



ACAT Annual Report

2020





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Please consult the table below for abbreviations used in this report:

CEO	Community Extension Officer
CF	Children's Facilitator
COP	Causes of Poverty
CV	Community Volunteer
CVC	Community Volunteer Coordinator
EDP	Entrepreneurial Development Programme
EO / EC	Extension Officer /Extension Co-ordinator
FG	Farmer Group
G5	Group of 5
HBC	Home Based Care
HFS	Household Food Security
IGA	Income generating activity
ILP	Integrated Livelihood Programme
SAP	Sustainable Agriculture Programme
SLG	Savings and Loans Group
ZF	Zone Facilitator
ZIC	Zone Implementation Committee
ZSIC	Zone Savings and Implementing Committee

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





Chairman's Report

"The year that changed its mind"..... this is how some have described 2020! We have certainly seen unexpected and unsettling changes in every aspect of our daily lives. Our nation, together with the rest of the world, has had to make radical changes since the coronavirus arrived, and it is doubtful whether we will ever return to life as we knew it. Hunger and poverty quickly became the overriding concern in South Africa, as our already ailing economy buckled under the stringent and protracted lockdown, imposed in an effort to slow the spread of Covid-19 infections, and to prevent the healthcare system from being overwhelmed.

The Covid-19 pandemic produced a variety of reactions, ranging from denial that the virus even existed, to extreme and oppressive anxiety as people saw loved ones die, and others saw their livelihoods destroyed. Over 3 million jobs were lost in the formal sector, with a disastrous cascading impact on the families and dependants of these breadwinners. According to StatsSA, the unemployment rate is now 30,8% - the highest it has been since the 2008 financial crisis. The rural economy suffered as revenue streams dried up, and customers of local enterprises lost their buying power.

However, this dark cloud has a silver lining! Symbolically and typically, the ACAT Programme brought hope and help to those who most needed it in the rural communities of Kwazulu-Natal. Early in the lockdown, in response to an unprecedented demand for vegetable seedlings when people were unable to leave their homes, ACAT was able to issue "Essential Service" permits to our eight Extension Co-ordinators (ECs). This enabled each EC to collect and deliver seeds and vegetable seedlings to our Programme participants, and also to non-participants. Furthermore, people saw how participants of the ACAT Programme

had a source of home-grown food when food was scarce in other homesteads. Community members were desperate to buy vegetables and seedlings from ACAT Group members. The result was a dramatic increase in demand for, and interest in, the ACAT Programme and the training it offers. Of course, these aspirant trainees were not able to attend a Basic Life Skills course at the Centre, but some are among those who have been trained in the communities by the Extension Teams.

During the lockdown period, 269,297 vegetable seedlings were delivered to G5 members and non-G5 member homesteads, as were 13,410kg of seed potatoes, 25 fruit trees, and many other kinds of seeds. This contributed significantly to food security for these households, and also brought the benefit of income generation to these households as some surplus produce could be sold.

This crisis has highlighted the relevance of the Integrated Livelihoods Programme. It has enabled disadvantaged rural families to provide themselves with food to sustain themselves, and also to provide much-needed income. Despite the devastation wrought by the Covid pandemic

and lockdown, we are pleased to report on some of the positive results achieved in 2020.

It is perhaps helpful for the first-time reader to understand that the work of ACAT is implemented through its vision and mission. ACAT's **VISION** is *'to be an instrument in God's hand in the transformation of the poor people of Africa from their spiritual, mental and physical poverty into a sustainable lifestyle, which is God-centred and people orientated'*. Our **MISSION** is *'to design and implement training and mentoring programmes aimed at equipping people to be sustainable in every aspect of their lives, and to influence, motivate and assist others to achieve the same'*.

This mission is implemented through the programmes of sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship, partnerships, and training. At the core of these programmes, and essential for the sustainability of these interventions, is the redemptive plan and work of God through Jesus. Since ACAT was founded in 1979, it has continued to equip and enable its beneficiaries to improve their livelihoods, and to begin their journey out of poverty. The specialised focus areas of these programmes include low cost food production, using sustainable production methods, and the generation of much needed additional income through training in basic business practices. Further, the Programme envisions and enables partners to implement their own respective initiatives to address poverty, and provides, through relevant training, mentoring and educational materials, the means for them to increase their capacity and sustainability.

In KwaZulu-Natal, 215 new families joined the Sustainable Agriculture Programme in 2020. Between them, these families started 428 new food gardens, and in addition, children of these families started a further 178 new food gardens. Since this programme started in 2000, ACAT has trained and mentored 17,007 small household farmers. These farmers have benefitted from improvements in soil fertility, crop yields, health, income, productivity, self-esteem, and some have been assisted with the purchase of water storage tanks and/or fencing materials. In addition, these small farmers started 243 new income generating activities, while children of these families started 178 income generating activities during the past year.

Similarly, 290 families joined the Entrepreneurial Development Programme, while 409 new income generating activities were started during the year. In addition, children of these families started 216 income generating activities. Since the programme started, ACAT has trained 15,063 entrepreneurs to start and run their enterprises. Furthermore, these entrepreneurs started 387 of their own small homestead food gardens in 2020, with a further 218 started by children of these families.

A variety of activities are planned and implemented each year to provide training and mentoring in each of the learning areas making up the Integrated Livelihoods programme. In 2020, these were severely restricted by



the Covid pandemic and lockdown. For example, only 6 week-long training courses could be held at the ACAT Centre in KwaZulu-Natal. This training was followed up by 1,197 one day field training workshops, 3,596 mentoring field visits, and 179 exchange visits, where participants learned from each other. In addition 4,921 people benefitted from appropriate information on HIV and AIDS and how to manage it. Only 2 "Asilimeni" (*let us farm*) days could be held prior to the lockdown. The purpose of these days is to promote the different elements of ACAT's Programme (i.e. food security, economic activities, spiritual development, and other disciplines) to members of the wider community (including adults, youth and children) who are not necessarily part of the programme.

