

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

PARTNERING WITH
RURAL ORGANISATIONS
FOR 41 YEARS

SOCIAL CHANGE
ASSISTANCE TRUST

# ABOUT SCAT

## VISION

A South Africa with vibrant, sustainable rural communities.

## MISSION

To partner with and support Local Development Agencies (LDAs) in advancing social justice and sustainable change within rural communities.

## MODEL

SCAT works to address the systemic barriers that keep rural communities trapped in poverty, inequality and exclusion. Many communities face poor service delivery, weak local governance, limited access to resources, climate change, gender inequality, gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), and high levels of youth unemployment, while the local organisations supporting them often lack the funding, skills and resources needed to respond effectively.

SCAT strengthens locally rooted organisations through flexible grant funding, organisational capacity building, leadership development, mentoring, networking and technical training. By investing in these organisations, we support them to help their communities claim their rights, fight patriarchy and gender-based violence, participate in local decision making, strengthen climate resilience and livelihoods, and hold government accountable.

Together, we are building stronger local organisations and more resilient communities that can shape their own development and advance social justice.

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# CHAIRPERSON'S REFLECTIONS 2025

Lorenzo Wakefield

As I reflect on this past year, I find myself thinking not only about what the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT) has achieved, but about the broader terrain on which our work unfolds. This terrain has shifted considerably, and not always in the direction of progress. For those of us who believe in the power of civil society, the year 2025 demanded a particular kind of resolve.

Civil society in South Africa and globally is navigating one of the most difficult funding environments in recent memory. Internationally, major donors, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany, all cut their official development assistance in 2024, with projected reductions in the civil society and governance sector of 21-36% by 2025. The withdrawal of USAID funding alone sent shockwaves through organisations across Africa. For many, it has meant the abrupt end of programmes that took years to build.

Closer to home, the South African civil society sector, comprising nearly 290,000 registered organisations, continues to shoulder an enormous burden amid state failure. With corporate social investment in South Africa reaching approximately R12,7bn in 2024, there is capital in the system. Yet the bulk of that investment flows toward education and established institutions, while small, rural, community-based organisations – precisely those doing the most essential work in the most underserved places – remain chronically underfunded and overlooked.

Against this backdrop, SCAT's model of intermediary philanthropy to raise funds and regrant to Local Development Agencies (LDAs) that are rooted in the communities they serve is not merely pragmatic. It is a principled response to the structural inequality of the funding landscape. SCAT exists, in part, to make philanthropy work better: to bridge the gap between funders who lack the reach and relationships to support small rural organisations and communities that have solutions but not resources.

There is a growing global conversation about what philanthropy is for, and who it should serve. Increasingly, the answer offered by the most thoughtful voices is: communities themselves, on their own terms, with their own knowledge at the centre. Community-led, locally rooted and accountable development is not a new idea. Still, it is gaining new urgency as the limits of top-down, projectised, externally driven development become harder to ignore.

SCAT has been practising this model since 1984. Our Fundraising Incentive Scheme (FRIS), which rewards LDAs for every Rand they raise locally, was an early expression of the principle that external funding should complement rather than displace the generosity and agency of communities themselves. The fact that international bodies (such as the G20, the World Bank, and the United Nations) are now reaching similar conclusions is gratifying. It is also a reminder of the importance of organisations that persist long enough to demonstrate this proof of concept.

At the same time, we must be honest about the limits of philanthropy, however well-designed. The crises facing rural South Africa, which include collapsing local government, high levels of gender-based violence, climate-driven displacement, and youth unemployment, are not philanthropic problems, but political and structural failures that require political and structural responses. Civil society organisations like SCAT can hold the line, protect and build community capacity, and create the conditions for communities to advocate for the systemic change they need. That is what we have done, and what we will continue to do.

On behalf of the Trustees, I wish to acknowledge with deep appreciation the leadership of SCAT, ably guided by Joanne Harding, and the extraordinary dedication of the entire team. In a year of genuine institutional stress, they responded with creativity, rigour, and an unwavering commitment to the people and communities at the heart of our mission. The scenario planning process conducted in 2025 that mapped multiple funding futures, including scenarios of significant contraction, is a mark of institutional maturity that gives the Trustees considerable confidence.

I am equally grateful to our long-standing donors whose continued investment reflects a shared conviction that community-led development is not a niche approach, but the only approach that creates durable change.

To every LDA partner, community member, and colleague who made the year's work possible: the scale of what you do daily, often under difficult, even dangerous conditions, deserves far more recognition than an annual report can offer. You are the reason this organisation exists, and the reason it matters.

South Africa's rural communities do not need to be discovered and saved. They need partners who stay, who listen, and who trust that the knowledge and determination to change things already exists in the places that have been most overlooked. That is what SCAT has always tried to be. It remains our highest aspiration.

**"... the answer offered by the most thoughtful voices is: communities themselves, on their own terms, with their own knowledge at the centre."**



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr Joanne Harding, Executive Director

## A Year Shaped by Converging Crises

2025 demanded that we confront a world in accelerating flux. Globally, the retreat of multilateralism, the rise of climate denialism in influential political circles, and the rollback of hard-won gains for human rights have created a deeply hostile environment for the kind of transformative, community-centred work that SCAT exists to do. At home in South Africa, the picture is no less challenging. Persistent service delivery failures, entrenched corruption especially at local government level, the devastation wrought by climate-driven floods and droughts on rural communities, and the declaration of gender-based violence as a national disaster have converged to place extraordinary pressure on the people and communities we serve.

Yet it is precisely in this environment that the value of our model becomes most visible. SCAT sits at the intersection of local knowledge and systemic advocacy, bridging the distance between global policy commitments and the daily realities of rural South Africans.

## Access to Justice and Governance Accountability

South Africa's local government crisis is not a new story, but in 2025 it deepened in ways that demanded a more robust response. Municipal dysfunction, ghost projects, tender irregularities and the chronic failure to deliver on Integrated Development Plan (IDP) commitments continue to strip rural communities of their constitutional rights. Against this backdrop, our Strengthening Action Against Corruption (SAAC) project has undergone a fundamental shift from awareness-raising to active accountability.

### From Fear to Action

When the SAAC project launched in partnership with Corruption Watch and Transparency International and funded by the European Union, Local Development Agencies (LDAs)[1] in the Eastern Cape Province approached the prospect of confronting local government with understandable trepidation. Corruption is not an abstraction in rural South Africa; it has faces, it has consequences, and it is often protected by the same power structures that communities depend upon. Over the course of 2025, we have worked to transform that fear into informed, strategic action.

LDAs are now utilising IDPs and municipal budget documents as accountability tools, tracking commitments, identifying discrepancies, and formally documenting cases of maladministration and neglect. This shift from passive observation to structured monitoring represents a significant achievement, not only for the communities involved, but for the broader health of local democracy.

### Towards Systemic Change

Our approach has evolved beyond a "light touch" model. We are now supporting LDAs to engage directly in formal governance processes. After conducting corruption risk assessments, the team prepared a submission to provincial government and reached out to the Chairperson of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) for the Eastern Cape Province to make an oral submission. LDAs negotiated Memoranda of Understanding with municipalities such as in Nyandeni, and have established themselves as legitimate, constructive interlocutors rather than adversaries of the state.

This matters because LDAs are, in many rural areas, the only organised structures with both the community trust and the institutional capacity to hold ward councillors and municipal officials to account. Their daily casework, navigating disputes over water, land, housing and social grants is a rich source of evidence about systemic failures. Our goal is to help LDAs harness that evidence for advocacy that changes systems, not just resolves individual cases. SCAT has worked with OpenUp to develop a bespoke online reporting system which will help us gather data from the LDAs we support.

## Gender-Based Violence: Legal Realities, Political Stakes

The President's declaration of gender-based violence (GBV) as a national disaster in 2025 was a watershed moment, one that carries both promise and risk. The invocation of the Disaster Management Act shifts primary responsibility for coordinating the response to the National Executive, creating a new legal and political architecture for how GBV must be addressed. For rural women, who face compounded vulnerabilities and often have the least access to the protective mechanisms of the state, understanding and navigating this new framework is not a bureaucratic exercise; it is a matter of survival.

### The Rural Dimension

Global trends are deeply concerning in this regard. Across several donor countries and international institutions, we have witnessed a deliberate retreat from commitments to women's rights. Funding for gender-responsive programmes has been cut, and the political will to prioritise women's safety has weakened. In South Africa, this intersects with geographic and structural inequalities that already place rural women at a profound disadvantage, meaning limited mobility, economic dependence, weak enforcement of protection orders, and the complex dynamics of traditional authority structures.

# SCAT 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- A second cohort of 26 women graduated from the Women In Leadership Programme at Goedgedacht in February.
- The 9th iteration of the Dullah Omar School for Paralegalism, with 63 community-based paralegals from across South Africa, was co-hosted in Johannesburg with the Black Sash and CAOSA under the theme: *Land and its People — an Advice Office Sector that Cares for Both.*
- Ten Youth Ambassadors for Accountability (YAfAs) were recruited for the SAAC programme and participated in their first capacity building workshop in East London from 8 to 11 April. In September they took part in communications training focused on advocacy, report writing, and content creation.
- The SAAC Programme hosted its second Corruption Busting Bootcamp in partnership with Corruption Watch and Transparency International in the Eastern Cape. The team followed up with the first Empowerment Against Corruption workshop in July.
- The 5th RACR Learning Festival was hosted in Johannesburg from 14 to 16 May. Its overarching theme was Engaging Government on Climate Change: Empowering Communities to Work with Local Government on Climate Issues.
- The WiL edition of the Rural Voice series was published on Women's Day, 9 August.
- SCAT and partners Legal Fundi, Black Sash and Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr launched a new edition of the Paralegal Manual in Johannesburg in June. SCAT and Legal Fundi collaborated in a social media campaign to promote the Manual and the Maya chatbot.
- The RACR permaculture booklet, "A Beginners' Guide to Food Gardening: Adapting to Climate Change in South Africa with Permaculture Techniques", was published in May. An electronic version in various South African languages is available on the RACR website at **https://ruralaction4climate.org.za/index.php/publications/**.
- The Irish Ambassador HE Austin Gormley and Deputy Ambassador John Dundon were hosted on a field visit to six Limpopo LDAs with SCAT trustee Noma Masiko-Mpaka and Keren Ben-Zeev from the Heinrich Böll Foundation.
- The Raith Foundation Trustees and Executive Director Audrey Elster were hosted on a visit to Masiphakameni LDA in Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape.
- SCAT Executive Director Joanne Harding travelled to New York to attend Climate Week #UNGA2025 side events. She participated in a panel on Climate Responsive Social Protection hosted by Climate Works Foundation and attended a session co-hosted by WINGS, which reflected on the role of philanthropy as a catalyst for sustainable development.
- The SCAT Online Access Reporting (SOAR) CRM system was built in collaboration with LDAs and OpenUp.

SCAT has not looked away from this complexity. We have worked to ensure that LDAs understand the National Strategic Plan and that they are equipped to support rural women in accessing the protections to which they are entitled under the revised framework.

### Strategic Partnerships for Impact

Recognising that no single organisation can address the scale of this challenge alone, we partnered with Mosaic[2] to create awareness and understanding of how LDAs can provide support to survivors of domestic violence through the court system. We also worked with Ibis Reproductive Health to create awareness of research they conducted on women's sexual and reproductive rights. This work will continue in 2026 with online seminars.

