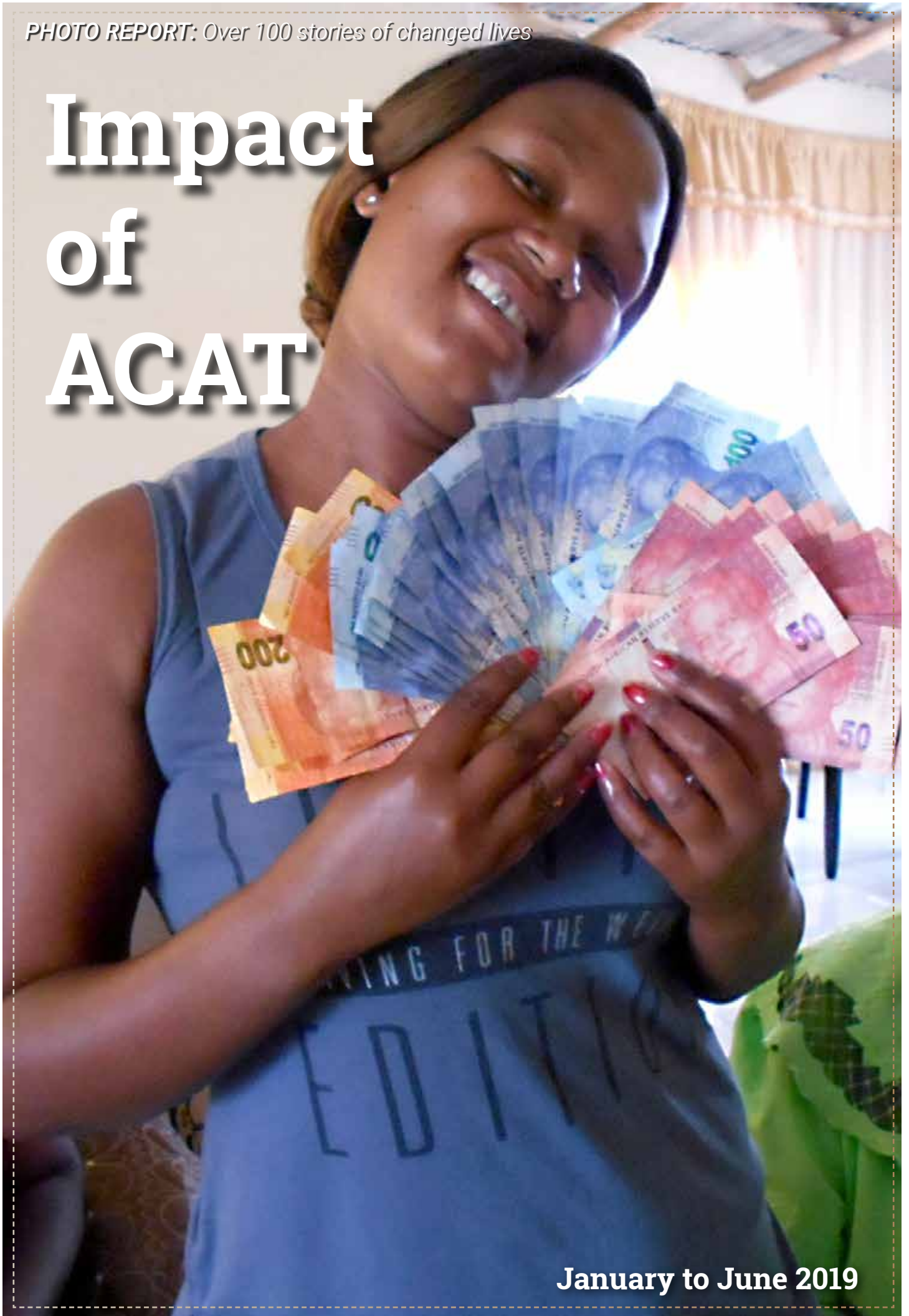


PHOTO REPORT: Over 100 stories of changed lives

Impact of ACAT



January to June 2019

Contents

ACAT's focus is to alleviate poverty sustainably through income generation, food security and spiritual transformation.

This report tells over 100 stories of how group members throughout KwaZulu-Natal have achieved this during 2019. Many of their stories seem similar ... each person started with a choice for change, implemented some strategy or plan, and then made a huge effort, spent hours of hard work, sweat, and at times, even tears, to achieve their goals!

Their central message is that poverty can be defeated – and this report tells their stories, and celebrates their victories. This report also pays tribute to our ACAT team that has taught, envisioned and cheered these champions on their way!

“Collectively all of us who are here have a mandate to build a nation founded on social justice. They also have a mandate to revive the economy to create jobs to actualise hope so that people’s aspirations are met.”

– President Cyril Ramaphosa

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All the stories in this report demonstrate the importance of belonging to a group.

For example, this ACAT group of 5 – Simunye Group in Amatata zone – which was started in 2017, has been instrumental in transforming 5 families ...



When **Thembi Tshabalala** joined Simunye Group in 2017 she had no garden or business. She was employed by Pick 'n Pay, and her husband encouraged her to leave her job, to start her own business and become self-employed. She started a Spaza shop, and then later borrowed money from her Savings and Loans Group (SLG) to improve her business by buying a fried chips making machine. She earns around R5000 a month from the Spaza Shop, and R2000 from the fried chips!



