouring hours of labour and love into each piece. It's not just a craft – it's her only source of income, the means by which she buys food, medicine, and other basic needs. While others her age may rest in comfort, she rises each day with quiet determination, knowing that each mat she sells brings her one step closer to surviving another day. Her resilience is a quiet testament to the strength of those who endure not because they want to – but because they must. But her resilience doesn't end at her doorstep. Just beyond her home, she tends to her garden plot, where grows rows of maize and sweet potatoes. She works tirelessly to ensure her family never goes to bed hungry. Her garden is more than a source of food – it's a living symbol of her strength, sacrifice, and the love of a mother and grandmother who refuses to give up.



These are the happy faces of group members from **Mathambo zone** in Nquthu who graduated from their Basic Life Skill course that was offered in the area through ACAT's programme, as a means to empower the community. The new group members are so thankful to ACAT for considering them in the struggle to eradicate poverty by empowering people in their community. They say that the scope of the course is very valuable and that they will pass the information on to other people they interact with. ↓



Basic Life Skills training is facilitated by **Thembisile Mdlalose**, a community volunteer in Nquthu. Participants are enthusiastic about taking part in this eye-opening 10-day course, especially since it is being held in their zone. They are encouraged to apply what they learned by starting home food security gardens and exploring opportunities to establish small businesses.





Thandi Buthelezi, the Community Extension officer in Nquthu, proudly works in her home food security garden. As a leader and overseer of the area, she believes in practicing what she teaches. Before reaching out to the community, she ensures that her own homestead reflects the principles she promotes. Thandi grows vegetables both to feed her family and to sell locally—over the fence and in town. When asked what motivates her, she shared that she wants to set a clear example, especially for new group members and her neighbours, showing that true leadership begins at home.



These **gentlemen from Phumqashe zone** are practicing '*lilima*' - a traditional form of collective work -where they take turns helping one another establish gardens at each member's homestead. This spirit of cooperation was inspired by their participation in the Basic Life Skills course, where they learned about deep trench gardening. Motivated by the training, they are now putting their knowledge into action to improve food security and support each others' well-being.



Young hands, big dreams — these children from **Nquthu Nkande zone** proudly carry cabbages they harvested during a field day, not just to sell, but to build a habit of saving through their savings groups. With every sale, they learn the value of hard work, responsibility, and planning for the future—one cabbage at a time.

Ngenzeni Nxumalo joined her Minenhle group in 2015. She credits ACAT for changing her life. With new knowledge, she renovated her house by installing new doors and windows. Furthermore, she's now building a new two-bedroom house with a dining room. Most importantly, she's grateful to be debt-free.

“Being an SLG member has been incredibly beneficial for me. I was able to cover my grandson’s schooling expenses from Grade 8 to Grade 12 and even built a house using my savings.”



Sihle Maphumulo who joined ACAT in 2019 is a young man who initially experienced success through ACAT development programme. However, as his life improved, he became unconcerned about his work, and started making poor choices. His life turned for the worse due to his actions. He started facing financial problems, lost his job and things were not going well with him. He then realized the need to change. So he remembered ACAT and started afresh by selling tripe and vetkoek with polony. Through his struggles and new determination, Sihle learned from his past mistakes and has rebuilt his life. His business is doing well. He is also involved in farming, and is a member of a Savings and Loans group in his zone. He saves monthly in order to improve his business.



Jabulani Ngcobo joined Ngodlomane group in 2023. He says,

“I see my life changing day by day. I farm, sell produce, and have an income. I started selling seedlings that I purchased from the nursery.

I really want to have my own nursery where all groups in my area can easily get seedlings without having to go to town.

I am really encouraging group members to work together to eradicate poverty.”

Khululiwe Dube is a determined woman from a deep rural area of Ntuliward. She joined the ACAT programme in 2024 to improve her family's livelihood. She started small, using her limited resources to cultivate a plot of land. She plants maize, pumpkins, and beans. Her hard work paid off, and she was able to harvest a bountiful crop i.e. maize, pumpkins, 20 litres of beans, sweet potatoes and madumbes. She sells her surplus produce at the local market. Her farming has brought her increased income, improved food security, and improved self esteem. She says,

"I am so grateful for the teachings and workshops offered by ACAT which brought hope into my life."