## Climate Change and Rural Resilience: Leading When Others Retreat

It would be easy to feel demoralised by the state of global climate politics. However, the communities we serve are not waiting for global consensus; they are already living with the consequences of a changing climate and need grounded, practical responses now. Drought, flooding and food insecurity cannot afford delay, which makes practical, locally-led climate action more urgent than ever. This is precisely the moment to deepen our commitment.

### Rural Action for Climate Resilience (RACR)

RACR, which we run in partnership with SAFCEI (Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Institute) has continued to demonstrate that climate resilience is inseparable from governance accountability. By empowering LDAs and faith leaders to engage local authorities on water management, waste disposal and land use, we are connecting the dots between community-level decisions and the floods, droughts and resource conflicts that devastate rural livelihoods. The project has built something that is increasingly rare – locally owned, locally adapted strategies that do not wait for permission from the top down.

Through RACR, SCAT and our LDA partners actively contributed to key national policy processes by making formal submissions on the White Paper on Local Government and South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These submissions were grounded in the lived realities and practical experience of our LDA partners, whose work in vulnerable rural communities offers critical insight into the local impacts of climate change, governance challenges, and pathways for resilience. Through consultation and engagement processes, partners shared community perspectives on issues such as water insecurity, food systems, disaster preparedness, local accountability, and the need for a just and inclusive transition. SCAT consolidated this input into evidence-based submissions that amplified grassroots voices in national decision-making spaces and advocated for stronger recognition of community-led adaptation, responsive local governance, and equitable climate action.

Our participation in the G20, the F20, the United Nations General Assembly, and Climate Week in 2025 provided important platforms to amplify this message. The reception was unambiguous: decades of investment in community-led, grassroots climate action is precisely what the global system lacks, and SCAT's model offers a compelling proof of concept.

## Fundraising, Sustainability, the Road Ahead

The funding environment in 2025 has been stressful. Shifting philanthropic priorities and the volatility of international development budgets have required SCAT to be more agile, more entrepreneurial, and more deliberate about the story we tell of our impact.

### New Ground Secured

Despite these headwinds, 2025 saw important successes. We secured new contracts with the Climate Works Foundation for CBOs that is focused on the Just Transition, and with the European Union, also focused on the Just Transition. This project will be in partnership with SAFCEI and Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF). Lastly, we secured a new grant from Tshikululu Trust to run an NPO capacity building programme in Limpopo. These partnerships not only provide financial resources, but validate SCAT's positioning at the intersection of climate change and social justice. There is a definite move towards more funding for climate change programmes.

### Long Term Funding Partnerships

We also successfully renewed grants from the Ford Foundation, the Mott Foundation, the DG Murray Trust (DGMT), the Joan St Leger Lindbergh Charitable Trust, and the Irish and Dutch Embassies. These relationships reflect decades of trust and shared commitment.

### Planning for Multiple Futures

We realised that it is important that our response be structural, not reactive. Melanie Judge facilitated a scenario planning with SCAT staff and trustees to prepare us for multiple futures, including the disciplined use of reserves to protect core operations during transitional periods. More importantly, we must sharpen our evidence-based narrative, that SCAT does not merely plug the holes left by a retreating state, but creates lasting, systemic change in the communities we serve. That case is strong. It is our job to make it heard.

## Staff and Board

### SCAT Staff

SCAT's staff remain the driving force behind the organisation's work, bringing dedication, skill, and deep commitment to advancing social justice in communities

across the country. In a complex and rapidly changing environment, they have continued to adapt, innovate, and deliver with professionalism and care. Their resilience, teamwork, and unwavering belief in SCAT's mission have enabled the organisation to sustain its impact, strengthen partnerships, and respond meaningfully to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Integrated programming is not just an operational aspiration; it is the foundation of our relevance. We are committed to ensuring that all staff understand the intersections of climate, social justice, gender, and governance, not as separate silos, but as a unified framework that defines who we are and what we do. The importance of deepening youth impact in our work has also been reiterated, with two staff members looking at this question while they participate in the DGMT Innovation Fellowship.

### Board

SCAT's Board continues to provide steadfast leadership, strategic guidance, and strong governance during a period of significant complexity and change. Through its oversight and commitment to accountability, the Board has helped to safeguard the organisation's values, strengthen institutional resilience, and support management in navigating an increasingly challenging operating environment. We are grateful for the time, expertise, and dedication that Board members bring to SCAT's mission and to ensuring that the organisation remains responsive, effective, and rooted in the communities it serves.

## Conclusion

SCAT entered 2026 in a world that is more volatile, more unequal, and more in need of what we offer than at almost any point in our history. Rising global fragmentation, the crisis of local governance, violence against women, and the accelerating impacts of climate change are not separate emergencies; they are expressions of the same failure to put people and planet first.

Our work at the intersection of access to justice, gender-based violence and climate resilience is not a coincidence of programming priorities. It reflects a coherent understanding of how power, vulnerability and change operate in rural South Africa. It is grounded in relationships built over decades, in the trust of communities who have seen us stay when others have left, and in a model of civic empowerment that the world increasingly recognises as the only kind that lasts.

We remain committed to that model. And we remain grateful to every partner, funder, community member and colleague who makes it possible.

1. Local Development Agencies is a term SCAT uses for the community-based organisations we partner with in rural areas. They are run by people in the community for the benefit of the community and are more than service delivery organisations; they are agents of transformation.
2. Mosaic is an African community-based NGO focusing on GBV prevention, in particular domestic and intimate-partner violence.



Compost making at Groenwater



Vegetable beds at Groenwater



Mulching and developing new beds at Groenwater



WiL plenary exercise



Eastern Cape governance training




Asisithi Zihlangu & Thembakazi Mthembu at CPUT graduation




WiL storytelling session



Masiphakameni LDA food garden



Field visit with Masiphakameni LDA



WiL storytelling session



Western Cape IT training session



Western Cape cluster workshop, Lagoon Beach



# PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Seth Tladi, Programme Director

2025 was a year of expansion, particularly through our engagement with communities in the Northern Cape and community-based organisations (CBOs) supporting elderly people in Limpopo. These were uncharted areas of work that tested our practice and development model. I am pleased to report that we emerged stronger and successfully delivered on the expectations of both our funders and partner organisations.

We started the year with 61 CBO partners, which we and they refer to as Local Development Agencies (LDAs) because we view them as development gateways into communities and as agents of change. We ended the year with 57 LDAs of which five were new grantees brought on board to replace LDAs whose funding was discontinued.

| Province | LDA |
|---|---|
| Eastern Cape | 19 |
| Free State | 6 |
| Limpopo | 15 |
| Northern Cape | 10 |
| Western Cape | 7 |
| **TOTAL** | **57** |

*Table 1: regional distribution of SCAT LDAs at the end of 2025*

Rural-based LDAs continued to operate under challenging circumstances, grappling with poverty, unemployment, crime, and widespread corruption across many provinces. Participation in Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes is often superficial, limiting meaningful community engagement and reducing LDAs' ability to influence local development priorities. Given prevailing conditions and insufficient support from local governments, communities cannot function without external assistance. This necessity substantiates SCAT's purpose and our sustained provision of essential grantmaking and capacity building support to rural LDAs.

At a broader level, the sector was still adjusting to amendments to the Nonprofit Organisations Act, which require registered NPOs to submit additional information, including details of their office-bearers, governance and control structures, management, administrative operations, and financial statements. A key concern is that non-compliance may result in disqualification or deregistration. In response, SCAT initiated a process to raise awareness of these requirements among our LDAs and to provide support where needed to ensure full compliance. SCAT also joined an NGO coalition established to advocate for the voice of the CBO sector to be heard on such issues.

## Grant Funding Support

Throughout 2025, we maintained the provision of Core Grants, Development Fund for Training (DFT) grants, and Fundraising Incentive Scheme (FRIS) grants to the 57 LDAs. This took the form of R168,000 Core Grant funding, a once-off annual R5,000 DFT for community education and awareness workshops, and a R10,000 FRIS grant for each LDA. Furthermore, LDAs participating in the Strengthening Action Against Corruption Project (SAAC) and the Rural Action for Climate Resilience Programme (RACR) were allocated supplementary grant funding. More details on these two initiatives are presented later in this report.

### Core Grant Funding and Community Advice Office Services

SCAT provided a total of R10,416,390 in Core Grant funding to 52 of the 57 LDAs. These Core Grants are contributions to the organisations' running costs and are paid monthly, quarterly, or twice yearly, depending on each LDA's development phase.

As a result of this funding, LDAs functioning primarily as Advice Offices handled a total of 18,910 cases in 2025. Table 2 outlines the types of cases handled. It is noteworthy that 25% involved labour-related disputes (e.g., unfair dismissals, unpaid wages), followed by social welfare cases (17%, e.g., Child Support Grants, Social Relief of Distress Grants, and other South African Security Agency (SASSA) grants) and Department of Home Affairs cases (12%, e.g., birth certificates, ID applications). Cases related to domestic and gender-based violence accounted for 13% of the total.

| Case Types | Total | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Consumer | **1080** | 6% |
| Domestic violence | **974** | 5% |
| Farm workers | **2110** | 11% |
| Gender-based violence | **1494** | 8% |
| Home Affairs | **2263** | 12% |
| Labor (including UIF, unfair dismissal) | **4769** | 25% |
| Social welfare | **3302** | 17% |
| Other cases | **2918** | 16% |
| **TOTAL** | **18910** | **100%** |

*Table 2: LDA cases handled as of the end of December 2025*

### Microgrants

**Development Fund for Training grants** – 36 LDAs submitted 46 DFT claims totalling R300,986. These claims were for community education and awareness workshops on human rights, gender-based violence, labour rights, the fight against substance abuse, youth empowerment, and women's empowerment. Of the 46 claims, 38 were to raise awareness of and promote gender equality, and for workshops focused on changing attitudes and behaviours towards GBV survivors in communities.

| Type of DFT activity | LDAs |
|---|---|
| Community GBV education, awareness and mobilisation workshops | 39 |
| Human rights, youth empowerment and substance abuse workshops | 4 |
| Annual General Meetings | 3 |
| **TOTAL** | **46** |

*Table 3: DFT activities in 2025*

**Anti-corruption microgrants** - 19 LDAs received a total of R190,000 in microgrants to raise awareness of corruption, how to identify it, and how to report it in communities, using an Anti-Corruption Digital Technology Tool developed by Corruption Watch, SCAT and Transparency International in an EU-funded programme.

### Fundraising Incentive Scheme Grants

Thirty LDAs submitted 34 Fundraising Incentive Scheme claims totalling R316,435. In this incentive for local fundraising, SCAT pays R5 for every R1 in profit generated by a fundraising event, up to a maximum of R10,000 per grantee per year. Fundraising activities include sales of food and produce from small-scale agriculture, sporting activities, sport and cultural competitions, and raffles.

| Type of FRIS activities | No. of LDAs |
|---|---|
| Food sale events – braai packs, cooked meals, meat, etc. | 9 |
| Livestock sales – chickens, goats, sheep, etc. | 2 |
| Food garden produce – vegetables, etc. | 7 |
| Raffles, Heritage Day celebrations, social events (music & dance) | 12 |
| **TOTAL** | **30** |

*Table 4: Community-based fundraising events in 2025*

LDAs use the funds raised through these events to support operational and programme-related expenses, including volunteer stipends, office rental, and bookkeeping services. Beyond their financial value, these fundraising initiatives also create an important platform for community members to actively contribute to and take ownership of the sustainability of the LDA.