Andile Miya joined the group because his mother had been involved in the ACAT programme for many years, and he had noticed that all the group members had productive vegetable gardens. He also wanted to learn to keep records of his businesses (spaza shop and selling blocks). He said that in the past he had started a broiler business, but it failed because he did not know the importance of keeping business records. Andile says: *"I am very proud of my businesses! My dream is to become an even more successful businessman! I sell airtime and electricity vouchers, and I save each month in a Savings and Loans Group towards my children's education."*

Sabathile Mvuyana joined the group in 2017, because she wanted to learn how to farm. Now she grows her own vegetables, and no longer buys from neighbours. She has a productive vegetable garden where she produces food for her family. And she sells the surplus...

"Before joining ACAT I had no salary of my own, and I used to depend on my husband's salary. Now I earn my own money and even save R100 monthly for my children's education."



Grace Mdletshe joined the Simunye group because she saw how good her neighbour's garden looked! She was encouraged to join by the ACAT Community Volunteers in the area – Simangele Miya and Zandile Ngwenya. Since then, her garden has improved, as well as her maize and amadumbe crops. She says:

"I borrowed money from my Savings and Loans Group and built my rondavel and a house for my fowls. The Savings and Loans programme helped us a lot."



Nonhlanhla Bhengu joined Simunye Group to increase her agricultural knowledge, and especially to learn to plant, produce and sell vegetables. Before joining ACAT she had tried to grow vegetables, but had never produced good harvests. Now she grows crops and vegetables for her family to eat, and has enough to sell. She says:

"At first, before joining Simunye Group, I only used to plant amadumbe and sweet potatoes. Now I produce good vegetables. My parents left me without a shelter, so I borrowed money from the Savings and Loans group to build a rondavel. Now I have a business selling second hand clothes, and I hope my home will continuously improve."



MARKET DAY



An Asilimeni and market day was held in Egugwini zone in April. Group members came from 9 zones in eThekwini, as well as from 3 other districts where ACAT operates (Maphumulo, Izingolweni and Nhlazuka).



The 125 participants learned how to plant seedlings and fruit trees, and how to save space and time by developing vegetable tower gardens. Community Extension Officer Deli Ngidi taught on business principles, including how to sell produce and products. Total sales amounted to R4500, with many community on-lookers asking to join the programme.



Doris Bukizine Ngcobo of Eskebheni zone joined Sithembele group in 2011 at a time when her situation was very bad. Her husband had just passed away, leaving her as the only breadwinner in the family. In order to survive, she worked 8 days a month doing road construction work, which earned her R500. This was not enough to provide for her family.



Doris says:

"Joining the ACAT programme helped me change my life. It all started when I developed a vegetable garden. Now our produce feeds the family, and we sell any surplus to our neighbours. I make at least R200 per harvest, and still have plenty to eat. I also have a business making bead work, which brings in about R400 a week. Now I am able to save R600 every month. All this helped me to buy a goat, which gave birth to one kid for the first time, and two kids for the second pregnancy. Unfortunately she then died, because I did not have enough knowledge to care for her. But now that has changed, and I now look after my goats properly. My wish is to start a family savings group so that my grandchildren will learn to save money at an early age."



Ntombifuthi Khumalo is 59 and lives in Doornhook Zone. She is a member of Hlaleneni group, which means 'why are you sitting down'. This group was formed in 2011. When asked why she was so keen to become a group member, she says:

"I wanted to gain more business skills in order to improve my business, which is buying and selling firewood".



She now produces enough vegetables for her family to eat, and grows crops like maize and pumpkins. If there is any surplus, she sells it to her neighbours. She also joined a Savings and Loans Group, where she saved enough money to purchase a water tank, as well as sheep and goats. She has never stopped putting into practice what she teaches!



Mrs Shabalala is from Watersmeet. When asked why she joined the group, she said:

"I joined to gain more knowledge on spiritual growth as well as in agricultural skills. Before joining the group, I was clueless on how to improve soil fertility, in order to get good quality crops. ACAT's training has taught us to use compost and manure to improve soil fertility, and this is what has enabled us to produce good quality crops from our vegetable gardens. Now I grow different vegetables for my family to eat, and sell the extra to make profit for my own family".

Sadly Mrs Shabalala passed away shortly after this report was published.



Agnes Mjiyako joined Sizakane Group in 2011. After attending the Basic Life Skills course, she went back home to implement what she learned at ACAT.

On observing how keen Agnes was to help others, an ACAT community volunteer advised her to attend all the Community Volunteer Courses offered by ACAT. As a result of this training, she developed an interest in gardening. She started digging deep trench beds to provide moisture to combat the frequent droughts in their area. She was also advised to mulch, and harvest rain water. Through saving, Agnes managed to get a loan from her Savings and Loans Group in order to buy a Jojo tank. She is now able to harvest rain-water, which helps her to water her garden. She serves as a community volunteer and spends most of her time visiting other group members, teaching them to start home food gardens and start small businesses. She says:

"In the future I want to save enough money to buy dairy calves, and sell milk to my neighbours.

Sipho Ntshingila, of Thusanani group, is a new group member, having joined ACAT in 2018. After attending the Basic Life Skills training, he returned home and implemented what he had learned from ACAT.

He says:

"Before joining ACAT my vegetables were not as good as they are now. At ACAT we learned how to improve soil fertility using sustainable agricultural principles, such as making compost and mulching. I have also started a small tuck shop business, to earn some cash income for my family."