Community Volunteers (CVs) are trained in a series of courses, held over a period of 2 years. The objective of this training is to build sustainability by equipping communities with trained and skilled people from amongst their own ranks, who are willing to train and mentor others. Through conducting extension visits, workshops, cross visits and Asilimeni days, 169 CVs were active in assisting their communities this past year in KwaZulu-Natal. Most (70-80%) of the CVs remain in the Programme from year to year. Although it is a loss to the programme when a CV leaves, the positive aspect is that they often do so as a result of finding permanent employment due to their knowledge and skills gained through their involvement in the ACAT Programme. In this context, ACAT has assisted in addressing unemployment.

Each of ACAT's programmes includes training and coaching in health, nutrition, HIV and AIDS, savings and loans, record keeping, mobilizing communities into groups, spiritual regeneration and growth, advocacy, and how to lead, manage and administrate a development programme. The purpose of including all these learning areas is to enable the beneficiaries to achieve sustainability.

The inclusion of the Savings and Loans scheme adds further value to each of the programmes. Instead of people depending on external loans, ACAT has developed, promoted and taught a wealth-building savings and loans scheme, which enables communities to generate and self-fund the finance needed for starting or growing income generating activities, as well as to save for and purchase assets such as water tanks and fencing for their food gardens

There are now 137 functioning Savings and Loans Groups (SLGs) in the Programme, with a total membership of 1,590 and a total amount saved of R4,525,756. There continues to be a steady growth in the amount saved from one reporting period to the next. These savings are typically used for the purchase of fencing materials, rainwater storage tanks, home improvements, and to start or grow income generating activities.

Over 170 training manuals have over the years been developed by ACAT for our various target groups. These learning materials cover various hard and soft skills, HIV and health, spiritual development, Sunday School teaching for children and teachers, literacy, numeracy, applied agriculture, agriculture technology, food and textile technology, business management, entrepreneurship, and the administrative, management and governance skills required to run an organization, programme or project with excellence. Where required, some of these manuals have been updated and improved. These manuals have also been made available to other development organizations, churches and partners, thereby expanding ACAT's impact.

ACAT's Partnership Programme was officially started over 11 years ago. This was done in order to respond to requests for assistance in addressing the poverty of people living in areas where ACAT does not operate. Since then it has grown in its strategies, scale and impact. In 2020, only one such course could be held prior to the



Covid restrictions – this was a Pastor's Course, attended by 41 pastors from the communities in which ACAT's Programme operates. Learning areas in this course include food production, enterprise development, Sunday school teaching, some of the skills church leaders need to improve their churches' effectiveness in implementing the Great Commission given by Jesus. Participants and people who benefitted from Bibles and Resources in 2020 represented 8 organizations, 66 local churches and 4 countries. To date, some of the course manuals have been translated into ten languages namely English, Zulu, French, Kirundi, Creole, Chichewa, Shona, Spanish, Bemba and Amharic.

We estimate that, in 2020, 3,675 NEW family members benefitted directly and indirectly from ACAT's programme activities in KwaZulu-Natal. Since ACAT's inception in 1979, we estimate the total number of direct and indirect family beneficiaries to be over 1,473,675 people. In addition to this, based on reports received from partners, thousands of family members have been impacted spiritually, mentally, materially and physically through ACAT's partners in numerous countries in Africa and beyond.

ACAT also records information each year on the qualitative impact of the work done. Evidence of improved livelihoods of individuals and families is provided by way of verifiable testimonies, together with photographs. Benefits that are more difficult to capture in photographic form include the benefits of receiving HIV and AIDS knowledge, experiencing spiritual transformation and having family relationships restored. The authenticity of these cases is confirmed through, amongst other things, various external evaluations commissioned by some of ACAT's funders.

We can therefore say that, even in the difficult circumstances encountered in 2020, the ACAT work has been used by God to bring about significant change and transformation in the lives of families and individuals who have participated in the Programme. God has also used the support of prayer partners, funders, board members, staff, community volunteers and partners throughout the world in achieving the above outcomes – we are grateful to all of you! All honour, praise and thanks are due to God, who has once again intervened, through the ACAT programmes, to impact the target group in significant and sustainable ways. It is He who has, in 2020 as in previous years, faithfully provided the resources that have enabled ACAT to play its part in achieving the results described in this report.

Dr S Radebe
Chairman



CENTRAL SERVICES

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the support services provided to the ACAT Programmes (i.e. Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP), Partnership Programme (PP), and the Education and Training Programme (ETP)) by the Centre-based staff. The specialized services of governance, strategic management, Centre training, fund raising and administration, which are essential to any organization, were provided in 2020 from our centrally based training Centre, which is located approximately 60km from Pietermaritzburg. While some services were limited in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic and lockdown, other NEW support services were provided to our Extension staff as a result of the Covid restrictions.

Administration

The purpose and function of administration is so often overlooked or neglected, which in many cases is due to a lack of awareness of its value or a dislike of the activities linked to this function. Some of these activities include procurement, various computing processes, secretarial support, important reception services and general office duties. The value of this function proved its worth during this Covid pandemic. Very soon after the lockdown was imposed, ACAT issued each of our Extension Co-ordinators (ECs) with an Essential Services Permit, which allowed them to travel to seedling nurseries to collect and deliver vegetable seedlings for Programme participants and other members of the community. During 2020, 269,297 seedlings of various kinds were procured, plus 13,410kg of seed potatoes, 25 fruit trees, 260kg maize seed, and numerous other seeds for field and garden crops. Also a "first" in 2020 has been facilitating the supply of numerous items of protective equipment, sanitizers, etc, that are required in order to keep our staff safe. Staff

living on site were kept busy with the many tasks needed to ensure that the Centre was Covid-compliant.