### Special Projects Grants

**Climate Change Project Grants** - through our RACR programme, SCAT provided four R100,000 Climate Change Project Grants to LDAs in Limpopo. The LDAs also received technical support and training at an agroecology farm run by John Nzira of Ukuvuna Permaculture, which enabled them to visualise what their projects could become.

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## Core Grants to LDAs

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 9,964 million | 10,41 million |

## FRIS Grants to LDAs

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 119,024 | 316 435 |

## DFT Grants to LDAs

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 270,665 | 300 986 |

## No of CBOs & LDAs Supported

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 59 | 57 |

## Youth Development Grants

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 93,000 | 376 386 |

## Food Security Grants

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 549,873 | 1,533 million |

## Climate Change Grants

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 796,000 | 550 000 |

## Special Project Grants

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| 2,170 million | 2,809 million |

*Note:
Youth Development Grants include stipends paid to the SAAC Youth Ambassadors for Accountability and the RACR Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change.



*Elizabeth Modikoa Monyama, gardener, Bloodriver Advice Office*

**Strengthening Action Against Corruption Project Grants** - SCAT provided 10 project grants of R150,000 each to LDAs in the Eastern Cape for their work to enhance accountability at the local government level. These grants enabled LDAs to engage more deeply with their local municipalities on issues related to incomplete government-funded infrastructure projects, such as housing, water and sanitation, electrification, public roads, and sports facilities.

### Other Forms of Funding

In addition to all these forms of grantmaking, all our LDA partners were given monthly data bundles to enable them to access the internet, facilitating communication with their SCAT Programme Officers and participation in virtual meetings and workshops.

## SCAT Programmes

### Women in Leadership (WiL) Programme

The year commenced with wrapping up the second iteration of the Women in Leadership Programme, managed by Hilda Gertze, SCAT's communications coordinator. The expertise of Vuyokazi Ngemntu, a poet, writer-performer, and indigenous healer, was enlisted to guide the 26 WiL participants in articulating their leadership narratives. These accounts were subsequently documented in a new edition of Rural Voice released on Women's Day, August 9th. An evaluation of the WiL programme is scheduled for 2026 to assess the extent to which it has achieved its intended impact. The results will determine the feasibility of enrolling a third cohort.

### Rural Action for Climate Resilience (RACR)

The RACR Programme deepened its focus on the intersection of community-led adaptation and local government systems across five South African provinces, responding to increasing climate variability and failures in basic services. SCAT supported its LDA partners through grants, learning, and mentorship to strengthen initiatives in food production, water access, and climate awareness, while also building their capacity to engage in municipal processes like the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and influence service delivery outcomes. A key insight from the year was that resilience requires integrating practices, knowledge, and infrastructure, and that community action is fundamentally shaped by the responsiveness of local government, making the programme increasingly focused on strengthening this interface to address climate change as both a practical and a governance challenge. Climate Change Programme Coordinator Claire Tapscott's report on page 35 provides more details.

### Strengthening Action Against Corruption (SAAC)

The SAAC Project, an EU-funded initiative overseen by Corruption Watch and implemented in the Eastern Cape since January 2024 by SCAT Programme Coordinator Jonathan Walton, has empowered SCAT-supported LDAs to actively combat corruption. The stories presented later in this report highlight the advocacy efforts of these LDAs in seeking accountability for government failures. Effective anti-corruption advocacy demands strong organisations and informed, engaged citizens. The SAAC report on page 28 provides further details on activities undertaken in 2025.

### Food Garden Projects

SCAT-supported food gardens across the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Northern Cape continued to address food insecurity, promote sustainable agriculture, and empower communities. Despite seasonal challenges such as winter crop slowdowns, volunteer retention issues, and limited resources, the projects demonstrated resilience and innovation. Collectively, the gardens reached over 3,000 beneficiaries, supported school feeding schemes, soup kitchens, and household gardens, and generated modest income through produce sales.

### Dullah Omar School for Paralegalism

The 9th iteration of the Dullah Omar School was held in Johannesburg, attended by 63 community-based paralegals from across the country, of whom 20 were from SCAT LDAs. The theme in 2025 was "The Land and its People – an Advice Office Sector that Cares for Both". Of the participants, 68% were women and youth. SCAT facilitated an NPO fundraising workshop and a session on understanding local government Integrated Development Plans.

## Staffing

The 2025 team comprised two Programme Officers, two Senior Programme Officers, two Programme Coordinators, three Programme Assistants, and one Programme Intern. In addition, we engaged three former SCAT employees, Ms Erna van der Westhuizen, Ms Deborah Zandile Nkompela, and Ms Linda Diedericks, who provided support, monitoring, and capacity-building to LDAs in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape.

We said goodbye to Programme Officer Katleho Ramafalo, who resigned to pursue a new opportunity in Gauteng, and other team members stepped up to cover her portfolio in the Free State and Limpopo provinces.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the team's hard work and commitment, which ensured that we delivered on our targets and funder requirements throughout the year.



DOS Session, Johannesburg



Governance workshop, Eastern Cape



SCAT mid-year review



Bholani food garden



Bathuseng Community Centre staff and volunteers



Bathuseng Community Centre food garden



WiL opening session, Goedgedacht



Asisithi Zihlangu at the Paralegal Manual launch



WiL handwashing ceremony



WiL handwashing ceremony



WiL cohort two, Goedgedacht



# STRENGTHENING DATA SYSTEMS FOR GREATER IMPACT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCAT ONLINE ACCESS REPORTING

**Nokukhanya Mchunu, Programme Manager**

**Nokukhanya (Khanya) Mchunu joined SCAT in 2019 as a Programme Officer and has grown steadily within the team, stepping into the role of Programme Manager in 2023, where she has since played a pivotal role in strengthening the organisation's work in research, advocacy, and learning. She has also taken the lead in developing SCAT's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan and system, with the aim of ensuring that programme impact is measured effectively and that learning is continuously integrated into programme design and implementation.**

In the past year, SCAT has made significant progress in strengthening its data collection, management and analysis through the development of the SOAR (SCAT Online Access Reporting) system. This initiative was intended to respond directly to the growing scale and complexity of our work, as well as the need for more efficient, meaningful, and accessible data systems that support both SCAT and our network of rural community-based partners. Our partners' needs were thus central to the development process and the system it delivered. Our priority was to ensure that the system would not be cumbersome, while still enabling partners to report effectively and strengthen their technological capacity.

Recognising our limited internal technical capacity, SCAT partnered with OpenUp, a tech-focused nonprofit organisation, to design and build a system that is both technically robust and grounded in the realities of the communities we work with. This collaboration enabled us to develop a system that aligns with our organisational values while meeting increasing reporting and accountability demands. In considering our internal capacity and the importance of having in-house skills to ensure that the system remains functional and that data is correctly analysed and utilised, SCAT also employed a full-time Data Officer to support this work.

A key outcome of this process has been the participatory development of a partner-centred data management system. Local partners were actively involved in co-designing and testing the data collection tools to ensure that they are accessible, user-friendly, and relevant. This approach, we hope, will not only improve the quality and consistency of data collected, but also reduce the reporting burden on partners and strengthen their engagement with this digital system.

The process did not happen without some pushback and vigorous conversations between the SCAT team and local partners, particularly where they experienced some of the data requirements as cumbersome. Collectively, we had to develop creative ways to ensure that data could be collected and shared with SCAT

effectively. As we progressed, it became increasingly important for the system to remain flexible enough to allow partners to upload data collected through various methods. For example, allowing CBOs to upload pictures, attendance registers, and other supporting documents from events as forms of evidence.

One of the innovative aspects of the SOAR system is that it brings grant management, organisational profiling, narrative and financial reporting, and capacity-strengthening into a single digital platform designed specifically for rural CBOs. SOAR replaces multiple spreadsheets and paper-based processes and enables real-time access to organisational and programme data, with the intention of improving the quality and timeliness of data collection and analysis. As the system evolves, SCAT intends to explore other creative and futuristic features to ensure improved functionality.

The SOAR system is expected to significantly enhance SCAT's ability to:

- Collect more accurate, consistent, and timely data across programmes.
- Strengthen evidence-based decision-making and programme design.
- Improve reporting to donors and stakeholders.
- Support advocacy efforts through credible and well-structured data.
- Increase organisational efficiency by streamlining data management processes.
- Improve organisational learning.

Importantly, the system also contributes to capacity strengthening at the partner level, enabling rural organisations to engage more confidently with digital tools and structured reporting processes.

Internally, the development of SOAR has driven a shift in the way SCAT understands and uses data. Data is increasingly positioned as a strategic asset that supports learning, accountability, and storytelling, and helps in improving our monitoring and evaluation plans and strategy. This system shift is intended to enhance our ability to demonstrate impact and mobilise resources in support of rural and marginalised communities. Moreover, we intend to improve our practice and that of the local parters we work with.

When we started developing SOAR, I assumed that SCAT would have a fully functioning system within three months. However, the development process ultimately spanned approximately fourteen months and required sustained organisational commitment, adaptability, collaboration, and a great deal of patience from both SCAT and our local partners. Through an iterative process of engagement and refinement, SCAT staff and partners contributed to shaping a system that reflects both operational needs and the lived realities of our community partners.

The partnership with OpenUp over this lengthy period evolved into a collaborative and purpose-driven relationship, rather than a client and service provider one, which ensured that the final product is both functional and responsive to SCAT's context.

As we move towards full implementation, the organisation is focused on ensuring effective adoption and integration of the system across all programmes. While

transitions of this nature require careful change management, the anticipated benefits far outweigh the challenges.

Leading the development of this system significantly strengthened my leadership capacity, while also requiring a great deal of patience, adaptability, and persistence. During this time, I also completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation, meaning I was simultaneously navigating two major and connected learning journeys, both of which were challenging and exciting.

The M&E qualification particularly highlighted the importance of consistent and accurate data collection, and how it enables organisations to tell stronger stories about their work while also improving their practice through ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The academic journey strengthened my ability to lead the system's development by deepening my understanding of data logic, indicators, and evaluation frameworks. It enabled me to more clearly envision what the system could look like and how it could support improved organisational practice. The combination of practical system-building and formal learning proved transformative, allowing me to engage more confidently in technical discussions and better translate programme realities into system requirements.

The development process is nearing completion and the next phase will focus on the full utilisation of the system. It is our hope that it will function with minimal technical challenges and that our local partners will not only use it for reporting to SCAT, but also to synthesise and use their own data to better tell the stories of their work to broader audiences, while strengthening and improving their own programmes and activities.



***WiL writing session, Goedgedacht***



# NOT WAITING, BUT BUILDING

**Vuyo Msizi, Senior Programme Officer**

**Vuyo Msizi mentors and supports Local Development Agencies (LDAs) in the Eastern Cape, facilitates governance, programme management, and change-making processes in the provinces where SCAT operates, and mentors and supports SCAT Programme Officers working on various projects.**

The single-lane road leading to Bholani reminds one of Robert Chambers' idea of deprivation: not a single hardship, but a trap, a vicious cycle of poverty. It is narrow, gravelled, and restless under the wheels – the kind of road that one wishes would end sooner rather than later. The village is remote, not just from towns and cities, but from opportunity, from power, from choice.