ACAT encourages rural communities to form themselves into groups of five. Then they are encouraged to start Savings and Loans Groups in order to start small businesses. The money they save enables them to work towards improving their livelihood.

Phumelele Gamede is from Watersmeet zone, and works as a Community Volunteer, implementing what she learned from ACAT. She grows a of variety vegetables, and has planted fruit trees like peaches, bananas and figs. She has learned to process surplus fruit, and sells the extra produce to earn income. She spends most of her time visiting other group members, teaching them gardening and business skills.

She says:

"ACAT's aim is to achieve sustainable development work in partnership with community people called Community Volunteers (CV). The first step to becoming a CV, is to attend the Basic Life Skills training Course at the ACAT Centre, and to learn basic skills like sustainable agricultural principles and business skills. Then you must implement these skills. In addition to this, you must be willing to share your skills with other G5 members."



This photo was taken during a cross visit where **Mrs Gamede** was visited by the ACAT Community Extension Officers and other CVs. The purpose of the visit was to share sustainable agricultural practices, so that they could go back and teach new group members to work towards achieving the same in their homesteads.

Mr Mgabhi joined Siyanqoba Group in 2015. He attended the ACAT Basic Life Skills course, and went back home to put into practice some of the sustainable agriculture lessons he had learned during the training week. He started a vegetable garden. The area he lives in becomes very cold in winter, and thus very difficult to grow most vegetables during the winter season. So as a solution to this challenge, he planted some vetiver grass around his entire garden as a protective wind-break. He encourages other group members to do the same.



ACAT's long-term objective is to help group members to work towards making provision for their future and unseen needs.

Zitatamise Savings and Loans Group was started in 2015. The group members say:

"Before forming our Savings and Loans Group we lacked the knowledge and skills on how to uplift and assist each other financially. Today, through our savings, we have seen ourselves coming out of poverty. We now have a sewing business and a tuck shop business. Through savings and loans our members have managed to buy building materials in order to improve their homes, pay tuition fees for their children at higher learning institutions, and buy fencing material to protect their vegetable gardens.

ACAT has taught us the importance of sustainable agriculture – like water harvesting – and we have taken up loans to buy Jojo tanks to harvest rain water for home use, and to keep our food gardens watered."



Zandile Mthlane of Driefontein Zone joined the ACAT programme in 2012. Since then she has continued to work hard and has achieved a lot in her homestead. When asked why she joined, she says: *"I joined ACAT to learn how to sew and produce vegetables."*

As a result of her implementing the ACAT training, her life has really improved. She now plants a number of different vegetables, and earns income from the sale of the surplus. She was trained how to raise traditional chicken breeds profitably – and she now makes a profit from her sales. She is a member of Zitatamise Savings and Loans Group, and through this, she has been able to buy materials to fence her entire homestead.

Zandile says:

"I have developed such a love for gardening, which I now do together with my children. My garden serves as a "lighthouse" for new group members to come and learn how to establish home food gardens of their own. I am always happy to share my skills with all visitors who come to see me. And I have a sewing business which earns me enough income to support my entire family."





Zethu Cele of Nsika Group in Siphambanweni Zone joined a Savings and Loans Group in 2016. She has a garden where she plants beans and madumbes. She loves her work. She also sews different things to sell in the community. Her family life has improved, and is thankful for the knowledge ACAT has given her.



Thabiso Ndlovu joined the ACAT programme in 2017. He has established a food garden and has started saving with the Siyaphambili Savings and Loans Group.

He says:

"Since being in the ACAT programme, I have obtained so much knowledge. I am so thankful! I now love to teach others what I has learned because it works!"



Sibukwesihle Group started meeting in July 2018. Soon thereafter they started their Savings and Loans Group, and in February 2019 they attended a course at the ACAT Centre. They teach each other different things and are looking forward to success.

Sandiso Nzama of Ourland Group joined ACAT in 2019. He says:

"I have made deep trench beds so that I can grow cabbages to eat at home, thus my family can live, and be healthy, without buying from the shops."



Lucadia Cele of Nsika Group joined ACAT in 2016. She works diligently in her garden and produces enough food for her family and sells the rest to her neighbours. She uses the money for her family. She says:

"I love the ACAT programme because it revived me, and through it, I have learned so many new things."



Nomvuyo Tenza of Mpilonhle Group joined the Siyaphambili Savings and Loans Group in 2016. She now has a growing business selling airtime using a flash machine. She is also able to contribute financially at home, and teaches others how to make a living for themselves.

She says:

"I am no longer the same person I was before I joined ACAT. I bought myself goats to increase the number of livestock I have at home. The ACAT programme has really helped change my life."



In April an **Asilimemi** day was held in the Highflats area at the home of Bhekuyise Cele who is a G5 member. He joined ACAT in 2016. The day was a great success, in spite of the bad weather. Amongst other things, they learned how to construct a tower garden, and dig and fill a deep trench designed to retain moisture.





Through the Savings and Loans Groups members are able to access loans to improve their lives, and get startup finance to develop their businesses.

One example is the **Siyaphambili group** which was able to purchase the materials required to fence their gardens. They say:

"Thank you ACAT for helping us to improve our lives by bringing development to our area. We are now able to fence our gardens, and protect them from livestock. We can now plant vegetables all year round so we can to eat from our gardens, and sell the left overs to our neighbours."