Nompumelelo Zulu (42) joined the programme last year (2024). She says, *“What makes me happy about joining the programme is meeting other people and learning new things. For me I discovered that the most important thing is to read or gain a deeper knowledge about the Bible. This has helped me a lot. When I tried the new method of planting, I produced a great harvest. I am a member of a Savings and Loans Group in her zone. When I joined them they had not yet started to save so I decided to leave them and join another group that was already saving, because I like progress!”*



Nokuthula Makhanya (56) joined the ACAT programme in 2024 because she wanted to gain knowledge in farming, as well as acquire some business skills. The area where she lives already has people running different kinds of businesses, so it was not easy to decide which one to start. However, she remembered that during her training last year there was a member who was carrying something unusual. That’s how she got the business idea. Her business involves making mats decorated with repurposed snack wrappers. By using discarded snack wrappers, she is not only creating unique products, but also contributes to environmental sustainability. This approach can inspire others to think creatively about waste reduction and management. You can use these mats to decorate your house. She used the money she earned in the first sale to pay the tithes in the ministry.

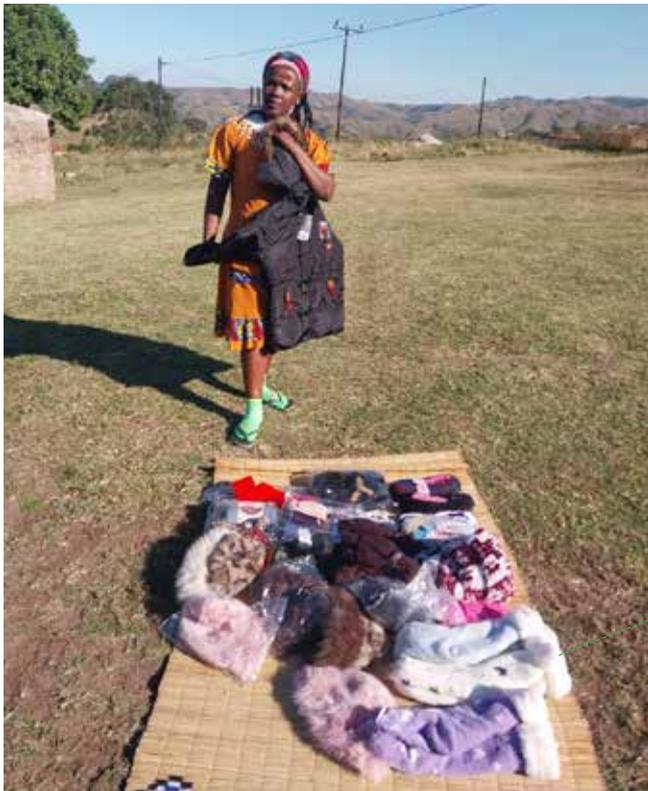


Thembeke Ngema (26) joined last year (2024) after attending the Basic Life Skills course. She said that previously she had helped her mother work in a large garden, but had never earned anything because it was not her own. After the training, she started her own garden. She says,

“Even as an unemployed graduate, I went to the Basic Life Skills at ACAT. Being in the training really inspired me, as it reminded me that it is possible to survive even if you are unemployed. It has also made me more enthusiastic about attending the short courses that the municipality offers. But as you can see, my garden has lovely broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce.”



Sizakele Mdluli (42) joined last year (2024) and is someone who loves to learn new things. She spends most of her time doing something that will bring her money. When she is at home she makes mats or is in the fields harvesting or planting. This year she sold 20 litres of amadumbe for R170 each and sweet potatoes for R150 each. She also planted beans that she is still harvesting, she has different varieties of indigenous beans and umzumbe. Her dream is to find a piece of land for herself so that she can produce more crops. At the moment she is using her neighbour’s land.



➔ **Mana-Israel Buthelezi** joined Khanyisa group last year and the most important thing she gained from being a member was being able to organize. Meeting other people had made her business grow and increased the number of customers. Her business is selling winter and summer clothes for adults and children, men and women. She also sells bags and dishes. The goods she sells, she orders from Durban. She makes her orders twice a month. What helps her business the most is that she does not sell on credit, if you buy you pay a deposit and pay the rest at the end of the month.