In Bholani, people carry ideas bright enough to change their lives, yet their pockets are empty. Their isolation stretches beyond geography – it seeps into every part of life, limiting access to infrastructure, to information, to economic opportunity. And perhaps most painful of all, there is a quiet form of powerlessness – the inability to shape decisions that define their own futures.

And yet, Bholani is not a place without strength.

It is a village held together by something deeper than infrastructure. In this close-knit rural village, residents have strong social ties demonstrated by mutual respect and support for one another whenever deaths, misfortune and other life shocks happen. Residents draw strength from their social capital. One might find a Makoti[3] of the village hastening to a bereaved family with home baked bread and groceries. Here, it is not taboo to borrow a small bowl of sugar from your neighbour when there is a shortage in a household. Ubuntu lives here, not as a concept, but as a daily practice. It softens the blows of poverty, even when it cannot defeat it.

Yet, despite these strong social networks and positive values, poverty, unemployment, and inequality persist. Women, who anchor households in this village, stepped forward to start a food garden to help address food insecurity. This step they took, to plan the food garden and make decisions about their lives, brought a sense of pride and achievement.

At first, they worked on borrowed land – an uncultivated space offered by a local resident. For a year, they poured themselves into it. But the land came with conditions and restrictions that slowly choked their vision. And so, they faced a choice: remain limited or start again.

That is when they met Ms Thembakazi Mthembu, a fieldworker of the Port St Johns Legal Advice Centre.

She did not arrive with answers, but with questions.

“What will you do?” “What can you contribute?” “What is within your power?”

This developmental approach was not always comfortable, but it was necessary.

Through thinking about those questions, something shifted. The women began to see not only their challenges, but their own agency. When they identified fencing as their priority, support came, but not as charity. The Port St Johns Legal Advice Centre provided fencing material, the women contributed poles. Poles they cut themselves.

They approached traditional leadership and were allocated land – virgin, untouched, closer to the river. It was not ready. It was not easy. It was possibility.

They cleared it with their own hands. No tractors. No machines. Bush became compost. Trees became fence posts. Tools were borrowed – from neighbours, from family, from anyone willing. What they lacked in resources, they replaced with determination.

The Advice Centre assisted the women to adopt a climate resilient strategy in their food garden. They were trained in permaculture through the RACR programme and encouraged to recognise and value nearby natural resources, applying these assets to address difficulties. The group learned to work with the land, not against it. Slowly, the garden began to take shape.

And with it, something else began to grow – leadership.

“These women are no longer waiting,” one could see, “they are building.”

The tools were old, some barely usable. It did not matter. Complaints had no place here anymore. Action had taken over. The group was mostly women, with one man – a familiar pattern in community work. But it did not weaken them. If anything, it sharpened their resolve.

Then came the issue of water. After the soil was prepared, seeds were planted and a harsh truth surfaced: water was not easily accessible. The river flowed nearby, but not within reach.

So, they adapted.

Every member of the group brought 2-litre bottles – discarded, overlooked, abundant in a village where such waste is common. Bottles once filled with cold drinks were given new purpose. They became carriers of life. Day after day, the group walked to the stream, filling them, carrying them back, and placing them carefully in the garden.

Rainwater was harvested. Mulch was used to hold moisture in the soil. Every drop was respected.

They built a shelter too – wood from the forest, corrugated iron from donations. A place to rest. To laugh. To gather strength under the unforgiving summer sun.

And they did laugh. They sang. They danced. Not because life was easy, but because joy, too, is a form of resistance. It was encouraging to observe how they used music and dance as an instrument of rejuvenation.

What was most striking is this: they did not wait to be rescued.

The group identified their problems. They argued, discussed, planned. They acted. And when necessary, they asked for support – not from a place of helplessness, but from a place of partnership.

Their commitment did not go unnoticed. They were included in a public works programme, receiving a modest stipend. But the true reward was already visible in the rows of growing crops, in the confidence in their voices, in the way they spoke of "our garden".

The harvest feeds not only their households, but the wider community. The most vulnerable benefit. The impact stretches beyond the fence they built with their own hands.

And still, challenges remain.

There is no rainwater tank; water is still carried in bottles. But even this has not stopped them.

When the RACR team visited, they spoke of the tank not as a dream, but as the next step. A practical need. A small intervention that could unlock so much more. Standing there, listening to their story, it became clear: they were not asking for transformation. They were already living it. They were only asking for support to go further.

If you want to see what determination looks like, what leadership looks like, what real development looks like, you will find it on the dusty road to Bholani.

As the saying goes; if you want something done, give it to women.

They will not only do it. They will make sure the whole community rises with them.

3. A word widely used in South Africa and other southern African nations to refer to a bride, a newly married woman, or a daughter-in-law.

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Alwande Ulwazi Community Advice Centre in Ngqeleni, Eastern Cape held a fundraising activity that demonstrated how to use available human skill, talent, and equipment. They offered logo design and photography services and made a profit which SCAT topped up with a Fundraising Incentive Scheme (FRIS) grant.

- Ukhahlamba Legal Advice Centre in Sterkspruit, Eastern Cape approached authorities to collaborate in their anticorruption awareness and human rights workshops. The South African Police Service (SAPS) addressed bribe payment at the anticorruption event.

- Kgatelopele Social Development Forum in Danielskuil, Northern Cape hosted circle dialogues to raise awareness about GBV and provide survivor support.

- Thembakazi Mthembu of Port St Johns Paralegal Advice Centre and Asisithi Zihlangu from Alwande Ulwazi Community Advice Centre were students in the first cohort of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's Bachelor of Paralegal Studies degree who graduated on 9 April.

- SCAT Eastern Cape partner Entlango Primary Agricultural Cooperative, SAPS and the Qongqotha Residents Association pooled their influence to avoid a community shutdown in Qongqotha. They convened a meeting with the Amatola Water Board, which dispatched engineers the next day to assess water damage in the community.

- OPRET Advice Office, Limpopo celebrated their 25th anniversary on the 2nd of July. They provide psychosocial care, legal and paralegal services, and advocate for the vulnerable, especially women and children.

- Port St Johns Legal Advice Centre, Flagstaff Paralegal Advice Centre (Eastern Cape), Ikgomotseng Community Nutrition and Development Centre (Free State), and Sandveld Local Development Agency (Western Cape) successfully applied for their full R10,000 FRIS awards.

- Port St Johns Legal Advice Centre hosted a fundraising event where they served traditional foods and promoted cultural dress to inspire the community, especially young people, to reconnect with their cultural roots.

- Ikgomotseng Community Nutrition and Development Centre used their FRIS income to purchase playground swings for the Halaletsang Day Care Centre.

- Mount Frere Paralegal Advice Centre's communal food garden produced a winter-spring harvest of vegetables and herbs with an estimated value of R13,360.



# MOVING BEYOND THE STRENGTHENING ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION PROJECT

**Jonathan Walton, Programme Coordinator – Strengthening Action Against Corruption**

**Jonathan Walton has collaborated in coordinating and implementing the EU-funded Strengthening Action Against Corruption (SAAC) project in the Eastern Cape since January 2024 with Corruption Watch, which oversees the project, and research support from Transparency International.**

The Strengthening Action Against Corruption Project provided SCAT-supported community-based organisations with an opportunity to become more involved and hands-on in the fight against corruption in communities. The stories below illustrate the actions of CBO partners in highlighting corruption and seeking answers for communities who have given up on finding answers to the failures of government. Fighting corruption through effective advocacy strategies requires strong and uncompromising organisations with informed and educated active citizens.

Through SAAC's popular education campaigns, the organisations that were awarded Anti-Corruption Micro and Macro Grants (ACMGs) jointly informed and educated 5,658 people about corruption and its different forms, consequences of corruption, whistleblowing, corruption identification and reporting.

Corruption in the constitutionalised spheres of government[4] is a serious societal problem that cannot be left unchallenged. The narrative that corruption manifests only in the public service should equally be challenged and questioned in an unbiased manner. A recent Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) survey shows that 64% of South Africans believe that most or almost all business leaders are corrupt[5].

At the Corruption Busting Bootcamp Workshops (CBBs) held in 2024 and 2025, organisations gained invaluable insights into financial mismanagement and its impact on communities. For instance, organisations learned about the following core consequences on municipalities:

- Many municipalities have approved "ghost" or unfunded budgets, leading to liquidity crises where they cannot pay creditors, including essential bulk service providers like Eskom and water boards.
- Neglect of asset maintenance has resulted in broken water, sewerage, and electricity infrastructure. The Auditor-General of South Africa reported in 2024 that over 90% of municipalities spent less than the required 8% of their budgets on infrastructure maintenance.
- In November 2025 the National Treasury withheld equitable share grants from 75 municipalities due to severe, persistent financial mismanagement and failure to settle debts.

- A pervasive lack of accountability means officials rarely face consequences for financial failures, fruitless expenditure (exceeding R5bn in 2025), or irregular spending.
- Municipalities often spend exorbitantly on expensive consultants to manage financial reports rather than building internal capacity.

## Corruption Risk Assessments

Corruption or maladministration in several municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province is a serious problem. In addition to the dearth of anti-corruption and financial misconduct laws, regulations, policies and strategies in the local government sphere, corruption is tolerated and treated as a norm. At the Corruption Busting Bootcamp Workshops, CBOs spoke about the irregular appointment of workers, payment of bribes for tenders, extortion, selling of land, collapse of municipal services, and unhelpful attitudes of municipal councillors and officials.

To understand the prevalence of corruption and accountability failures in municipalities, SCAT contracted 10 researchers to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures and policies in municipalities. The researchers used the Corruption Risk Assessment methodology to gather data from nine municipalities in the Eastern Cape: (1) Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, (2) Emalahleni Municipality, (3) Kouga Municipality, (4) Makana Municipality, (5) Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, (6) Ngquza Hills Municipality, (7) Nyandeni Municipality, (8) Senqu Municipality, and (9) Umzimvubu Municipality.

The assessments revealed financial mismanagement and internal audit failures; exorbitant, unaccounted, unauthorised, irregular, unlawful, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, violations in procurement management and employment practices; oversight weaknesses; and lack of consequence management.

To strengthen the advocacy capacity of CBOs or any other civil society organisations to fight corruption in local communities, the SAAC project team developed a "Toolkit for assessing corruption risks in local municipalities of South Africa"[6]. Complimenting the Toolkit, the project team published the "Anti-corruption Guide on Understanding Corruption and Public Accountability"[7].

Corruption is a cruel and inhumane phenomenon. The fight against corruption requires community organisations to radically shift mindsets and use various advocacy tools to hold municipalities accountable for public service failures.

4. https://www.gov.za/about-sa/government-systems
5. https://issafrica.org/iss-today/corruption-prevention-pays-why-business-must-take-the-lead
6. https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Corruption-Risk-Assessment-Toolkit_Digital.pdf
7. https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/SAAC_Anti-Corruption-Guide-English.pdf




*SAAC Anti-corruption Guide*



*SAAC Bootcamp, East London*



*Thembi Tshongoyi & Sisonke Mkwasi*



*Dimakatso Tsulo, SAAC Bootcamp*




*Vuyo Msizi & Nomiki Mathonsi*




*Group discussion, SAAC bootcamp*

# STRENGTHENING ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION PROJECT GRANTEE STORIES

## Compromised Housing Rights in the Nyandeni Municipality – DELTA/Alwande Ulwazi Community Advice Centre (AUCAC)

In 2014, the Department of Human Settlements and Nyandeni Municipality planned to build 1,000 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing units for the people of Mbobhaleni Village in the Libode area. Through the SAAC project and interaction with people at Mbobhaleni Village, Development Education and Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA) discovered that only 700 RDP houses had been built. The remaining 300 unbuilt houses were never accounted for by the Department of Human Settlements and Nyandeni Municipality. Of the 700 houses built, several were never properly completed, with houses lacking doors, windows and ceilings. Some of the houses are in a state of dilapidation.