Another new administrative activity in 2020 has been the transporting of our Centre-based staff to and from work each day, since the local public transport operators are, for the most part, non-Covid-compliant, and therefore pose a risk for passengers.

In the field, since movement was restricted, Extension Teams could not make their usual homestead visits to follow up on, assist and encourage Group members. ACAT therefore put in place a system for monthly topping up of airtime for each EC, Community Extension Officer (CEO) and Zone Facilitator (ZF), enabling them to maintain regular contact with Programme participants.

Throughout the lockdown period, there was frequent contact with donors. Our contract funders showed

genuine concern for ACAT and its target communities, and some were very quick to raise additional funding to help cover some of the significant expenses incurred in achieving compliance and protecting our human resources from the coronavirus.

The Basic Life Skills courses took place in the communities between October and December, attended by 300 trainees representing 60 Groups of 5. This required a great deal of planning, procurement and distribution of materials and equipment to the extension Teams in each area.

Strategic Management and Human Resource Services (SMS)

Overall day-to-day Leadership of ACAT

Strategic Management Services did not deviate from its existing focus areas, which continued in this period to provide leadership and direction in terms of:

- Managing the daily affairs of ACAT through the Leadership Forum activities – agendas, minutes, and follow-up action specifically aimed at the monitoring of the ACAT programmes and the Centre.
- Addressing any problems that emerge in terms of programme implementation as well as managing any adjustments that are necessary to improve the programme. This included leading the staff and the organization through this challenging Covid season.
- Implementing and monitoring the Partnership Programme with all its related activities. Once lockdown was imposed in March, these activities were limited.
- Increasing the capacity of staff by organising and facilitating staff workshops, of which 3 were held in 2020.
- The day-to-day financial management of donor funds, income generating activities, investments, retirement funds and medical aids.
- Implementing Board and Board sub-committee decisions.

For ACAT, 2020 ended in tragedy, with the death of Gerald Dedekind. This has been very unsettling for us all. It is our hope and prayer that ACAT will be able to continue on



the trajectory set by Gerald over many years. Thousands have come to salvation under almost 4 decades of his leadership at ACAT.

Annual BBBEE Audit (Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment)

Due to Covid restrictions, this annual exercise had to be postponed until 2021.

Networking

The purpose of Networking is to promote and enable the process of shared learning between stakeholders within and between geographical areas, as well as equipping the target group for lobbying for support services by the public and private sectors. This is part of ACAT's "exit strategy", which is aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of the community structures that have been established. This networking was somewhat different in 2020, as some government departments and other NGOs approached our CEOs to help identify deserving candidates in their communities for food and other support during lockdown.

Fundraising activities

In many ways the life blood of an organization like ACAT is a well planned and managed process of fund raising. Donor reports are an indispensable element of this. Currently over 100 different reports are submitted by ACAT each year, of which about 80 are for donors. Further donor proposals were submitted to donors. Some of the more significant fundraising activities included:

- Communicating with existing and potential funders.
- Submitting proposals and budgets to funders for 2020 and beyond.
- Ensuring that ACAT fulfills all its contractual obligations, involving 15 project funders.
- Regular and careful planning of ACAT's investments.
- Requesting the timely processing of tranches to avoid or minimize cash flow problems.
- Completing the 2019 Annual Reports.



- Completing the 2019 annual statutory audit.
- A new auditing firm, Moore Stephens, which was appointed to audit the funds of Bread for the World, conducted their first donor specific audit for 2018. During this reporting period, ACAT also planned for the same audit for the six months ending June 2020.

Programme monitoring

- **Monthly Progress Chart:** this is a helpful instrument consisting of a number of key performance indicators (KPIs), presented at every monthly leadership forum to assess how the programmes are progressing towards their annual objectives.
- **Savings and Loans Groups (SLG):** there are now 137 functioning groups, consisting of 1,590 members, with a combined savings of R4,525,756. These funds are generally not banked as the funds revolve amongst members for business and other needs like fencing and water tanks. On the whole, these SLGs continued to meet and save throughout lockdown. However, Covid-19 has taken its toll on rural revenue streams, and some struggling SLGs had to close down in 2020.
- **Monitoring through the use of technology:** Over 5000 GPS readings have so far been taken of families who are part of the programme. These readings are mainly of families who have joined the programme more recently ie 2 - 3 years.
- **Commitments to Christ:** During 2020, 35 of the adults who attended training at the Centre accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and 67 accepted Christ during regular EDP (38 people) and SAP (29 people) activities in the field. They are all encouraged to join Bible Study Groups and attend a church that teaches the true gospel of salvation, which should enable them to grow in their faith. Support structures and discipleship opportunities for new converts include G5s, CVs, field workshops, Bible study groups and Exchange visits. The availability of a Bible, training manuals and audio-visual learning aids is also instrumental in growing the faith of the Programme participant.
- **Water tank and fencing fund:** this enables people to become more resilient, as the subsidy scheme for water storage tanks, and for fencing to protect produce from animals, has continued in this period to benefit many needy households. Since 2016, this scheme has enabled the purchase, by Programme participants, of 195 water tanks, and fencing materials for 219 food gardens. To be eligible for this assistance, a Group member must also be a member of a Savings and Loans Group (SLG) in their respective zone. This scheme is benefiting thousands of G5 family members.

Funding, cash flow and sustainability

A large proportion of time continues to be spent on fundraising, for funds from existing and new funders. We are very grateful to the Lord for funds received from donors during 2020, and look forward to receiving further funds allocated by donors for 2021, especially by those

who have multi-year contracts with ACAT. We pray that the Lord will continue to provide funds through those funders who renew their contracts on an annual basis. Cash flow has during 2020 was not a significant concern, as most funders had transferred their funds in reasonable time. Various meetings were held to carefully monitor the related investments.