Ninizana says she joined the ACAT programme in 2023 in order to come out of poverty. Her garden feeds her family, and produces surplus for sale which enables her to be an active member of a Savings and Loans group. She says:

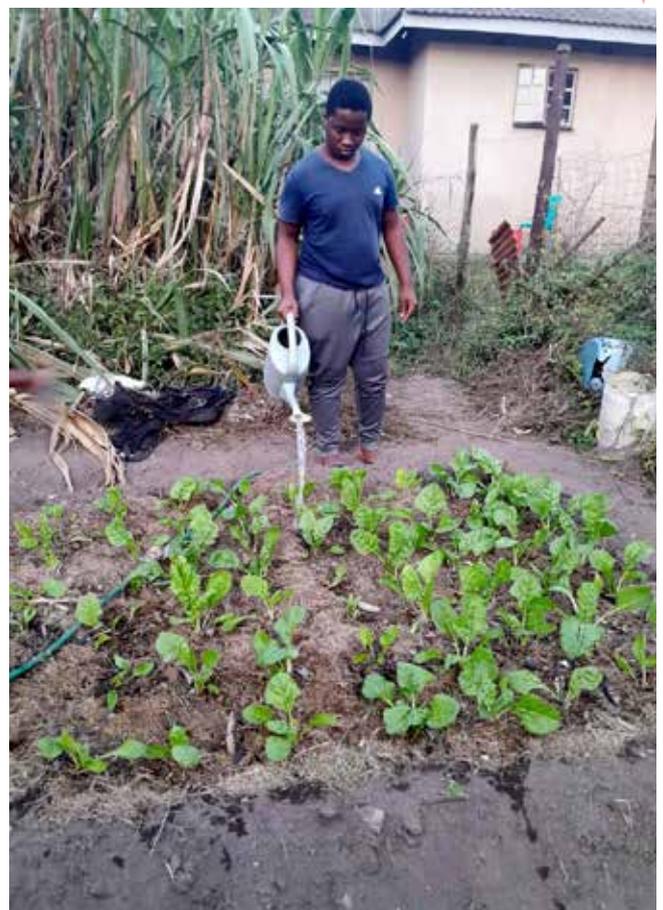
↓ *“This programme lifted me out of poverty”.*



Wandile Chiya joined the children’s programme in 2021 because his parents were in the ACAT programme. They taught him about different vegetables, and how to plant and care for them. They taught him about nutrition and sustainability and he discovered the joy of watching seeds sprout and grow. His garden flourishes, and he proudly shares the vegetables with his family.



Siyanda Zondo has been part of ACAT since 2018 when he joined children’s programme. His parents taught him how to plant, tend, and harvest various crops. He learned about different types of plants, soil preparation, and irrigation. He discovered the joy of nurturing life and watching his efforts bear fruit. His garden is flourishing and the family enjoys his harvest.





Andisiwe Magwaza is in the children's programme which encouraged her to grow vegetables and to learn ways of generating income. She grows vegetables for her family's consumption and they enjoy healthier meals and their grocery bills have decreased! ↑



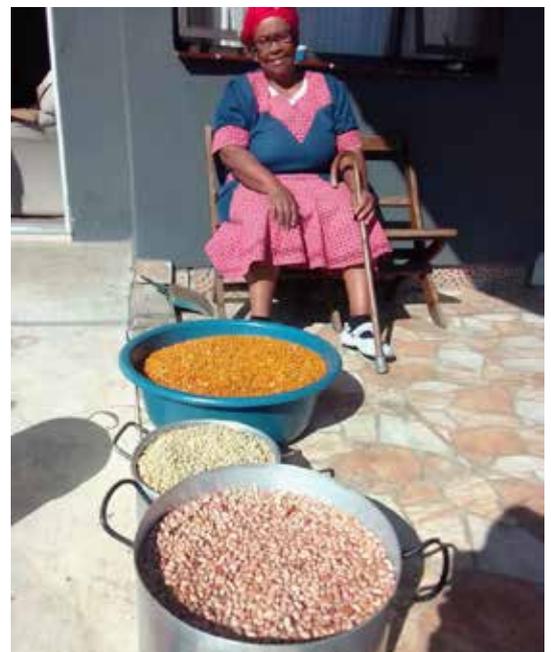
Goodness Sibiya joined Buhle Bendalo Group in 2024 where she learned about sustainable practices, environmental conservation, and community engagement. She witnessed the programme's positive impact on local communities and developed new skills and confidence. Now she grows and sells vegetables from her own garden. Her dream is to expand her garden and plant to supply the local supermarkets. ↓