There are thus 300 families who have been waiting for their RDP houses since 2014, hoping for fulfilment of their constitutional right to housing. According to DELTA, this story is just one example of gross maladministration and possible unlawful diversion of public funds intended for people who have waited for a long time for a government-subsidised house. The organisation has received numerous complaints from aggrieved people who applied for RDP housing and whose applications were, according to them, approved and captured on the Department of Human Settlements' housing database. DELTA was informed by aggrieved people that:

1. Applicants whose applications were approved were not issued with letters of approval or rejection from the Department of Human Settlements.
2. Applicants approved were orally informed by the appointed contractor and officials from the municipality at meetings called by traditional leaders. The list of approved applicants was read out at the meetings.
3. Some of the approved applicants alleged that their RDP houses were built in another area without their knowledge.
4. Some of the approved people alleged that the contractor had sold their RDP houses to other people who are not on the housing lists.

DELTA and AUCAC are tracking the story in 2026 and have met with the Member of the Mayoral Committee for Human Settlements and senior municipal officials to discuss the RDP housing problems they have uncovered. They were advised to seek a meeting with the District Manager for Human Settlements at the OR Tambo District Municipality. This meeting took place on 17 March and the District Manager recommended that a formal letter be submitted with detailed motivation to the District Director. They continue to take action steps recommended by the authorities in what is an ongoing story. A big win for DELTA and AUCAC was the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nyandeni Local Municipality to document service delivery failures and to facilitate structured dialogue to address these failures.

## Forgotten Dreams and Unfulfilled Promises in Kariega – Inter-Church Local Development Agency (ILDA)

The Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality in Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) is no stranger to corruption[8] and service delivery failures. Crispin Olver's 2017 book, "How to Steal a City: the Battle for Nelson Mandela Bay", exposed the kleptocratic syndrome in this municipality.

In 2014, together with the Department of Human Settlements, the Municipality launched a housing rectification project in Kariega (formerly Uitenhage). The project targeted poorly built RDP houses in Old Greenfields location in Kwalanga and involved repairing and strengthening, or demolishing and rebuilding substandard houses, with several projects occurring in areas like KwaNobuhle, Gunguluza, and Dispatch. The houses that were assessed as irreparable were handed over for demolition to a contractor who abandoned the work before completion. In the interim, the Municipality erected temporary corrugated iron shelters nearby for the people whose homes were due for demolition. More than 10 years later, the affected families are still living in these temporary homes. At the time of writing, the Department of Human Settlements and the Municipality had not returned to Old Greenfields to rebuild the demolished RDP houses or to finish the rectification of the other RDP houses. The people whose houses were demolished have title deeds to houses that do not exist.

In the financial year 2015/2016, 614 RDP houses were approved for people in Joe Slovo, but only 398 were built and there are 216 approved beneficiaries who are still waiting for their housing dreams to be realised. ILDA has secured meetings with the Municipality's Directorate for Human Settlements to discuss the plight of the people whose RDP houses were demolished.

## Water Stories

### Entlango Primary Agricultural Cooperative

In the 1800s, Qongqotha Location was established by the former King Williams Town Municipality. In 1936, the Municipality built a water reservoir in the location for the benefit of households. From 2009 to 2011, Amatole Water Board commissioned maintenance on the reservoir and later commissioned more upgrade work at the reservoir. With the establishment of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCM) in 2011, Qongqotha was incorporated into the Metropolitan Municipality.

Due to poor workmanship, underground water leaks which caused structural damage to nearby houses were detected. To prevent water loss, the Municipality closed all communal taps. Out of desperation and necessity, people in Qongqotha Location connected their own pipes to the municipal water system. They also complained that the water stored in the reservoir was often contaminated with sediment.

Having realized the seriousness of the water problems, Entlango decided to take up the issues with the BCM, Amatole Water, and Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA). With support from the people, meetings were held with officials from these structures, but without a productive outcome. The SAAC Project Coordinator has advised Entlango to consider reporting the water problem in Qongqotha Location to the Public Protector or the South African Human Rights Commission.

## CARE Alicedale

Alicedale is a small, forgotten railway junction town in the Makana Municipality. Its people are dependent for services on a dysfunctional municipality that is also infected with the kleptocratic syndrome. Access to clean drinking water is unreliable, with water provided to households on a 2-to-3-day rotational basis. On water days, the water pressure is extremely low. In some of the older areas of the township, water is not provided at all. To alleviate the water problem, four boreholes were drilled at the main water supply dam, but only one of them extracts underground water. Another two non-workable boreholes were installed near the cemetery. With financial support from the EU SAAC funding, CARE Alicedale convened community meetings to discuss the water problems and requested meetings with the Municipality.

As with the other stories we have told, this is an ongoing process which CARE Alicedale is monitoring in the hope that their community will receive answers.

8. https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/special-investigating-unit-welcomes-conviction-eastern-cape-bishop-17-nov



***Eastern Cape***



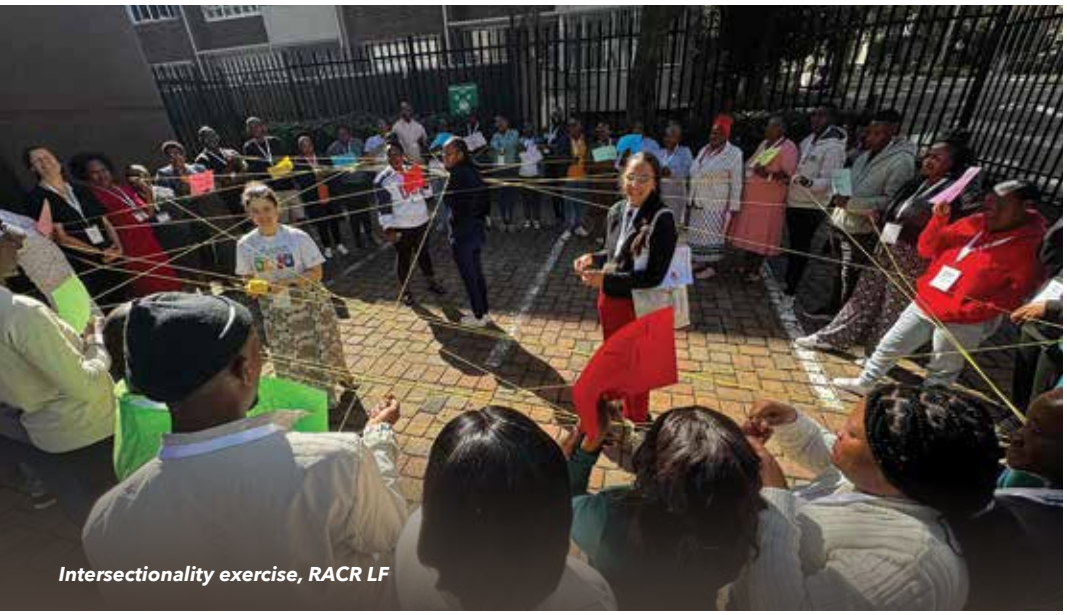
*Group work, RACR LF*




*RACR LF resource*



*Nomaxabiso Nesi, RACR LF*



*Intersectionality exercise, RACR LF*



*Ashley Green-Thompson & Francesa de Gasparis (SAFCEI), RACR LF*



*Uegene Mapotlo, Nathaniel Matlou, Asisithi Zihlangu, RACR LF*



*Claire Tapscott & Joanne Harding, RACR LF*




*RACR LF Publication*



*Seth Tladi, RACR LF*



*Rethabile Moeketsi, RACR LF*




*Indiphile Matini, RACR LF*



# RURAL ACTION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE REPORT

**Claire Tapscott, RACR Programme Coordinator**

**Claire Tapscott has led SCAT's Rural Action for Climate Resilience (RACR) programme since mid-2021. As Climate Change Programme Coordinator, she oversees implementation and supports collaboration across partners, strengthening community-led responses to climate change and engagement with local governance systems in rural South Africa.**

In 2025, SCAT's climate change programme deepened its focus on the relationship between community-led adaptation and local government systems. Work continued across five provinces, supporting community-based organisations to respond to climate impacts while strengthening their ability to engage municipal processes and influence service delivery outcomes.

The operating context continued to shape both implementation and engagement. Increasing climate variability, including flooding and prolonged dry periods, placed pressure on already fragile local systems. At the same time, delays in municipal planning cycles, constrained budgets, and limited accessibility of Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes affected consistent community engagement. These conditions reinforced that climate impacts in rural areas are experienced not only as environmental change, but through failures in basic services such as water, waste management, and infrastructure.

In response, SCAT supported organisations through a combination of grantmaking, learning processes and ongoing accompaniment. This included awarding Micro and Project Grants, facilitating Learning Festivals and targeted training on climate adaptation and municipal systems, conducting field visits, and providing continuing mentorship. Organisations were also supported to engage local government through practical tools such as letter writing, participation in IDP processes, and contributions to national policy submissions.

Within this context, ten Micro Grants of R10,000 each and four Project Grants of R100,000 each were awarded to support locally defined climate resilience initiatives. Across Micro Grant activities, 585 participants were reached directly, with additional indirect reach through wider community engagement. Women made up approximately 65% of participants and were strongly represented in leadership, while youth accounted for over 45% of participants.

More telling than participation numbers were the patterns in how these grants were used. Across sites, activities clustered around strengthening food production, improving water access and conservation, and building climate awareness through practical, hands-on learning. Food gardening remained the most consistent entry point, with projects supporting composting, mulching, seed and seedling

distribution, and small-scale agroecological production. In many cases, this extended beyond food security to include small income generation and knowledge sharing.

Water-related interventions were also prominent, reflecting pressure on both rainfall and municipal supply. Projects included simple rainwater harvesting systems, water conservation training, and soil practices aimed at retaining moisture. These activities highlighted how community-level adaptation is closely tied to gaps in basic service delivery.

A key learning across both grant types was that infrastructure alone does not produce resilience. Investments in water systems or garden infrastructure were only effective when integrated with the development of knowledge, management, and organisational capacity. Sites that combined these elements showed stronger outcomes, while others faced ongoing challenges with soil health, water access, and coordination.

Another emerging trend is the shift towards linking climate adaptation with livelihoods and social support functions. Gardens increasingly contribute not only to food security, but also to feeding programmes, support for vulnerable households, and small-scale income generation. This reflects growing recognition that climate resilience must engage with local economic realities.

These patterns reinforce a broader insight: resilience is driven by how different elements are combined at local level. Where soil improvement, water management and crop diversity were integrated, outcomes were more stable. In contrast, single-input interventions were less effective.

This made the link between adaptation and governance more visible. In 2025, organisations engaged more actively with local government. Following training on IDPs and municipal systems, 28 organisations drafted letters to municipalities, with six formally submitted. Others engaged through meetings and informal channels. All of this reflects growing confidence to navigate municipal systems.