Partnership Programme

This programme has been of immense value to many people, organizations and churches. Below are some of the highlights of this intervention in 2020:

- ACAT continued to support and engage with Formal and Informal Partners.
- Due to Covid restrictions, only a Pastors' Course could be run at the centre. Our Extension Staff have continued strengthening relationships with those pastors who have shown a positive response to the Programme, and we have seen an impact in their lives and the lives of their communities. A number of pastors are themselves active in the programme, with some being models of excellence in their communities when it comes to productivity, food gardening and small business activities.
- This year, two funders provided grants for the purchase and supply of Bibles and special training aids to ACAT's target group, some of their children and to some of ACAT's partners.
- 132 People were trained this year by attending courses for Pastors and community leaders.
- Further training and development has also been reported on by our partners in Burundi, the DRC and Lesotho, although in 2020, their activities, too, have been curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Central Training Services

Centre Training

A total of 166 learners attended various training courses at ACAT's centre, up until the Covid lockdown was imposed. In addition to being a training, mentoring, seminar and meeting venue, the Centre continued to serve as a demonstration unit of how to use and manage a centre and how to grow a variety of food types using different growing, fencing and crop protection techniques. After lockdown was eased to Level 3 in August, we also served as a good demonstration of compliance with Covid-19 protocols, and took all reasonable measures possible to protect our staff and Programme participants.

Training materials and sales

The following materials were used, produced, or worked on during the year:

- Various manuals were improved on.
- Some manuals were translated.
- Partner organizations have continued to make use of ACAT's Programme materials, either by purchasing them, having them translated into other languages or, through a license from ACAT, have made copies for their learners. The providing of manuals has been made possible through a special fund, which also includes provision of a large number of Bibles.
- 1409 Manuals were issued during 2020.

Governance

Good Governance is a critical function for the overall health of any entity, and for ACAT, it is Godly Governance we strive for. In March 2020, the full Board of Governors met for the AGM and an ordinary Board meeting, which

was followed up by an ordinary Board meeting in July, held "virtually" by Zoom. The AGM's main purpose was to consider the overall progress and position of the Trust after the completion of the 2019 financial year. Policy, planning, finance, partnerships with others, and giving due consideration for the year ahead were some of the things considered by the ordinary Board meetings.

Board sub-committees met when necessary by Zoom to address matters relating to statutory and other audits, general finance, investments, and the preparation of all the groundwork for informed decisions to be made by the full Board as well as implement select Board decisions. These meetings (when including the AGM and full Board meetings) reflect the Board's commitment to the sound governance of ACAT.

Extending ACAT's reach

In 2018, leadership felt led to look at ways to extend the reach of ACAT's programmes. This has been somewhat constrained in 2020 by the Covid pandemic.

Conclusion

We are most grateful to staff, community volunteers, partners, funders and prayer partners, but most importantly we are extremely thankful for God's continued intervention in and through the life of ACAT, which has led to improved livelihoods for all who have taken seriously their involvement in the programme activities.

Rick Phipson

Director





SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME (SAP)

The overall purpose of this programme is to use sustainable agriculture as a means to enable disadvantaged small farmers to overcome poverty in a sustainable way, and for them to influence and assist others to do the same. This involves:

- Promoting and teaching sustainable agricultural practices,
- Applying specific development principles, and
- Considering the context, needs and problems facing small-scale rural farmers, which include past, present and future circumstances.

Objectives: Long and Short term

To provide the active disadvantaged small farmers who show potential, with the opportunities, passion and capacity:

- To be members of sustainable community structures.
- To achieve self-reliance and sustain an ever-improving quality of life.
- To address the causes of poverty.
- To become food secure by having at least a basic food garden, or a profitable agri-business for those who want to make farming a career.
- To use sustainable business and agricultural practices, which will also mitigate against climate change.
- To be aware of, understand and actively address the HIV and AIDS pandemic with a special focus on causes, symptoms, transmission, avoidance, stigma, alternate lifestyle, and management of the virus.

- To promote community based support and care for children, the sick, elderly and the disabled.
- To promote, encourage and offer an alternate lifestyle and the reconstruction of families.
- To facilitate the process of transformation in the lives of our target group members.
- To influence, motivate and assist others to do the same in ALL the above objectives.

Strategies used to achieve the Overall Purpose and all the Objectives

Certain strategies have been carefully selected which, if implemented well, will achieve the overall purpose and each of the above objectives.

Strategy One

Identify the area and the target group and form Groups of 5

During this reporting period, SAP has identified Richmond as a new area. This area is in place of Maphumulo where SAP is currently operating in partnership with the community, in addition to Nkandla. Currently SAP is actively operating in 8 areas i.e. Vulindlela, Taylors Halt, Emnambithi, Nquthu, Ntumeni 2, Ethekwini, Mophela and Richmond. In addition to one new area identified, 3 zones were identified in Taylors Halt, Nquthu and Richmond areas.

43 New groups have been formed, of which 16 were able to send their representatives to the ACAT Centre for the one-week training in Basic Life Skills Course at the ACAT Centre. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic (which started in March 2020), the rest of the groups were trained in the areas through what ACAT calls field or area training. This makes up a total of 215 new additional families that are impacted by ACAT. The number of groups identified is lower than the projected target of 80 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the most part of 2020 there have been limited activities that could be carried out in the field and at the training centre as most activities were suspended under the lockdown regulations. The ACAT leadership felt that it would be unsafe to bring in participants from different areas to the ACAT Centre, as it had the potential for them to infect each other.

Strategy Two

Equip Groups of 5 towards sustainable homesteads – through the 4 phases of ACAT's Household Food Security Approach (HFS)

All new members have been equipped through the Basic Life Skills Course. ACAT carefully selected 5 learning disciplines i.e. Sustainable Agriculture, Health, Business Practices, Life Skills and Spiritual Development.