Nonhlahla Dlamini heard about the sustainable agriculture programme from the G5 members, who were already benefitting from the programme. She started by attending area workshops on sustainable agriculture practices and business workshops. After the workshops, she decided to join Sinothando group in 2023 where she discovered she could put new farming techniques and sustainable methods into practice. She grows a variety of crops and vegetables and generously shares her knowledge with neighbours and friends. Her community benefits from increased food security and environmental practices. She also joined the Savings and Loans group and is saving for her future. ↓



Evelin Buthelezi joined Masiphumelele group in 2023. She says,

"How I wish I heard about ACAT early in life, I would have done so many things. ACAT opened my mind". She has a large field planted to different types of beans that she uses to feed her family and sells surplus to her neighbours to earn money. She saves monthly in her Savings and Loans group for her future." ↓



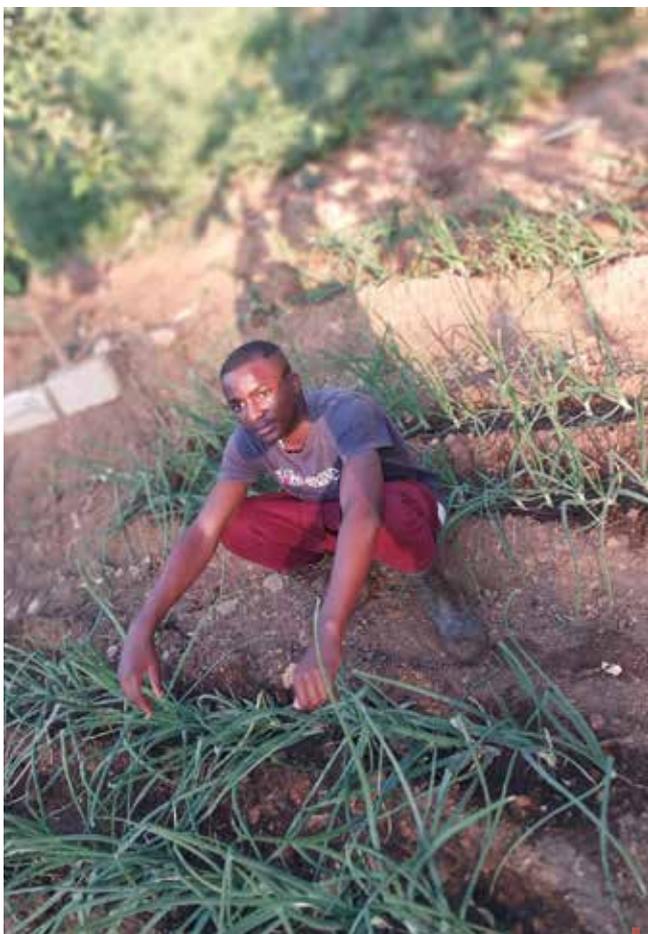


Doris Mpungose joined Funa Ulwazi group in 2024. She is very happy to be part of the ACAT programme because it has lifted her out of poverty and given her a business idea. Now she raises chickens and sells them to her community. She earns a living for herself and her family and is able to save monthly in the Savings and Loans group.



Jabulisiwe Ncube joined the Masibumbane group in 2024. She says,

“I am so grateful to God who brought ACAT into my life. I had a piece of land, but I didn’t use it profitably. Since ACAT came into my area, my eyes opened, and I could see myself as a very successful farmer.” She plants her vegetable garden to support herself and her family. She hopes to expand it to a larger size so that she can sell to her community and in town.



Siyamukela Ncanana is in children’s programme (KNH) since 2018. His garden is green all year round.



Mr and Mrs Zulu joined the ACAT programme in 2023 in order to come out of poverty. They were struggling to make ends meet. They discovered a local development programme offering training and support in sustainable agriculture and animal husbandry. This was through area training done by ACAT extension team.

Mr Zulu learned to raise chickens for eggs and meat. He started small, but has grown his flock, selling chickens at the local market. His wife grows a variety of vegetables and crops. She cultivates a small plot of land, using sustainable practices to improve soil fertility. The family’s income has increased, enabling them to afford basic necessities. Their children enjoy improved nutrition and health. This family’s lives are transformed through the development programme and they have become a symbol of hope and resilience.