A consistent pattern emerging from this work was that engagement was most effective when grounded in a specific, immediate issue. Advocacy linked to visible concerns such as dumping sites, water access, or electricity supply was more likely to receive a response, while general participation in IDP processes rarely led to meaningful engagement.

While some engagements resulted in improvements in waste management, water access, and infrastructure, these cases remained the exception rather than the norm. Most organisations reported limited or no response. Engagement continued to depend on individual relationships rather than predictable systems, reflecting broader constraints within local government, including limited capacity and weak accountability.

These dynamics point to a central insight: climate resilience is both a practical and a governance challenge. Community-led initiatives are essential, but the extent of their impact is shaped by the response capacity of local government systems,

which varies considerably across different contexts. The effects of climate change are experienced in their intersection with failures in service delivery, so both need to be addressed together.

In response, the programme is increasingly focused on strengthening the interface between communities and local government. This includes building practical skills for engagement, supporting participation in planning processes, and linking local experience to policy discussions. In 2025, this extended to national-level engagement, with RACR participants contributing to submissions on the review of the White Paper on Local Government and South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions.

Overall, the work in 2025 reflected a shift in how the RACR programme understands its role. Climate resilience is not achieved through isolated interventions, but through the alignment of practices, knowledge, infrastructure, and organisational capacity within a system shaped by local governance. The programme is increasingly focused on strengthening these connections, supporting organisations not only to respond to climate impacts, but to engage more effectively in shaping the systems that affect them.



***John Nzira (Ukuvuna) and SCAT staff with Sandsloot Youth Development Centre***



# SCAT-SUPPORTED FOOD GARDENS: STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABILITY AND LEARNING

Brigett Siphosethu Matomela, Programme Assistant

**Brigett Siphosethu Matomela is a qualified hydrogeologist. In 2025, she provided technical support for SCAT's water and food security initiatives, conducting hydrogeological assessments, overseeing borehole drilling, and leading sustainable water management workshops. Through these efforts, water access was enhanced, agricultural productivity improved, and communities were empowered with the skills to manage their water resources sustainably.**

## Nurturing Resilience Through Sustainable Food Systems

Food gardens continue to play an important role in SCAT's work to address food insecurity, poverty, and unemployment in rural communities. Through partnerships with community-based organisations (CBOs), SCAT supports initiatives that provide access to food while building longer-term community resilience.

SCAT-supported food gardens are largely community-driven, with women playing a central role in implementation and leadership. These gardens not only support feeding programmes for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, but also create opportunities for skills development, employment and local participation.

## Building On Experience: From Food Gardens To Sustainable Food Systems

Supporting community food gardens is not new to SCAT. Before 2022, several Eastern Cape CBOs had established food gardens with training and technical support from a local food garden specialist. Over time, however, the increasing impacts of climate change began to threaten the sustainability of many gardens. While some organisations, such as Kgatelopele Social Development Forum (KSDF), continued to demonstrate resilience and maintain productive gardens, it became clear that a different approach was needed to help communities adapt to changing conditions.

In response, SCAT strengthened its food security programme in 2022 by partnering with Ukuvuna Urban Farming and engaging permaculture and agroecology specialist John Nzira. This partnership introduced a more holistic approach to food production, with a focus on building healthy soils, conserving water, increasing biodiversity, and creating systems that are better able to withstand climate-related shocks. The emphasis shifted from growing food to cultivating resilient and sustainable food systems for the long term.

Since then, SCAT has embedded agroecological principles across its food security work through training, mentorship, and ongoing support to partner organisations. By promoting composting, mulching, crop diversification, and water-wise farming, the programme seeks to strengthen community food gardens' productivity and resilience while contributing to household food security, nutrition, and sustainable livelihoods.

With SCAT's support, many CBOs have expanded their focus beyond providing meals through feeding schemes to promoting longer-term food security and sustainability. While feeding programmes remain an important response to immediate needs, organisations are increasingly investing in community food gardens and local food production initiatives that enable households to access nutritious food more consistently. This shift reflects a growing recognition that addressing hunger requires not only food relief, but also building resilient and sustainable local food systems.

With an increasing emphasis on expanding gardens into backyard spaces, food gardens are being used to:

- **Improve household and community food security** through the provision of seedlings, training, and ongoing technical support to households and community gardeners.
- **Reduce reliance on external support** by strengthening households' capacity to produce food for their own consumption.
- **Support small-scale income generation** through the sale of surplus produce, with the income used to meet basic needs or reinvest in garden activities.

## Learning From Implementation: Strengthening Practice

In 2025, SCAT conducted field observations to better understand how permaculture practices were being applied across supported CBOs. These observations highlighted important gaps in the continuity and consistency of implementation.

While initial training provided a strong foundation, sustaining these practices over time proved to be a challenge for some organisations. For example, mulching, a key permaculture practice, was not consistently applied across sites. Misunderstandings were also observed – some participants believed that shade netting replaces the need for mulching.

Despite these gaps, there are strong examples of what is possible. Gardens such as the one at Blood River Advice Office demonstrate consistent application of permaculture principles and serve as important learning sites within SCAT's network.

In response, SCAT has initiated a research process to understand the factors influencing permaculture adoption and implementation, and to strengthen its approach to training and support. Several key learnings will inform SCAT's approach going forward:

- Sustained implementation requires more than one-off training.
- There is a gap between knowledge transfer and practical application.
- Ongoing mentorship and follow-up support are critical.
- Strong leadership and ownership improve consistency.
- Peer learning between CBOs can strengthen implementation.

In response, SCAT will:

- Strengthen follow-up support through regular engagement and mentorship.
- Introduce refresher and advanced training sessions.
- Promote peer learning through well-performing sites.
- Support the development of local champions.
- Improve training design to focus on practical understanding.
- Ensure access to basic tools and resources.

## Looking Ahead

Climate-related shocks continue to pose a significant challenge to food garden sustainability. In the past year, severe flooding in parts of Limpopo led to the destruction of several garden sites and many CBOs were forced to rebuild their gardens from scratch.

Such events highlight the vulnerability of community-led initiatives to climate extremes and reinforce the importance of strengthening climate-resilient practices and infrastructure. SCAT is thus placing greater emphasis on water management systems, soil restoration practices, and garden designs that are better able to withstand environmental shocks.

SCAT recognises that community food gardens remain an important entry point for addressing food insecurity. They also create opportunities for dignity, participation, and long-term community development.



*Brigett Matomela & Deborah Nkompela at CARE Alicedale*

# YOUNG PEOPLE CAN BE POWERFUL CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

**Indiphile Matini, Programme Assistant & Thembi Tshongoyi, Programme Assistant**



**Indiphile Matini (they/them) coordinates the Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change (YACC) Programme. This forms part of the Rural Action for Climate Resilience (RACR) Programme, in which Indiphile has been involved since 2022. Indiphile is also enrolled in the DG Murray Trust (DGMT) Innovation Fellowship, focusing on how to improve youth development practices within SCAT and SCAT's rural partners.**



**Thembi Tshongoyi joined SCAT as a Programmes Intern in 2023. As of 2024, she works as the Programmes Assistant and Youth Ambassador for Accountability (YAfA) Coordinator in the Strengthening Action Against Corruption (SAAC) Project. This initiative educates and equips Eastern Cape-based LDAs to hold local government accountable. Thembi oversees a team of 10 young people who serve as Accountability Champions in their communities.**

Young people in South Africa, particularly those in rural communities, remain one of the most vulnerable groups. Faced with limited skills development opportunities, high unemployment rates, and few opportunities to participate in decision-making that impacts them, there is a strong need for youth to mobilise and participate in actions that contribute to building a sustainable future – one which they will inherit.

Through the YouthBank Programme, SCAT has instilled a sense of entrepreneurship and philanthropy in youth from the rural communities where we operate. However, this model was not effective in the South African context and required reshaping for youth participation to be authentic and more visible throughout our programmes. Youth-led and -focused programmes like the Youth Ambassadors for Accountability (YAfA) and the Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change (YACC) were thus introduced within the Strengthening Action Against Corruption (SAAC) and Rural Action for Climate Resilience (RACR) Programmes. To further ensure these programmes' effective implementation and create new pathways for integrating youth development in SCAT's strategy, two young SCAT staff members participated in the DGMT Innovation Fellowship.

An important aspect of the YAfA and YACC Programmes is recognising and addressing the practical barriers that often prevent young people from participating in civic and community processes. For many young people in rural communities, costs such as transport, mobile data, and communication can be a significant obstacle to engagement. To support meaningful participation, youth ambassadors receive a stipend that allows them to participate consistently in activities, training, advocacy, and community engagement efforts.

## Youth Ambassadors for Accountability (YAfA)

The 2024 SAAC Corruption Buster Bootcamp, where the YAfA Programme was launched, marked an important moment in youth engagement. This initiative was designed to empower young people as active agents in promoting accountability, transparency, and ethical governance in their communities. Recognising that corruption deeply affects young people, who face unemployment, inequality, and declining trust in public institutions, the Programme aims to equip them with the knowledge, confidence, and platforms to drive change from the ground up.

Since its inception, the YAfA Programme has developed into a network of young leaders promoting integrity across South Africa's rural and urban communities. In collaboration with SCAT-supported Local Development Agencies (LDAs), the YAfAs developed action plans to guide their advocacy work. Two capacity building trainings in April and September 2025 focused on strengthening skills in social media engagement, storytelling, and advocacy, including a session facilitated by Equal Education. Tablets were provided to support digital storytelling and improve their work's visibility. Their leadership and confidence were evident during the second Corruption Buster Bootcamp in May, where they presented their achievements and lessons learned, reinforcing the role of young people as active drivers of ethical and transparent governance.

The YAfAs carried out a range of activities to raise awareness about the impact of corruption, particularly on unemployed and job-seeking youth. Through workshops, community dialogues, and school visits, they addressed issues such as nepotism, bribery, and lack of transparency, helping young people understand how corruption affects their daily lives.

Following the second Bootcamp, there was a clear shift towards structured, school-based engagements aligned with their host organisations' programmes, which reduced costs and reached more young people. By working in schools, YAfAs promoted peer learning, strengthened youth leadership, and encouraged learners to see themselves as active citizens who can demand accountability. They also organised community activities such as peaceful marches and door-to-door and social media awareness campaigns to promote transparency and community participation. These efforts contributed to building a stronger culture of accountability, social cohesion, and responsible leadership among young people in their communities.

To date, the YAfAs have reached more than 3,042 young people. Each ambassador leads at least two local activities per cycle, such as peer learning circles, school dialogues, door-to-door campaigns, and sports tournaments. These platforms have opened conversations about the everyday realities of corruption and its impact on education, employment, and service delivery, while promoting a sense of shared responsibility and collective action.

## Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change (YACC)

Parallel to the YAfA initiative, SCAT deepened its youth focus through the YACC Programme, established under the RACR Programme. YACC emerged in response to the unique vulnerabilities faced by young people in rural areas, such as limited access to opportunities, fewer skills development programmes, and growing exposure to climate shocks. The Programme aims to build a generation of youth leaders who not only understand climate change, but also mobilise their communities toward sustainable, climate-resilient practices.

Through interactive training sessions, the YACCs were equipped with knowledge and tools to engage in climate advocacy using creative and accessible methods. Workshops introduced innovative approaches such as storytelling, art, social media, and even sport as vehicles for climate education. A storytelling guide was developed to help the ambassadors craft and document impact stories from their communities, enhancing their communication and advocacy skills.