To reduce the spread of Coronavirus but still facilitate development activities, the ACAT leadership and the field team have decided that for the rest of 2020 the new groups will be equipped only within their zones. This means that they will not attend at the ACAT Centre, and the training will be limited to few zones within the areas of operation, and not more than 10 group members will be trained at the same time and venue.

For this reporting period 220 one day food security workshops have been facilitated where 1564 group members and potential group members were equipped. (The one-day workshops reported here are in addition to the Basic Life Skills training days). This has resulted in 425 new home food security plots being started and 269297 vegetable seedlings, 25 fruit tree seedlings, 13410kg potato seeds, 260kg maize seeds, 15kg bean seeds and 44 pockets of compost were facilitated by the field team. The number of seedlings excludes those that were provided by the members who have been equipped to grow their own seedlings and sell the surplus to their

neighbours and fellow group members.

4 Phases of ACAT's Household Food Security Approach (HFS)

Due to COVID-19 regulations, the SAP team have not been able to assess the growth of the newly identified members according to the phases of ACAT's household food security approach.

Meetings

To ensure the smooth and effective running of the meetings, CVs, Extension Officers, and Extension Coordinators plan and organise all meetings under the leadership and guidance of ZSICs. During this reporting period, the following meetings were conducted and/or attended by the field team.

- Combined group meetings: a total 147 with 355 participants.
- ZIC /ZSIC meetings: a total of 260.
- CV mentoring meetings: a total of 85 with 670 participants.
- Area reporting meetings: every month in each area.

Zone Savings and Implementing Committee Meetings (ZSIC/ZIC)

During this reporting period, the SAP team implemented the programme through 86 ZIC/ZSICs in 44 zones and they collectively ran 260 monthly development, savings and reporting meetings under the leadership and guidance of SAP field team.

Savings and Loans Groups (SLG)

ACAT encourages all group members to form themselves into an SLG or where possible join the existing SLG within their respective zones. To date, ACAT has assisted in the formation and equipping of 137 SLGs with a total of 1590 members. Collectively they have saved a total of R4,525,756.



Spiritual Development

Spiritual Development training filters through all learning subjects and levels of training provided by ACAT, both at the ACAT Centre and in the field. During this reporting period, 174 spiritual training sessions were facilitated and 1233 members and potential members participated. Through these training sessions, 26 new bible study circles have been started.

Causes of poverty

During this reporting period, causes of poverty were raised and discussed at 202 meetings/workshops, and 968 group members participated to discuss these issues and how to address them.

HIV and AIDS issues

The SAP team continues to create awareness and give training on issues related to HIV and AIDS and other pandemic diseases like diabetes, and lately COVID-19. During this reporting period, these issues were discussed at 128 meetings and 900 members and potential members participated. In addition to the G5 members discussions, ACAT also created awareness and gave detailed information on the issue of COVID-19 and the protocols that should be observed.

The protective equipment they were equipped with are, thermometers, sanitizers, masks, protective shields (for personal use), cleaning detergents, sprays for cleaning larger surfaces and documented COVID-19 information for them to use when sharing the information within their communities.

Networking and referrals

During this reporting period, ACAT SAP continued to network with various Government Departments, local churches, other NGOs including other ACAT programme, CBOs and community structures equipped by ACAT.



Strategy Three

Stimulate economic farming and profitable agri-business activities

The SAP team continues to encourage members to grow food in a sustainable way which ensures that they provide healthy food for their families. As they enjoy eating food from their gardens, neighbours start to request to buy from them. This is how they start selling the surplus and getting extra money, which motivates them to increase their plots and sell more and the business idea starts to grow.

During this reporting period 241 new survivalist agribusiness were established through SAP's motivation, encouragement and guidance. In addition to these, 139 were established by the youth (still in school).

Strategy Four

Identify and capacitate Community Volunteers to assist in implementing the Programme

Community Volunteers (CVs)

During this reporting period, the SAP programme was implemented with the assistance of 132 Community Volunteers who are actively motivating and encouraging the newly identified members to implement the programme. Of these 132, 16 were identified during this reporting period, and they have attended 1 of the 5 week long CV courses at the ACAT Centre. Under the normal circumstances they would have done 3 weeks in their first year, but due to COVID-19 regulations, they only managed to do one week.

Community Extension Officers (CEO)

All 8 SAP areas are implemented through CEOs who are actively involved in identifying and forming and equipping new group members in various activities of their development.

Zone and Children Facilitators

In addition to the CVs who are assisting in the implementation of the programme, the field team have requested Zone Facilitators and, in some areas, Children Facilitators whose task is to make sure that CVs and other key members are frequently monitored and reminded about meetings and other important activities. This focus mainly is on new zones.

To date, SAP have identified 17 ZFs and 2 CFs. 15 of them attended the one week training and introduction course at the ACAT Centre. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rest of the training weeks during this reporting period were cancelled. They are currently part of the field training team.

Strategy Five

Establish and equip Sustainable Community Structures and partner with them

Groups of Five

During this reporting period 43 new G5s were formed. Of these, 16 were able to send their representatives to the ACAT Centre for Basic Life Skills Course. The 27 were trained through area training – due to COVID-19 regulations.

Savings and Loans Groups

SAP encourages all group members to save through savings and loans groups. This is to provide them the capacity and the support needed for development and it provides them with a potential to grow into self-reliant. To date ACAT has facilitated, formed and equipped 137 SLGs with a total membership of 1590. Collectively they have saved a total of R4, 525, 756,00.

Zone Savings and Implementing Committee (ZSIC/ZIC)

During this reporting period, the SAP programme was implemented through 44 ZSICs in 86 zones. Collectively they ran 260 monthly meetings that were attended by the SAP extension team.

Nkandla/Maphumulo

During this reporting period, Maphumulo area joined Nkandla in partnering with ACAT in facilitating development activities within their communities. ACAT continued to mentor these communities through different development activities. They continue to send their representatives to various training courses at the ACAT Centre.