Mahlubi Co-op is made up of a group of five women who experienced the benefits of participating in the Basic Life Skills (BLS) training and the wider program. Motivated by what they had learned, they approached community leaders and were allocated a piece of land where they now grow a variety of vegetables for the market. The members of the co-op expressed that being part of the program has not only equipped them with agricultural and business skills but has also given them confidence and a strong sense of belonging. They believe that their journey reflects the power of working together and applying the lessons gained through the training.



Tholakele Thwala of Shayamoya Zone is one of the newer members of the group, and she has quickly become an example to others. Although she was always passionate about planting, she once believed she did not have “green hands.” After completing her Basic Life Skills (BLS) training, Tholakele witnessed a remarkable change as her garden began to thrive. Today, she enjoys fresh, healthy vegetables from her own garden and also sells some of her produce to the local community. Her story reflects how confidence, skills, and perseverance can transform both livelihoods and mindsets.



The **Emdwebu Groups**, who received training last year, have since established a communal garden where they grow vegetables such as cabbage, beetroot, and spinach. They currently sell their produce to local community members, but their vision is much bigger — they dream of one day supplying large retail stores such as Pick ‘n Pay and Spar. For many of them, this achievement is deeply meaningful. Most had previously lost hope, but through the programme they have discovered that they are capable of building something for themselves. They expressed gratitude for the skills and confidence they have gained, which have opened the door to new opportunities for both income and dignity.



Mrs Mazibuko, an Area Zone Facilitator, has experienced the benefits of the programme to such an extent that she now works alongside her husband in their garden. Together, they enjoy eating fresh vegetables, which contributes to their good health, while also helping them save a significant amount of money. They sell part of their produce to the local community, creating both income and stronger community ties. They are especially proud of their harvest of beans, which has been particularly successful. The Mazibuko family expressed their happiness with the positive changes the programme has brought into their lives.



Mr Mxolisi Ndlovu, the community Chief (Induna) of Power Zone, first attended the Basic Life Skills (BLS) training a few years ago. Since then, he has continued to build on his learning by completing the Pastors' Course and is now part of the Colab series. Mr. Ndlovu plants large fields of maize and beans, which his family enjoys as food and which he also sells within the community. In addition to his crops, he keeps cows that provide both income and manure for his farming. He makes good use of the kraal manure to improve his soil fertility and boost his harvests. He expressed deep gratitude for the knowledge and skills he has gained through the program, which have empowered him to strengthen both his household and his community.



A new group in Okhahlamba has recently started their Basic Life Skills (BLS) training. From the very first sessions, the participants expressed deep gratitude for what they were learning. Many shared that they had not only gained valuable knowledge about God but had also discovered the importance of eating well, something especially meaningful as some of them are facing various health challenges.

The group was particularly enthusiastic about the practical sessions in the garden. For many, it was their first time engaging in hands-on activities that showed them how to grow food in a simple and sustainable way. Their excitement was clear as they spoke about starting gardens at home, eager to apply what they had learned and to improve their families' health and livelihoods.

This new beginning has filled the group with hope, as they look forward to growing both spiritually and practically, trusting that these lessons will make a lasting difference in their daily lives.



These **Area Implementing Committee** members from Taylors engage in meaningful discussions around their plans and priorities for the upcoming month. The atmosphere reflects a strong spirit of teamwork, strategic thinking, and shared vision, as each member contributes valuable insights toward setting clear objectives and actionable steps.

Although she had no formal fence to protect her crops, **Banothile Dlamini** didn't let that stop her from planting the vegetables her family depends on. Piece by piece, she gathered scraps of wood, rusted metal, old wire – anything she could find – to build a makeshift barrier to shield her plants from wandering animals. Although her garden is small and her fence improvised, the love and care she puts into every seed sown is immeasurable. In a world where resources are scarce, she proves that creativity and perseverance can still yield a harvest – one that feeds not only the body, but the spirit.



Gcina Dlamini sits proudly at his snack stand, offering chips and sweets to passersby with determination and a bright smile. His love for business started after attending Youth Basic Life Skills training in his area. Though it is now a small scale, Gcina is very determined that one day he will be counted among the business owners in his area and be able to support his family with income from his business.