YACCs have since reached over 1,435 learners in 13 schools across the Eastern Cape, Free State, and Limpopo. By forming relationships with teachers, principals and Community and Extended Public Works Programme workers, the youth ambassadors have integrated climate education into classroom sessions, facilitated quizzes, and initiated school gardening programmes. These gardens not only teach practical sustainability, but also connect environmental stewardship to food security and community well-being and resilience. In Limpopo, young farmers supported the initiative by demonstrating climate-adaptive farming techniques, showing peers how to respond to changing weather patterns and soil conditions. The YACCs also engaged broader community groups, including women who sustain their families through gardening. Through these dialogues, the ambassadors distributed seedlings, shared knowledge, and fostered community-driven climate solutions. Despite initial challenges with gaining access to schools and limited engagement time, the ambassadors' persistence and the LDAs' support ensured the initiative's continuation and growth.

The enthusiasm with which the 2024 and 2025 YACC cohorts approached their work is worth noting. Young people have used the skills they acquired as well as their own talents to build relationships with stakeholders working towards improving the livelihoods of rural communities. When given the tools to build together with other young people, the YACCs demonstrated that the youth do have the ability to engage on topics like climate change and corruption without being infantilised or having their views disregarded.

The YACC and YAfA Programmes have built on what was learned from SCAT's YouthBank Programme and from listening to the young people's expressed needs. The Programmes have supported them to exercise leadership through co-creating processes that give them opportunities to demonstrate leadership.

Together, the YAfA and YACC Programmes illustrate how youth leadership can cut across themes of governance and sustainability, linking accountability with climate justice. Both initiatives prove that when young people are trusted with responsibility, trained in practical skills, and supported by strong networks, they become powerful catalysts for change.



*GBV workshop*



*Permaculture training with Ukuvuna*



*Repairing the shade cloth at Bloodriver Advice Office*




*YAfA cohort two, East London*



*Foodgarden at Bloodriver Advice Office*



*DOS session, Johannesburg*

# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS IN LIMPOPO

Seth Tladi and Claire Tapscott

In Limpopo, community-based organisations (CBOs) play a vital role in responding to rural poverty, exclusion and underdevelopment. Many provide first line support to people most at risk of being left behind. They care for older persons, support people with disabilities, create opportunities for youth, and respond to households' and communities' practical needs. Their quiet, local work is essential to the communities' social fabric.

SCAT's work in Limpopo is rooted in the understanding that community organisations do not become strong through funding alone. They need reliable systems, accountable governance, practical tools, committed leadership, and long-term accompaniment. Through capacity development and grant-making, SCAT and its partners have capacitated 24 CBOs across Limpopo, contributing to stronger local institutions and more reliable community-based services.

This work began through the CBO Capacity Development Project in the Mogalakwena Municipality, where 10 CBOs were supported to strengthen governance, management systems, and programme implementation capacity. SCAT also facilitated accredited business skills training for 10 young people affiliated with these organisations, linking organisational development to youth livelihood opportunities.

This was followed by the Community Grants Project, funded by Valterra Platinum, which supported five CBOs in the Blouberg, Musina and Thabazimbi Municipalities. The project responded to gaps identified through an organisational review by providing governance training, infrastructure improvements, IT equipment and restructuring. These interventions helped CBOs strengthen accountability, improve communication, involve junior staff more meaningfully in leadership, and create better conditions for service delivery.

A further phase, the CBO Strengthening Project, focused on a different group of five CBOs in the Mogalakwena Municipality recommended to Valterra Platinum by the Department of Social Development because of their work with older persons and other vulnerable groups:

- Mogalakwena Active Ageing Centre, Mahwelereng
- Reholegile Centre for the Elderly, Mapela Village
- Maphaganeng Centre for the Elderly, Ga Molekane Village
- Masungulu Centre for the Elderly, Mapela Village
- Mokopane Society for the Blind, Masodi Village

Implemented in partnership with Synergy Global Consulting, the project included a baseline assessment and ongoing capacity building support. The baseline assessment established a clear picture of each organisation's capacity, operational challenges and support needs. It confirmed the importance of practical support in fundraising, financial management, digital literacy, governance, leadership, human resource management, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The need for simple M&E tools for tracking organisational stability, progress and growth in ways that are useful to their own work was highlighted.

A recent project assessment revealed encouraging signs of organisational growth. Several CBOs demonstrated improved governance capacity, including a clearer understanding of management and board roles, better filing of board minutes, and a stronger commitment to avoiding unnecessary expenditure. Three CBOs can now be classified as developing, while one is showing signs of becoming an established LDA in terms of SCAT's CBO development model.

Financial systems have also improved. All participating CBOs have transitioned to electronic banking and established independent accounts for operational grants, including Masungulu Centre for the Elderly, which had significant financial challenges. Grant funding has also translated into practical improvements in service delivery. Mogalakwena Active Ageing Centre has made progress with land acquisition, while Mokopane Society for the Blind has hired additional staff for its farm and completed important infrastructure improvements.

The assessment showed that continued support is needed, particularly in financial sustainability and M&E, which remain central to the organisations' long-term resilience and effectiveness.

Mokopane Society for the Blind provides one of the most promising examples from the project. Using recycled egg cartons, the organisation produces household items like calabashes, plates, and dishes, which are decorated with beads and seeds, creating distinctive handmade products that are sold as part of the organisation's income-generation strategy.

This initiative shows how creativity, environmental awareness and local enterprise can come together in practical ways, and illustrates the role CBOs can play in the green economy, bringing together recycling, income generation and community-based livelihoods. With further support in product development, market access, business planning and positioning, this work has the potential to grow into a stronger community-based enterprise.

SCAT's work in Limpopo has deepened our understanding of the Province's context and of the CBOs working to address social and development challenges. It demonstrates that when CBOs receive the right support, they are better able to serve, adapt and lead change from within their own communities. This experience has also reinforced a central lesson of SCAT's broader work: rural community organisations are not simply service providers. They are trusted local institutions that hold relationships, knowledge and memory.



*Joanne Harding, RACR publication launch*


*Phumla Gojela, SAAC bootcamp*


*Gwen Mvula, SCAT trustee, SAAC bootcamp*


*DOS at concort*


*WiL graduation, Goedgedacht*



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2025

## Hishaam Nordien, Finance Manager

SCAT remained financially stable and resilient during 2025, despite a more constrained funding environment and lower investment income compared to the previous year. Through prudent financial management, careful expenditure control, and continued growth in its investment portfolio, the organisation was able to sustain its programme commitments while strengthening its overall financial position.

## Income and expenditure

SCAT generated total revenue of **R44.17 million in 2025**, compared to R60.37 million in 2024. The decrease was primarily attributable to lower donor funding resulting from funded projects ending in 2025 and reduced dividend income from investments following the exceptionally strong investment returns experienced in 2024.

Funder income amounted to **R38.14 million** (2024: R47.81 million), reflecting changes in donor funding levels during the year. Other income totalled **R6.02 million** (2024: R12.55 million) and included dividend revenue of R3.68 million, interest income of R2.00 million, rental income of R139,973, and sundry income of R203,670.

Total expenditure for the year was **R44.21 million** (2024: R48.68 million). Expenditure remained closely aligned with available resources, enabling SCAT to maintain its programme activities while exercising financial discipline. Operating expenses decreased slightly to R27.81 million (2024: R28.81 million).

Programme delivery remained the heart of SCAT's work. During the year, **R18.46 million** was invested in capacity-building initiatives and **R16.4 million** was distributed through grantmaking programmes. Core grants remained the largest component of grant expenditure at R10.42 million, supporting community-based organisations across SCAT's areas of operation. Additional resources were directed towards youth development, food security initiatives, climate change projects, connectivity support, equipment grants, and other strategic interventions.

In addition to operating activities, SCAT recorded **fair value gains on investments of R7.25 million** (2024: R11.63 million). These gains contributed significantly to the organisation's financial performance and resulted in a **total surplus of R7.2 million** for the year.

## Statement of Financial Position

SCAT's financial position strengthened further during 2025, with **total assets increasing to R146.29 million** (2024: R137.47 million).

Non-current assets grew to **R106.77 million** (2024: R96.57 million), driven primarily by growth in the value of the organisation's investment portfolio, which increased to **R101.29 million**. These investments continued to play a critical role in supporting SCAT's long-term sustainability strategy and generating income that can be reinvested in programme activities.

Current assets amounted to **R39.52 million** (2024: R40.90 million), including **R37.77 million in cash and cash equivalents**. While cash balances decreased slightly during the year, liquidity remained strong and sufficient to meet operational and programme commitments.

Total funds and reserves increased to **R120.04 million** (2024: R112.83 million), reflecting the surplus generated during the year and positive investment performance.

The organisation's reserves comprise:

- **Share Revaluation Reserve:** R75.62 million (2024: R68.37 million)
- **Sustainability Fund:** R44.42 million (2024: R44.46 million)

The continued growth of these reserves enhances SCAT's ability to manage future funding uncertainties while maintaining support for its mission and strategic objectives.

Current liabilities increased modestly to **R26.24 million** (2024: R24.64 million), largely due to income received in advance of programme implementation. This reflects donor confidence and funding commitments that will support activities in future periods.

## Sustainability Outlook

SCAT entered 2026 with a strong balance sheet, substantial reserves, and a well-diversified investment portfolio. While donor income declined during 2025, the organisation successfully aligned expenditure with available resources and continued to generate positive returns from its investments.

The growth in reserves, combined with significant cash holdings and investment assets, provides a solid foundation for future operations. SCAT remains committed to prudent financial stewardship, responsible management of donor resources, and the strategic use of its sustainability reserves to strengthen community organisations and support long-term development outcomes.

Despite ongoing uncertainties in the funding environment, SCAT is well positioned to continue delivering on its mission while safeguarding its financial sustainability for the foreseeable future.