Gugu Ngema

ILP Programme Leader





ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (EDP)

The objective of this Programme is to provide the most vulnerable rural families who demonstrate potential, with the opportunities, passion and capacity:

- To be members of sustainable community structures;
- To achieve self-reliance and sustain an ever-improving quality of life;
- To address the causes of poverty;
- To have a food garden, using sustainable agriculture practices;
- To engage in an income generating activity, using sustainable business practices;
- To create an awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS and other pandemics, with a special focus on causes, symptoms, transmission, avoidance, stigma and management of the virus;
- To promote, encourage and offer an alternate lifestyle and the reconstruction of families, which includes child protection;
- To promote community based support and care;
- To influence, motivate and assist others to do the same in ALL the above objectives.

The past year has been a very difficult one for our nation, province, and target communities, as we were impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and the crippling lockdown that was imposed as a result. At ACAT, we did what was necessary to keep our staff, our Community Volunteers and our Programme participants safe from Covid-19 infection. The main negative effect on our Programme results was that we could only run 4 courses at the Centre before lockdown. The Programme activities carried out in this reporting period are summarized below under the headings for the respective strategies, which are designed to achieve the objectives stated above.

Strategy One

Identifying the Target Group and the formation of Entrepreneurial Groups of 5

Forming Groups of 5 and training in Basic Life Skills

There was only one Basic Life Skills course held during this reporting period, attended by 25 G5 representatives. In the unknown and uncertain Covid-dominated environment, we realized we could not expect to form the targetted 110 Groups by the end of 2020. However, the Extension Team in each area assessed their situation,

and began with the Basic Life Skills training in their community as soon as it was deemed safe to do so. The first of these Groups began their BLS training in October, and by mid-December, most had completed the BLS Course. In the EDP, this yielded 33 more Groups of 5 (165 trainees), bringing the total number of Groups formed in 2020 to 58. Given the unfavourable circumstances of the Covid pandemic and lockdown, we are very pleased with this achievement.

A Baseline Survey form was completed for each Group member joining the Programme, which means that 290 Baseline questionnaires were completed. At each training session, an attendance register was signed in order to ensure that trainees completed the full BLS course before being issued with a BLS certificate. In addition, the necessary Covid registers were kept, and compliance with the necessary protocols was enforced.

By the end of 2020, then, the total number of G5 groups formed since inception of the Programme stood at 2,363 (or 11,815 group members).

Visits to group members

The CVs paid 2,208 visits to individual group members at their homes in 2020. In addition, the CVCs held 206 Combined Group meetings during the year, with an attendance of 1,777 group members. Sadly, we could not hold the Youth Basic Life Skills (YBLS) courses in 2020, nor could any Follow-up Visits be made to children during this period.

Strategy Two

Promote, Teach and Facilitate Household Food Security

Establish new home food security (HFS) gardens

There were 290 new group members who joined the Programme in 2020, while there were 387 new gardens established (133% of new participants)! The reason for this is that many members of the communities in which the ACAT Programme operates, observed how G5 members' food gardens sustained families during the lockdown, and wanted to join the Programme immediately. However, BLS training could not take place at that time, and these potential participants had to wait to be trained once this became possible. Nevertheless, these people started gardens as soon as they could, and these numbers have been included in our reports. This brings the total number of food gardens established to 9,957, which is 84,3% of the 11,815 group members who have joined since inception. Also in 2020, 218 food gardens were started by children of G5 families.

HFS Workshops

264 one-day HFS workshops were conducted by Community Volunteers in 2020, attended by 1,667 people.

Asilimani Workshops

Only 2 Asilimani ("Let us Farm") workshops could be held before lockdown in March 2020, involving 8 zones, and attended by a total of 82 people.

Seedlings facilitated during lockdown

Shortly after the imposition of lockdown, ACAT's Extension Co-ordinators began receiving requests for assistance with the collection and delivery of vegetable seedlings. During the lockdown period, 269,297 vegetable seedlings were delivered to G5 members and non-G5 member homesteads, as were 13,410kg of seed potatoes, 25 fruit trees, and many other seeds. This contributed significantly to food security for these households, and also brought the benefit of income generation as surplus produce was sold.

Strategy Three

Stimulate Economic Activity and Start Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

Start-up of Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

The target for new income generating units for this reporting period was 440, or 80% of the planned number of new participants. The actual number started in 2020 was 409 (141% of the 290 new participants!). (The explanation given above for a similar situation regarding HFS gardens established, also applies to the IGAs started). This means that a total of 10,149 income generating units have been started since the inception of the Programme, which is 85,9% of the 11,815 group members who have joined. In addition, 218 children started income generating activities. This is a significant indicator of true sustainable development!

Savings and Loans

There are now 137 functioning Savings and Loans Groups (SLGs) in the whole ACAT programme, with a total membership of 1,590 and a total amount saved of R4,525,756. This amount represents only the capital portion of the savings, and does not include the income the members receive in the form of their annual interest. This interest, paid by every member who borrows money



from the SLG, is a form of additional “compulsory saving”. For an active borrower in an efficiently run SLG, this annual payout may equal his/her capital amount. This money can then be used for Christmas expenditure or for “back-to-school” costs in January, while the capital portion remains intact. This is a remarkably empowering scheme, provided that members borrow responsibly, and don’t take loans beyond their capacity to repay!

Business Skills Training

During 2020, 290 one-day income generation workshops were conducted by CVs, with a total of 1,960 people attending.

Sector/Interest Groups

A “sector group” or “interest group” is formed when a few entrepreneurs within the same business sector or with similar business interests, get together to access economies of scale or to enter, or better service, a certain market. In the ACAT programme, this is evidence of entrepreneurial growth. A sector group may involve entrepreneurs from a number of different Groups of 5 who share a common interest.