William Mbona of Hlanganani Group joined the Sinakhokonke Savings and Loans Group in 2016. He now has a small business buying calves, and is teaching others about development. He is grateful for the knowledge he got from ACAT.



Sibongile Nyide of Sibukesihle group joined the programme in 2018. She is very active and is already saving in her Savings and Loans Group. She says she is so grateful for being in the ACAT programme and she is implementing what she has learned by making a deep trench in her vegetable garden.



Phumlaphi Sosibo has been in the programme since 2010. She raises pigs, and sells them to her community. With money she makes from her sales, she is extending her house. She says:

"I really can't stop thanking ACAT for the knowledge I received that helped me remove all the darkness from my mind. Now I am able to get all I need from my own money – the money I have earned myself, through my hard work."



Zamimpilo and **Senzakwenzeke** groups joined the programme in June 2019. They are so happy to be in the programme and learn different skills. They have started saving in a Saving and Loans Group, and they say they are prepared to become successful!





Nompilo Ndlela wanted to find ways to sustain herself and generate income and not just to depend on her husband. So in 2011 she joined the programme, and became a member of Ukuzamakwethu group. Since then her life has changed. She has done many things with the money that she generated, including buying two goats, which have in turn, produced more goats. She also bought a new lounge suite and wall unit for her home. She also had a spaza shop which she closed due to theft. The thieves stole everything from her shop while they were away. Her dream is to try again. She saves R100 every month in her Savings and Loans Group. She is very grateful to ACAT for assisting her to fence her food garden, as this has helped her to protect her crops from livestock.

Tholwaphi Ndimande joined the programme in 2015. She says:

"At that time every time we needed vegetables, we had to buy them, so we couldn't eat vegetables regularly. Because of my situation, I did not think I could have a business. After joining ACAT, my life changed. I now grow vegetables and have started a small business selling snacks. We eat what we grow, and sell the surplus (especially of beans, madumbes and chickens). Even though the weather was not good this season, I made a profit from my bean crop, and I saved seed for the next season. I make over R300 a month selling snacks – most of which I save. I am saving towards buying some goats."



Life was difficult when **Tholakele Mzobe** joined ACAT in 2015. Her husband was the only breadwinner, and they couldn't afford to buy food or clothes, or pay the childrens' school fees.



She says:

"When I heard about ACAT, I felt that this was a good opportunity to help my husband sustain our family. And our lives have really improved, even though my husband passed away in 2018. Life goes on! I plan to feed my children and I sell the rest. Even though the weather wasn't so good, I was able to make R1000 on bean sales. Now I save R100 every month. I also started a business to sell goats, but unfortunately 5 died, and now only one goat remains. I am still learning how to make sure they survive, as I want to continue breeding goats because they are in demand."



Duduzile Mzobe joined ACAT in 2015. She is the first wife in a polygamous marriage, where her husband lives with the second wife in Durban, and thus finances are always very tight. But since she joined the programme, things have improved – now she is able to save on the monthly grocery budget because she does not have to buy everything because she produces some of her own food, like beans. In fact, she harvested enough for the family to eat, as well as to sell. She has also increased her goat production to sell and make money, and is now able to save R100 every month.

ASILIMENI

This was one of our Asilimeni Days held at Vuma zone, Maphumulo.



During the workshop, people were encouraged:

- to plant citrus trees
- to save money
- to expand their businesses
- to plant vegetables so that they can eat healthy food, and not depend on shops for their vegetables



The group members also used this opportunity to sell their produce to the community. They are so grateful for these Asilimeni days because some people made over R1400 from the sale of their produce.



Thandekile Gwala joined ACAT in 2015 to improve her business. She is a well-known business woman in the area, but her business was not doing very well. Today her business



is running at a profit, in fact she has registered a company which is now contracted with the Department of Environmental Affairs to eradicate alien plants. She has already created jobs for 16 youth in the area! She also has a catering business and a merchandise business. She has bought a trailer, and musical instruments for hiring at events such as weddings, funeral, birthdays and other functions. She has tents for hire, and a mobile fridge ("cold room"). She says she has managed all this diversity in business because of implementing ACAT's training. She makes a profit of ±R7000 a month from all her businesses. She also has a vegetable garden and is a member of a savings club whose desire is to save money for their children.



Eunice Mkhize says she joined ACAT in 2016 in response to her neighbours provocation! She says:

"I always asked my neighbour to give me some of her vegetables, until one day she asked, 'for how long are you going to beg me for my vegetables? Why don't you consider joining us?' This was painful, but worth it. I joined, and now I have my own vegetable garden. ACAT opened my eyes – I was so hopeless, now I am very hopeful. Work is a blessing, not a curse!"



Thandazile was influenced by her friends to join ACAT in 2016 and she has worked hard ever since, in her blockmaking business. After attending Basic Life Skills Course at the ACAT Centre, she became really motivated – through the course she learned how to manage the business, and work out pricing, costs and profit. She realized that she had been ignorant in these areas. Today her business has picked up – she is a supplier of concrete blocks in the area of Impendle. She makes a profit of R7000 a month. Her desire is to 'take the business to higher level', where she will be the main supplier of building materials in the area and in Bulwer, Underberg and Boston. Thandazile is a member of a savings club, and she has inspired her family to save, so they started a savings club that consists of her family members.