# SCAT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

## Year ending 31st December 2025

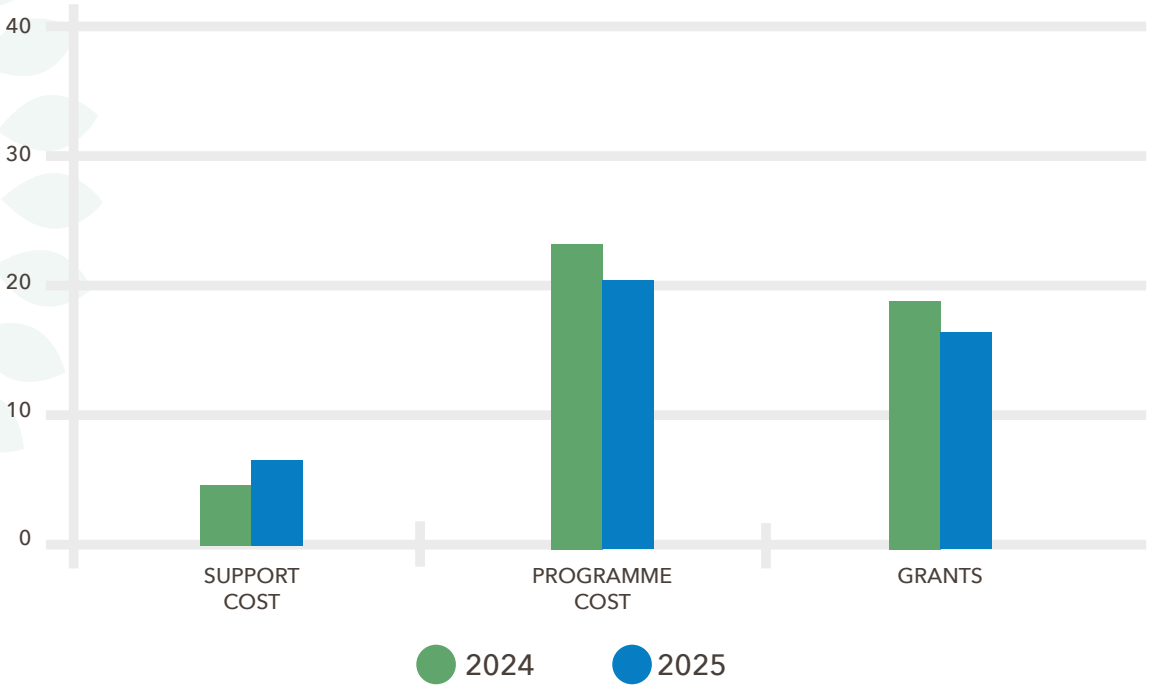
## Detailed Income Statement

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| **Revenue** | **44,170,465** | **60,365,156** |
| Funder income | 38,143,570 | 47,811,456 |
| | | |
| **Other Income** | **6,026,895** | **12,553,700** |
| Dividend revenue | 3,679,708 | 9,614,929 |
| Interest received | 2,003,544 | 2,739,125 |
| Rental received | 139,973 | 137,835 |
| Sundry income | 203,670 | 61,811 |
| | | |
| **Expenditure** | **44,210,263** | **48,681,937** |
| **Operating Expenses** | **27,813,019** | **28,814,606** |
| Governance, communications & finance | 5,481,090 | 4,472,583 |
| Programme costs | 3,868,523 | 3,736,225 |
| Capacity building | 18,463,406 | 20,605,798 |
| | | |
| **Grantmaking** | **16,397,244** | **19,867,330** |
| Core Grants | 10,416,390 | 10,212,400 |
| Development Fund for Training | 300,986 | 270,665 |
| Fundraising Incentive Scheme | 316,435 | 119,024 |
| LDA Connectivity | 94,000 | 91,047 |
| Climate Change Grants | 550,000 | 768,000 |
| Youth Grants | 376,386 | 93,000 |
| Food Security Projects | 1,119,483 | 286,000 |
| Equipment | 414,448 | 99,360 |
| Special Project Grants | 2,809,116 | 7,927,834 |
| | | |
| Other Income | | |
| Fair Value Movements - Investments | 7,248,668 | 11,631,106 |
| | | |
| **Surplus/(Deficit) for the period** | **7,208,870** | **23,314,325** |

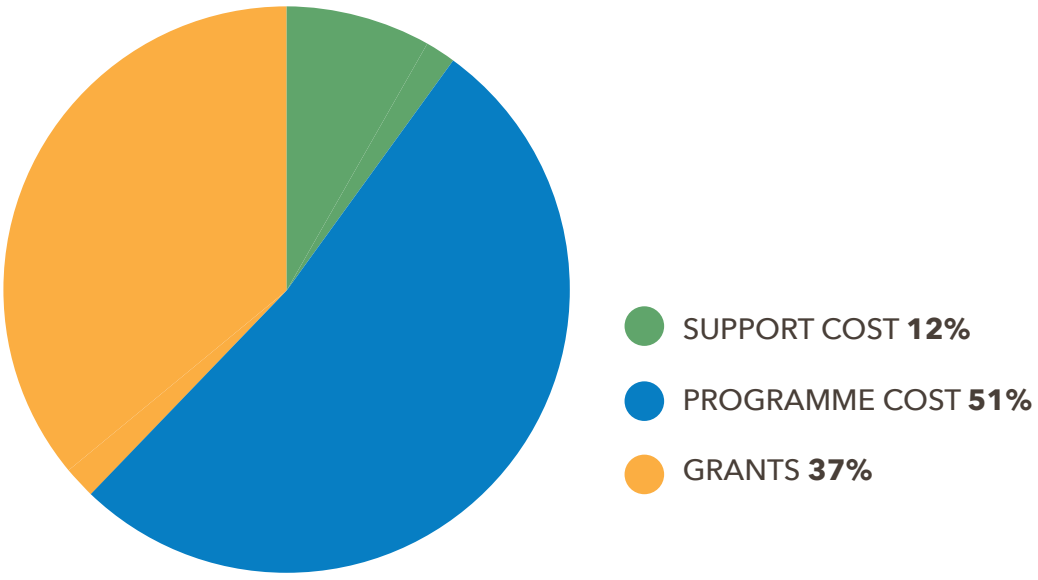
# Statement of Financial Position

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| **Assets** | | |
| **Non-Current Assets** | **106,765,722** | **96,573,551** |
| Property, plant & equipment | 5,476,351 | 5,588,584 |
| Other financial assets | 101,289,371 | 90,984,967 |
| **Current Assets** | **39,521,022** | **40,895,162** |
| Trade & other receivables | 1,750,751 | 993,349 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 37,770,271 | 39,901,813 |
| **Total Assets** | **146,286,744** | **137,468,713** |
| **Funds and Liabilities** | | |
| **Funds** | **120,042,298** | **112,833,429** |
| Share Revaluation Reserve | 75,622,833 | 68,374,165 |
| Sustainability Fund | 44,419,465 | 44,459,264 |
| **Liabilities** | | |
| **Current Liabilities** | **26,244,446** | **24,635,284** |
| Provisions | 1,062,563 | 826,375 |
| Trade & other payables | 1,542,868 | 981,766 |
| Income received in advance | 23,639,015 | 22,827,143 |
| **Total Funds & Liabilities** | **146,286,744** | **137,468,713** |

## SCAT EXPENDITURE 2024/2025




## OPERATING EXPENSES 2025



# SCAT TRUSTEES



Lorenzo Wakefield
**Chairperson of the Board of Trustees**



Deena Bosch
**Trustee, Programmes Committee Chairperson**



Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka
**Trustee, Finance Committee**



Senzosihle Mavune-Mapisha
**Trustee, Finance Commitee**



Rev Gwen Mvula
**Trustee, Programmes and Finance Committee**



Valerie Jonathan
**Trustee, Finance Committee**

# SCAT TEAM



Hishaam Nordien
**Finance Manager**



Dr Joanne Harding
**Executive Director**



Seth Tladi
**Programmes Director**



Vuyo Msizi
**Senior Programme Officer**



Nokukhanya Mchunu
**Programme Manager**



Jonathan Walton
**SAAC Programme Coordinator**



Colleen Alexander-Julies
**Senior Programme Officer**



Claire Tapscott
**RACR Programme Coordinator**



Nosimilo Filita
**Finance Administrator**



Kathleho Ramafalo
**Programme Officer (until July 2025)**



Abigail Steedsman
**Administrator**



Kholofelo Kate Kolotsi
**Programme Officer**



Brigett Siphosethu Matomela
**Programme Assistant**



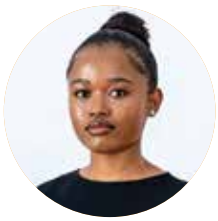
Nicole Ross
**Executive Assistant**



Ngesipho Sifanelo
**Bookkeeper**



Anastacia Pila
**Data Officer**



Aphile Madela
**Intern**



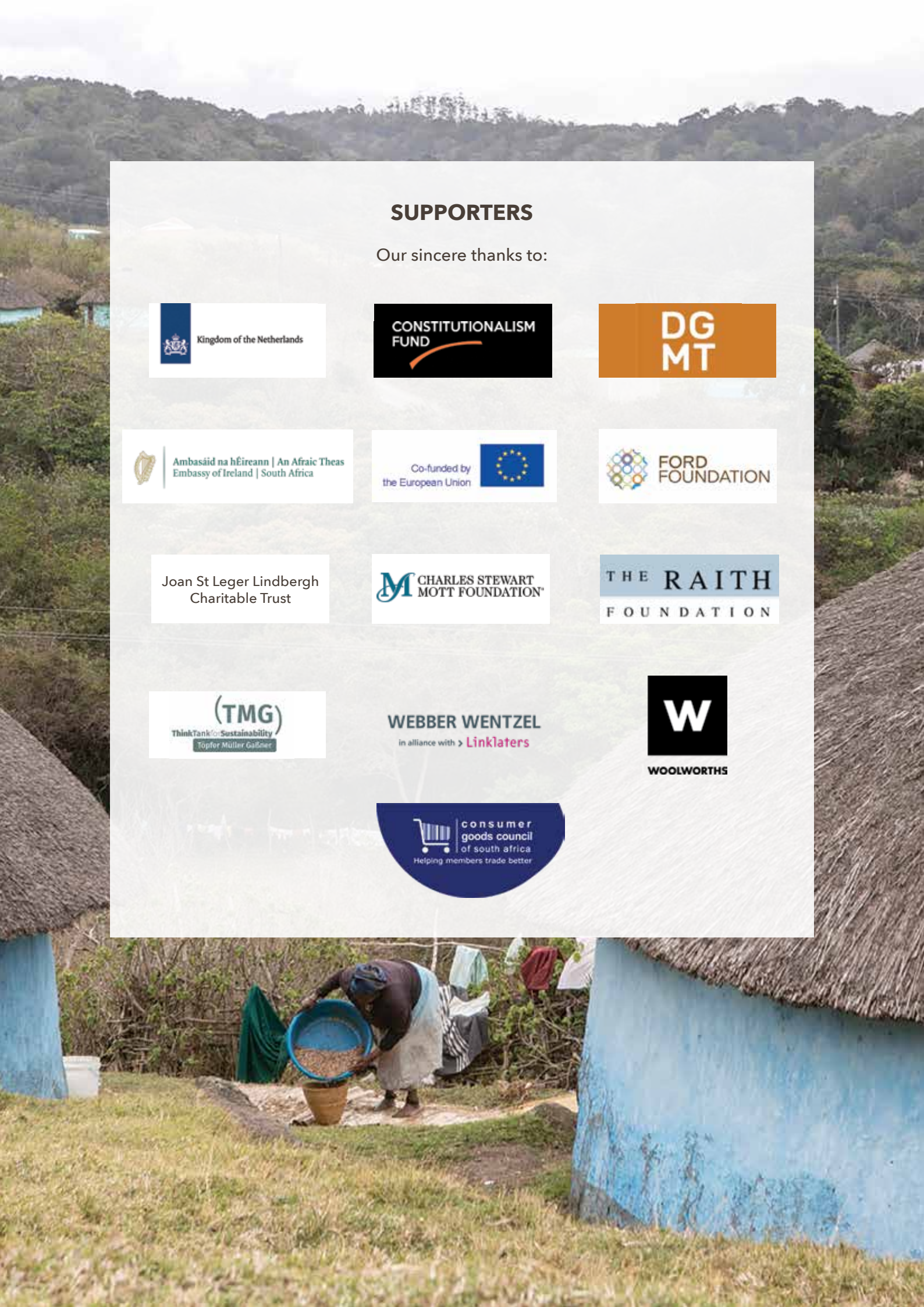
Indiphile Matini
**Programme Assistant**



Thembi Tshongoyi
**Programme Assistant**



Thandi Hogana
**Housekeeper**



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**Banker:** Nedbank

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