There were 25 new sector groups formed in 2020, which, when added to the cumulative total of 480 at the end of 2019, make a total of 505 sector groups formed to date. The main challenges for entrepreneurs and small farmers at this level is that of finding:

- Viable markets for their goods and produce;
- Affordable and reliable transport for their produce to places where buyers and sellers meet;
- Helpful Government officials to assist with NPO registrations. In some areas, this help is sorely lacking due to indifference and incompetence, and as a result, group members eventually become discouraged and abandon their efforts to register an NPO.

Strategy Four:

Identify and capacitate Community Volunteers to assist in implementing the development Programme

At the beginning of 2020 there were 169 CVs submitting regular monthly activity reports.

The “CV Thanks” was re-instated in 2019, but there was very little work done by most CVs in 2020, due to the coronavirus and lockdown. The unique circumstances in 2020 necessitated drawing in those CVs considered best equipped to assist with the BLS training in the communities, to assist the CEOs and ZFs with this activity. This justified the payment of a small ‘thank you gift’ to only those CVs, and this was paid in accordance with the number of BLS courses each one assisted with.

Community Volunteer (CV) Training

The impact of Covid on training of CVs in 2020 is shown below:

Courses held:	Number attended
CV1 (1 course)	47

Community Volunteers with increased responsibility

Two new categories of volunteers are referred to in this report - that of:

- *Zone Facilitator (ZF)* – this volunteer is selected on the basis of good performance as a CV, and deemed capable of handling greater responsibility in implementing the Programme in his/her zone. At the end of 2020 there were 35 ZFs among the 183 communities where ACAT operates. The ZF currently works in more than one Zone, and receives an allowance towards the cost of public transport and airtime in order to do this.
- *Children’s Facilitator (CF)* – this volunteer is selected for work ethic and love for children, and assists with regular visits to the children of G5 members. This appointment is based on a number of considerations, with no target or expectation as to how many, or in which areas, CFs will be appointed. There are currently 6 CFs assisting in the Programme.

The Community Extension Officer (CEO) is not a new level of volunteer, but is in line with ACAT’s intentional transfer of greater capacity and responsibility to the community component of the Extension Team. We say this every year, but it remains true in 2020: the current team of CEOs we have is the best we have ever had! At the end of 2020, there were 20 CEOs assisting the ACAT Extension Co-ordinators (ECs) in the different Programme areas. The intention with building this capacity is to relieve the ECs of their day-to-day involvement with forming new groups and running field activities, so that they can give more of their time and attention to growing and maturing the community structures, (i.e. the Zone Savings and Implementation Committees or ZSICs) and developing advanced businesses among Programme participants. Part of the task of the ACAT Leadership in this process is to instill a “strategic management mindset” among our ECs. We are all aware of the need to “work smarter” in order to expand ACAT’s impact within the constraints of the resources with which we have been entrusted.

Strategy Five

Promote and Facilitate the Establishment of Sustainable Community Structures



Zone Savings and Implementing Committees (ZSICs)

The Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP), which includes both the EDP and SAP, is currently operating in 183 Zones. There are now 107 ZSICs among these Zones, and 136 functioning SLGs.

During this reporting period, the EDP Extension Co-ordinators and/or their CEOs, attended a total of 214 ZIC/ZSIC meetings. This is less than usual, and the reduction can be ascribed to Covid-19.

Referrals

Each year, some Group members are referred to other service providers or stakeholders for those needs which are outside of the scope of the ACAT Programme, for instance those who have already formed sector groups. Some of these have been referred to various Government Departments and Municipalities, as well as to other NGOs and stakeholders operating in the rural areas. Unfortunately, not all of these referrals bear fruit for the Group member.

Networking

In their Monthly Monitor narratives, CEOs and ECs report on networking activities undertaken by CVs, ZFs, CEOs and ZSIC's. These continued to develop their own networks with local, municipal and national government, in order to identify and access the various services they are expected to deliver, and to find ways in which they can benefit their community. In some cases, participants have been assisted with sewing machines, seed, day-old chicks, and land preparation for planting.

Exposure Visits

"Exposure Visits" or "Cross Visits" provide opportunities for member-to-member learning, where members of the programme in an area/community visit programme participants in another area/community, with the purpose of learning from one another, or encouraging one another in a particular aspect of the programme. In 2020, 33 Area-to-Area exposure visits were arranged, involving 95 people. There were 61 local 'member-to-member learning' visits undertaken between Zones within an area, involving 182 group members. There were 28 CV cross-visits held.

Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS and other pandemics

HIV/AIDS training was included in 141 meetings and one-day workshops held by CVs in 2020, attended by a total of 961 people. There were 41 screenings of various DVDs, attended by 288 people. During this reporting period, 187 more G5 members began caring for sick family members. G5 members also began caring for 97 families which are not involved in the Programme. In addition, G5 groups or individual group members began caring for or supporting 64 child-headed homes. Teaching on diabetes has now also been included in our training, and as we learn more about Covid, this, too, is being incorporated.

Spiritual

During the constrained Programme activities in 2020, a total of 102 people committed their lives to Christ, thereby starting the process of true and sustainable transformation in their lives. Another 110 Bible Study groups were formed by Programme participants during this reporting period. Sound Biblical teaching continued to make up a large part of the content of the Quarterly Staff and CEO Workshops we were able to hold.

Conclusion

In terms of results, we are pleased with what has been accomplished during this disrupted and very difficult reporting period. We are also very pleased with the way our ECs and CEOs have risen to the challenges presented by these circumstances. May the Lord continue to bless and protect them!

Financially, the work done in 2020 was made possible through the faithful and generous support of our community of committed donors. We appreciate the continued financial support throughout the course of this pandemic, and the continued contact they made with us to find out how ACAT was doing. Some have offered, and indeed provided, significant additional funding to enable us to become Covid-compliant at the Centre and in the field. We are also exceedingly grateful for the prayer support provided by our intercessors and prayer partners. For this, we give God all the glory, thanks, honour and praise!