Dudu Hlela shares the wisdom behind her choice of crops. With a deep understanding of the land and its climate, she has learned to embrace dryland farming – selecting hardy, drought-resistant crops like amadumbe and sweet potatoes that flourish with minimal water and provide a reliable harvest.



“I prefer growing dryland crops, because they give me a better return.”

In regions where rainfall is uncertain and resources are limited, her practical approach not only ensures food security for her family but also helps her earn a modest income. Her story is one of resilience, smart farming, and the power of working with nature rather than against it.



Busisiwe Ngcobo from Taylors, is a dedicated woman who focuses intently as she works at her sewing machine, skilfully crafting garments by hand. Through her talent and hard work, she earns a living by sewing clothes and selling them to her local community. Her small home-based business not only supports her household but also provides affordable, custom-made clothing to her neighbours. Her story highlights the importance of self-reliance, creativity, and the vital role women play in sustaining local economies through traditional skills and entrepreneurship.

Banzile Nxumalo tends to her broiler chickens – an inspiring venture she began after attending a local business workshop led by ACAT community training team. What started as a spark of interest, has grown into a thriving small business, where she raises healthy chickens and sells them to her neighbours (both live and in prepared cuts). Her poultry business not only helps provide fresh, locally sourced meat to the community but also stands as a testament to how access to the right knowledge and training can empower individuals, especially women, to create sustainable livelihoods and contribute meaningfully to their local economy.



Zanele Zuma, from Chagwe in Vulindlela, is a new member of the group who felt hopeless before joining the ACAT programme. Since joining, she has done very well for herself. Zanele shares that being part of the programme helped her to better understand God, and this gave her renewed hope. She especially enjoyed learning about healthy eating, which inspired her to start her own garden. Today, she grows fresh vegetables and can feed her family from her harvest. Zanele is also looking forward to joining the Savings and Loans group.



Eunice Mbambo joined the ACAT programme in April and completed her Basic Life Skills training in the Chagwe Zone. Although she used to plant before joining, she often saw very little harvest and believed she didn't have "green fingers." After her training, she was able to identify where she had been going wrong and make the necessary changes. Eunice is now very happy with the results, especially because she can finally put food on the table at home. Her desire is to expand her vegetable garden so she can begin selling produce to the community.



Babhekile Mapini from the Chagwe Zone in Vulindlela had always dreamed of planting her own vegetables, but she felt held back because she couldn't afford to put up a proper fence. However, after attending the Basic Life Skills training in April 2025, she was encouraged to use whatever resources she had – and she did just that. Using available materials, she managed to create a simple fence and now has a beautiful small garden. This success has greatly boosted her confidence, and she is now excited about growing even more. Babhekile also mentioned that she really enjoyed learning about the relationship with God during the training, which brought her peace and renewed purpose.

Thulangani Zondi is a new member from the Chagwe Zone. She shared how much she enjoyed learning about our relationship with God during the Basic Life Skills (BLS) training. She said that her eyes were opened, and she now sees life in a completely new light. Another highlight for



her was learning about healthy eating, which she found both interesting and practical for improving her lifestyle. Thulangani used to struggle with water shortages, often complaining that her crops looked unhealthy due to the dry conditions. However, during Basic Life Skills, she learned how mulching helps retain soil moisture. She applied these principles in her garden and is already seeing a big improvement in her plants. Encouraged by these results, Thulangani is now planning to enlarge her garden, as she has enough land and is excited to grow more.



Delisile Mbambo from the Chagwe Zone in Vulindlela was someone who once felt hopeless. When the opportunity to attend the Basic Life Skills training came, she was excited – but initially thought it was just something to keep her busy for a few days. However, after going through the training, Delisile was deeply encouraged. She went home and started her own garden. Now that she sees growth, she feels motivated and is determined to improve and expand her garden even further.



Thokozane Skhakhane from the Chagwe Zone in Vulindlela already had a small tuckshop when she joined the Basic Life Skills training. However, she was not seeing much profit from her business. After learning about business management and bookkeeping during the training, she realized where she had been going wrong and made improvements. As a result, she has been able to add more items to her stock, and she is now experiencing growth in her profits. Thokozane has also started a garden and says she will have enough to feed her family and also sell to her community.