Group member **Dudu Zuma** says:

"My life was difficult before I joined ACAT in 2016. But since joining, my life has taken another direction. That Basic Life Skills Book is loaded with information from garden to small-scale business. I use a hand driven machine that grinds maize. I have seen my own mistakes, but I have also seen how rich I am. My ignorance has been my deadly disease".



Amanda Zondi joined ACAT in 2017. (The person on the picture is her sister Wendy as Amanda was at ACAT for the Community Volunteer Course). Amanda is our Community Volunteer in this zone. Besides being involved in the ACAT programme, Amanda is studying to become a teacher with UNISA. Amanda says:

"Thanks to ACAT who has brought smiles to my family, because now we can eat fresh vegetables, and we are able to sell some of our surplus. We are also saving towards our future!"





Zodwa Ndlovu of Ikhetelo G5 joined the programme in 2018. In one year, she has moved from being a survivalist, to a self-sustainable food producer! She now sells her produce at a profit. She is a member of the local Savings and Loans Group called Siyaphambili and recently she borrowed money from the SLG to purchase goats. As a result of both the food production and the goat business, her financial situation and life has changed dramatically. She now encourages other women to join the SLG and experience the difference it makes in their lives.



Dudu Mdlalose joined the programme in 2016. She now has a thriving vegetable garden where she grows different vegetables for her family. As a single parent, she is now able to support her family with school requirements and other household items. Despite the fact that there is a shortage of water in the area, she is still able to produce well, because she uses deep trenches.



Sibongile Mkhonza likes ACAT so much that she helps every member of her group, and encourages other community members to join the programme. She is also a Zone Facilitator who promotes the establishment of vegetable gardens. She has realized the link between producing food from her garden and good nutrition within her family. She is very proud of her produce, which she sometimes gives to her sick patients.



Phindile Nkomo joined the programme after attending an Asilimani Day where she was motivated to start her vegetable garden. She's very grateful to ACAT for 'opening her eyes', and wishes to engage in other business activities. Now she and her family eat fresh vegetables from her garden.



David Kunene of Izagila G5 joined the programme in 2017, in order to improve his quality of life. He uses ACAT's practices in his garden, and intends expanding his garden in order to plant more. He attends all garden workshops, as he is interested in gaining knowledge in farming. He has fenced his garden to prevent livestock from damaging his vegetables.

He says his motivation is derived from the money he receives when selling vegetables on pension points.



Evelyn Nyathikazi has a sewing and tuck shop business. She also grows and sells vegetables. She obtains uniform orders from various schools as a result of her marketing strategy. She also attends parents meetings to advertise her work, and to negotiate prices with them. Her tuckshop is supported by locals, as she has good customer relations and business skills. She saves money both in the bank and in the local SLG. She loves to motivate housewives and the youth to start their own small businesses!



Fikelelphi Khumalo of Phumelela Group grows vegetables for her family and for sale. As a result of her improved situation, she's been able to buy building materials to improve her house and fencing materials for her garden. She also has a confectionery business – the cakes and scones are sold to children and shops for resale.





Fikile Sokhela has been a group member since 2011. She thanks ACAT for the positive contribution to her life and the family. Today Fikile has an established and viable catering business! She has grown the business, and has bought equipment to boost it (chairs, tables, and cutlery). She trained her daughter and granddaughters to champion this business as their own. She is looking for a place in town to rent, so that she can expand the business. Agriculturally Fikile is one of many who have grown over the years into “phase three” – she is ready to become a commercial farmer.



Thembisile Ngcobo joined ACAT as a group member in 2016, after attending one of our field workshops in the area. She then took upon herself to find others who were interested, and they formed a group of five. She says: *“Before joining ACAT I was just a house wife, waiting for my husband’s salary. I took care of children, and just cooked and cleaned. But now, the yellow maize and pumpkins I harvested*

are a miracle! I have never experienced that before! I am now so motivated to work hard! I ‘grow’ chickens and sell them at 5 weeks old for R80 each.”

It was exciting to see the number of young people attending the community **Asilimani days** held in the area. They were enthusiastic and motivated, and it is our hope that they will implement what they learned. In addition to teaching agricultural practices, we taught on substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and child protection. The community’s enthusiasm was observed by the quality questions they asked.



Mr Ndebele is one of the oldest members in ACAT – he joined the programme as a group member in 2007. He’s a keen farmer, and we use his homestead to motivate others. He has attempted to do many things, and faced many disappointments that have tempted him to quit, but he says:

“Godly resilience has been my greatest motivation to keep me going. When ACAT introduced the savings and loan groups, I saw this as an opportunity to grow my businesses. My main occupation is in poultry – with broilers and layers, and traditional chickens. At the moment I have 30 birds (layers) laying 30 eggs a day. I sell eggs at R1.30 per egg, and the broilers for R90, and prices start from R70 for traditional chickens. I raise cattle. And sell my surplus fruit and vegetables. I have built two nice houses, and have sent my three children to school, and all have matriculated.”



Nomsa Bhengu joined ACAT as group member in 2014. As a result of her implementing what she learned through ACAT, her life has improved so much so that she has been identified by

the community as our Zone Facilitator. Through her, groups have teamed up and formed a sector group which is registered as a Non Profit Organisation. They are involved with business including decoration and catering, beadwork, and other income generation projects. Her goal is to help and develop a sustainable sector group that would bring positive impact in the lives of the people.