Rick Phipson
Director





EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

ACAT's Education and Training Materials

During the lockdown, some of our bilingual staff members were busy with the translation of Module 3 of the Sunday School Lesson Plans from English into isiZulu. Some improvements have been made to Module 6 (Principles of Management) of the Leadership Skills Course, and on-going updates, improvements and additions are being made to the various reporting forms contained in the Programme Implementation Manual, as and when appropriate. This included the adaptation of the many Covid registers to suit ACAT's context. Furthermore, information hand-outs on Covid-19 have been compiled for our Field Staff as we learned more about the virus, and this will be incorporated into the relevant sections of our training materials in due course. As has been the case with HIV, information on the Covid-19 pandemic will be incorporated into our training, and "mainstreamed" across all our training materials.

No direct marketing activities were undertaken in this reporting period. As usual, the pastors who attended Pastors Course in February, wanted a number of training materials of all kinds, in particular, the Spiritual Development series. Depending on individual circumstances, a plan was made to ensure that people with limited resources did not go home without the manuals they need to assist their families and their congregations.

Spiritual Development Series

Translation of Module 3 of the Sunday School Lesson Plans is completed, and it is now undergoing DTP. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable Christian material for the children in our Programme, and for use by Sunday School teachers in ACAT's Programme areas. We have been given to understand that further modules have been added to the CTI Spiritual Development series, and we hope to be in a position to make use of these in the near future.

Module Sales

The effect on module sales of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown is obvious from the figures below. There were very few sales of the ABET, Skills, HIV and Spiritual series manuals since the last reporting period, the total being R5,893 for 280 modules. The Integrated Livelihoods Programme used 1129 modules (mainly Basic Life Skills manuals) at a value of R66,239. This amounts to total sales for this reporting period of 1,409 modules at a value of R72,113 as shown below.

Summary of sales (1 January – 31 December 2020)

Category	Quantity	Value [R]
ABET, Skills, HIV & Spiritual	280	5,893
Programme series	1,129	66,239
Total	1,409	72,133

ACAT CHAMPIONS



Zanele Mkhize joined ACAT in 2019. She says:

"I joined ACAT because I was always asking my neighbour for some of her vegetables. But one day I felt provoked when she told me that, 'for how long are you going to ask for vegetables like a young child?' Although this was painful thing to hear, it pushed me in a right direction. Now I have my own vegetable garden and eat fresh vegetables and even sell any surplus! I have even joined a savings club with the goal to improve my home and become a responsible parent regarding my children's education. I have saved a total of R800. I am so thankful to ACAT for opening my eyes. I was a person who was so hopeless, but now I am very hopeful. I have discovered that work is a blessing, not a curse, and that working hard pays! All one needs is to be focused, and know what you want to achieve in life. As a young lady, I also want to prove to myself that for a woman to make it in life you don't necessarily need a man! You just need to work hard and set life goals."

Nomsa Biyela has been a successful small farmer and her agri-business is doing very well. She plants different types of fruit and vegetables, and has specialized in the production of tomatoes and onions. She supplies tomatoes in crates to hawkers. She also supplies schools with 3 pockets of 7kg of tomatoes per week. She says:

"I see an improvement in my life and in my home. I used to take time to water my garden, but now I use a sprinkler for irrigation. I am looking forward to buying more sprinklers, so that I can save time irrigating it because my garden is big. All in all, I want to thank God for the amazing work I have produced this year."



Before joining Thulasizwe group, Lindokuhle Nkosi tried to farm by himself, but had little success. He says:

"Now I plant big fields of maize, and have a thriving vegetable garden in which I plant spinach, cabbage, carrots, beetroot and lettuce for my family to eat. I save money monthly in the Savings and Loans Group in my area. Our Community Volunteer in the area encourages me to work the soil to increase soil fertility and food security. This has helped me so much because before I was trained by ACAT, my farming knowledge was very limited and I was not able to be successful like I am now."

Mr Mhlanga of Sinethemba group says:

"ACAT is involved in developing small scale farmers to produce their food using sustainable agriculture methods, using locally available resources. Group members are motivated through Extension visits, organized workshops and cross visits. I am always very keen to attend cross visits, which provide me and other farmers, with the opportunity to learn and share ideas on how to produce. It is so important to plan and know the best time to prepare your land in order to get a good crop. I produce different crops and vegetables without ploughing the soil or using chemical fertilizers. Before being part of ACAT, I used to produce poor crops. I am very thankful to ACAT who helped me to meet other farmers and learn good farming practices. My family really enjoys eating fresh vegetables."





Dorah Khanyile from Maphumulo is very involved in her agri-business. She works very hard, and is always very enthusiastic. She says:

"Because I am part of an ACAT group of five, they have encouraged me to do my best to make my agri-business a success! In the future I want to be financially sustained. At our monthly meetings we meet with other group members to encourage each other. The money that I have earned has helped me pay fees for my child to study at Ongoye University."



Busisiwe Ndlovu says she wants to do something innovative with her life. When she joined ACAT in 2019, she started thinking how she could be fruitful, and what kind of business she could start to generate income to support her family. She says:

"Things started making sense after attending the ACAT training. My first attempt was a vegetable garden, but then I realized that I have a skill in art, so I started making door mats using recycled materials such as plastic bags, special grasses and so on. It takes me 3 days to make a big mat which I sell for R200. Because I have other commitments like cleaning the house and working in my vegetable garden, I am able to make 5 mats per month. The garden also earns me some income, and my goal is make a total of R500 every planting season. I have also heard also that goats can make a good business, so instead of just looking at them, I want to start selling them! I have also learned about the importance of establishing a sustainable homestead, and I want to get there by ensuring that I have planted fruit trees also."

Well done to all who have worked so hard to achieve these amazing results. And to those who have supported ACAT – thank you for making a difference in the lives and communities of KwaZulu-Natal!