Mrs Mbona (second from right) joined ACAT as a group member in 2017, as a result of being motivated by our Community Volunteer. During 2017 she was passive, and did not attend any meetings and workshops. However, when she observed how much money her neighbour was making from vegetable sales, she realized that she was actually letting an opportunity pass her by.

So she decided to start a business in poultry and fast foods, and discovered that she is good at handling business. As our Asilimani days always provide some form of nourishment, we decided to support her business (instead of buying braai packs from the supermarket), by buying 6 chickens from her (at R70 per chicken). In this way, we were able to support our local farmers.

With her fast food business, she works with a capital of R3000, and she generates a profit of R1800. She has two main goals: to grow this business into a restaurant, and to build a house.



Thokozani Duma joined ACAT as a group member in 2017. She has a thriving, fenced, vegetable garden. She says:

"It is amazing the wonders of a nice vegetable garden! I am surrounded by young people who are highly motivated to go out and assist old people. The young people in this area had an opportunity to attend training at ACAT Centre. When they returned, they went out demonstrating what they learned to other Group members. I am an old lady who benefited from this campaign. I now listen to everything there is to learn, and because of my hard work, today I can feed the family with fresh vegetables. I sell the surplus. I have joined the saving club with a goal to help educate other grannies – especially for their grandchildren's tertiary education. I want to make a business out of my garden, and hopefully to become a big supplier of vegetables locally. The money I generate must go towards my 'granny education fund'. I feel so bad how I suffered, and the last thing I want is for my grandchildren to suffer. I am aware that my time of living is short, but I will make it my highest priority to generate income for them."





Pastor Mtshali attended the ACAT Pastors' course. He returned home, and called a local farmers meeting, where he gave a general overview of ACAT's Integrated Livelihoods Programme. Together with his congregation, they planted cabbages in a well fenced, irrigated vegetable garden. They have a strong water storage/supply where a large amount of water is available to be used for irrigation. They now supply supermarkets such as Boxer and Inkanyezi Cash & Carry, as well as schools for government's feeding schemes. They have sold 6 bakkie loads (200 heads) of cabbages at R8 each. Pastor Mtshali delivers 200 cabbages on each trip 3 days a week using R300 a day for petrol costs. There are no salaries being paid as yet, and there are still plenty of cabbages in the garden to be sold. Now Pastor Mtshali is on a mission to send a few members of his congregation to ACAT's Sunday School course in October, as well as the Basic Life Skills course next year, and even to send a few members of his Church Council to ACAT's Pastors course in 2020!



New members



Nonhlanhla Gwala joined the ACAT programme in January 2019.

"I thank God for ACAT because, since I joined, my life has changed. I now have my own garden where I plant vegetables for my family to eat. I sell the surplus to my neighbours. I save some of the money into my Savings and Loans Group. I want to involve myself in other community structures so that I can learn more, and improve."



Khanyisile Mkhwanazi joined ACAT in January 2019. She has made a large vegetable garden, and she plans to sell her surplus.



Futhiwe joined in January 2019, and started a small business selling fruit and vegetables. She is very grateful.



Grace Zuma joined in January 2019 and now that she has her own garden, she no longer buys vegetables from the shop, but rather picks them from her garden. She says:

"I am so grateful for joining the programme. It brings joy to my life! I've also joined the SLG and am saving money so that I can come out of poverty. And I want to grow spiritually."



Fikile Hlongwa of Amandlethu group joined ACAT in January 2019. She says:

"I joined because I wanted to start a small business. Then I joined my Savings and Loans Group, and now I am really saving money. But I got more than that, because now I have Jesus as the Saviour of my life! Now I experience joy in my family, and I am living a life of prayer. I want to thank this programme for changing my life."



Nompumelelo Ngema joined in January 2019. She also joined a Savings and Loans Group, and is saving towards improving her home. She also wants to start a small business. She is very grateful for this opportunity.

She shares a prayer of gratitude:

"I thank the Lord for loving me, and I pray that Jesus may keep and protect me and my family."

Asilimemi

Hlengiwe Gumede, ACAT's Community Extension Officer says:

"I want to thank God for the success of the Asilimemi and market day we had in our area where we invited people from Ethekwini, Richmond and Nhlazuka to be part of the day. I also thank the ACAT team who joined us on that day. A team from the Department of Agriculture attended, and they gave us tools and seeds. Nine people gave their lives to Jesus, and many people got to know the programme."



Bikani Ngcongco joined the ACAT programme many years ago. She thanks ACAT for teaching her how to start her own business. This year she planted 5 kg of beans, and harvested 100kg. She has put some aside for her family to eat, and sells the rest.



Practice makes perfect. **Thandi Sigwili** shows Community Volunteers and G5 members her vegetables! She is the lady wearing the graduation gown, as she was celebrating the completion of her community volunteer course, offered at the ACAT Training Centre. Thandi first joined the programme in 2013. She started as a G5 member, and later became a Community Volunteer. Before joining the programme, she used to be a well-known sangoma (*witchdoctor*) in the area. After being in the programme for a year, she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour. She then quit all her sangoma practices, and joined a local church where the gospel of Jesus is preached. She now owns her small business, and grows vegetables right through the year. She is a successful Community Volunteer, and is now one of the Zone Facilitators at Izingolweni.



The G5 members in Nkulu zone say they had one thing in common and that's what made them form the **sector group** that rears broiler chickens. The group took the initiative of starting this business after attending some business workshops that were offered by CVs mentored by ACAT EC (Wanda Zikalala).



Ntombi Mbhele from Nyonyana zone carries potato bags to package her bumper harvest. She sold over 30 10kg bags of potatoes. She sorts her potatoes according to sizes, small, medium and large.



Thandekile Nzimande from Dingimbiza Zone, stresses a point to workshop participants. As the facilitator for the workshop, she made sure that all the required training material was available for the training. Group members are keen to attend such workshops because it is where they 'learn by doing', meaning that everybody participates.



Community volunteer, **Sibongile Cele**, teaches group members on the importance of living a healthy life style. These discussions are held monthly, in order to equip group members and even non group members.

Jabu Jeza uses some waste 10kg bags, to plant vegetables since she has a very limited space for gardening.



'Local is lekker' – group members from **Dingimbiza Zone** at Mzumbe sell their produce to the local market. Due to fierce competition in the main market, group members have now taken the initiative to sell their produce at 'mini-markets'. Instead of going to sell at bigger markets, group members organize themselves to meet at a convenient place, and those who have some produce to sell, bring it to sell to the local community. Many items are sold at these markets, including farm produce, home industry items, livestock and clothes. Some group members also 'exchange' (barter) their items with each other, especially if a group member does not have the actual money to purchase.



Neli Ndadane's happy face expresses the fascination she has with the first vegetables grown with her own hands! She joined ACAT in 2017 as a result of being inspired by seeing a community volunteer's garden that looked very good. She says that before she joined ACAT, she only used to grow crops like amadumbe and maize, but never vegetables. So after joining the group, and attending training workshops in her zone, she realized that everyone can plant vegetables. She is now one of the most successful group members in the area, and a good example to other group members, as she grows vegetables throughout the year.

When **Thandi Chili** moved from Ophindweni zone to Kwamfana zone, she realised that there was a need to start the ACAT programme there.

"When I started development in this zone, they said what I am doing is going to fail, because other people tried things, but failed. But these words did not discourage me".

She started by forming G5s, and saving groups which help members to finance their projects.

(For example, **Sphiwe Ntuli** (below) has started a handcraft group through networking with the Department of Arts and Culture.)

Thandi has developed leadership skills in such a way that she has male members in her groups, and they respect her as their leader. She encourages CVs in her zone to start business through learning new skills, like handcraft.



Sphiwe Ntuli joined the programme in 2017. Before joining she was in a difficult situation as a single parent. Although she grew crops and vegetables, she did not harvest good crops. She was visited by Thandi Chili – who started a new group at Kwamfana zone – and Sphiwe was one of the first group members. Thandi taught them all the ACAT activities, including saving. They started a Saving group which helped them to buy inputs for their garden, fields and their businesses. Sphiwe decided to start an income generating project, since she had enough land to plant crops. She planted amadumbe, because she knew that in town, the market was very good. With the money from her savings, she



bought and planted 17 tins of madumbe seeds at a cost of R130 per tin. She harvested 47 tins and sold @ R150 per tin, and earned herself R7050.



Gladys Ngema joined the programme this year. After attending the Basic Life Skills course, she started a vegetable garden that is impressive. She also formed few more groups in her zone. The enthusiasm for the programme has 'forced' us to hold an Asilimeni Day in their zone. The community was very cooperative in preparation, and on the Asilimeni day itself. Now they have started their own savings and loans groups.

Beadwork and produce for sale at the **Asilimeni Day** held at Gladys Ngema's homestead...



Ntombizonke Magwaza joined Ubuhlebemvelo group in 2017, to improve her agricultural knowledge and business skills. She says that before she joined ACAT, she had tried to grow vegetables, but had not been very successful. Now she is successfully involved in vegetable production, as well as other crops, for her family consumption. She sells the surplus. She also farms green maize to supply some women who are marketing her produce in town. She makes R1500 per harvest, and saves R500 each month in a Savings and Loans Group.





Nokuthula Myeza joined ACAT in February, 2019 because she wanted to participate in 'the programme that changes people's lives'. She wanted a business, but she had no business ideas. Now she sells meat to the community, and from her profit she has managed to buy a deep freezer.



Life changes ... but skills remain! When her husband got ill, **Phumzile Ntombela** moved to Saron zone, leaving behind all their fruit trees and a big vegetable garden. At her new homestead, she started growing fruit and produced maize and beans for her family to eat, with enough surplus to sell.

Busi Ntanzi of Masethembane group joined the ACAT programme in 2007. She is active in her different businesses. She bakes and sells at least once a week. She grows and cooks chilies, which she sells (earning at least R900) at the Mandeni market. She buys and grows chicks from one



day until six or seven weeks, then sells them to her community. Her main market is at the nearby college, where they buy 20 chickens monthly. She has a big field of madumbe and sweet potatoes. She harvested 10 tins of madumbes, which she sold for R1300, and her sweet potatoes earned her R320.

Sabathile Buthelezi joined the ACAT programme in 2016, because she heard from other group members how the vegetable production changed their lives. She started by attending their training workshops on how to grow vegetables in a sustainable way, using organic material. Now she grows her own crops and vegetables. She rears chickens for sale, and has a beadwork business. She says:

"The money I earn really helps at home. It's helped me buy free range chickens for home and for sale. My life and family have changed. My husband is very happy with my contribution, because before I joined ACAT I just depended on him for everything".



We held an **Asilimani Day** at Mawusheni zone. We chose this area because we have new groups from this zone. G5 members learned how to grow fruit trees, dig and fill deep moisture trenches and set up tower gardens. We were very impressed to see many young people who came to learn. During Asilimani Days, G5 members bring their garden produce and products for sale including maize, jugo beans, amadumbe, oranges, cakes onions, potatoes, and even clothes, to sell.



Mbodozi Vilakazi joined Isinamuva group after seeing his wife change. When she joined the ACAT programme, nobody was working, but after joining ACAT, he saw such a change in her. She started with a vegetable garden, and their first harvest was good.

"I was motivated by her to start something. We moved up from a small vegetable garden, to a big field of maize and beans. Now we no longer buy most of our food from town. We milk cows to get milk. We have goats, and free range chickens. I have the carpentry skills to make chairs and tables. I visit places which produce planks, get those that are thrown out, and use them to make chairs and tables, as well as chicken sheds and cages. I work hand in hand with my wife who is a Zone Facilitator. She makes and sells aprons and dresses. This business is doing very well, and the market is good. With the money we earned from our sales we were able to build a strong house. I thank ACAT, my life has changed, my carpentry skills have improved, and my wife keeps good records in order to see if we are making profit or not".





The **Ithubalethu Broiler Sector Group** was formed 3 years ago by the G5 members who got together to start a business of rearing chickens for sale in the area. As a requirement, they also have home gardens in which vegetables are planted for home consumption. They have a Savings and Loans Group to save and lend money for the purpose of purchasing stock and feed. In the picture, Ms Nhlanhla Zulu – one of the group members – is seen with the chickens. They have finished building a broiler house, which is made up of cement blocks with corrugated iron. They take turns in feeding the chickens, which are sold locally. ACAT has assisted them with simple record-keeping training, which is understandable by all the members. This has helped them with a sense of belonging and ownership, hence they are all actively and collectively committed.

Cebisile Buthelezi of Zama G5 comes from Machanca Zone, Nquthu. She has a business making grass mats, which are used for sleeping on. She also teaches other G5 members who have an interest in this money making business, how to make the mats. The profits she earns are used to support her family. After hearing about ACAT, she decided to join the programme, which has helped her a great deal. In winter, she cuts grass for thatching, and bundles them for sale, in order to supplement her income. She also has a vegetable garden for home consumption.



Sisters **Nompumelelo and Nomkhosi Kubheka**, joined the ILP programme in 2018 after having done the Basic Life Skills course at ACAT. Nompumelelo is a multi-skilled entrepreneur who is very ambitious. She is a confectioner who makes home baked buns, cakes and birthday cakes (the latter on order). She also makes grass mats, which she sells on pension days. Nomkhosi has her own vegetable garden in which she has planted different varieties of vegetables. She decided to become a Community Volunteer because she has a passion to help people (especially youth) in the area. Recently, she organized G5s to form a Vegetable Production Co-op, selling their produce to the surrounding supermarkets and schools. Nomkhosi also serves as a secretary of the local SLG and ZSIC Committee. As a result of her improved financial situation, she has moved from 'survival to sustainability', and her life has changed quite dramatically.



Celimpilo Mkhwanazi joined the Ncengimpilo G5 in 2018. He is the breadwinner at home, and supports his elderly mother and his siblings. He grows seasonal crops and vegetables and as a result of his successful food production, his financial position improved. He managed to pay for his school fees doing carpentry. He now produces kitchen units, built-in wardrobes, tables and chairs. As his carpentry business is not fast moving, he joined the local Vegetable Production Co-op and grass-mat making sector groups.

Sphamandla Makhoba attended the Basic Life Skills course and came back home very motivated. He applied the skills he learned from ACAT by starting a vegetable garden, which changed his poverty situation at home. He then decided to use his welding skills (which he learned when he was temporarily employed). He now produces pedestrian /motor vehicle fence gates, and erects fencing for his customers. He learned record keeping skills at ACAT which helps him to do his bookkeeping well, and enables him to calculate profits for his business.



Gabangani Mthethwa of Isulabasha G5, is a broiler producer who is keen to grow his business venture. He purchases one day old chicks, and rears them to a point of sale (at 6 weeks old), and then sells them locally and at pension pay points. He also has a vegetable garden, where he plants vegetables for home consumption and sells surplus locally.



Sister Dlongolo is a group member and a Community Healthcare Worker. She motivates the community to eat a healthy balanced diet. She is always keen to learn more new farming techniques to transfer to the community. She is also an active member of the local SLG.





Lucas Motloung joined the ILP programme after seeing his wife (who was a G5 member) provide for the family. Now even though he is unemployed, he is able to support his family both financially and with material things by growing vegetables and crops. He makes a good turnover of R5000, and saves in the local SLG in order to provide for 'rainy days'. He says:

"There is a need to mobilize people in the field of community development, so that the government can realize the importance of giving us resources to take our development to the next level, and also that our zone becomes a centre of attraction."



When **Thandi Buthelezi** joined ACAT in 2005, she was unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. Since then she has learned many 'skills', including influencing her husband to help other G5 members to fence off their vegetable gardens, and helping group members to form successful agri-businesses. She has completed many ACAT courses, which has equipped her to do her work better. She visits G5 members, encouraging them to start small businesses and home food gardens. She has now been appointed as a Zone Facilitator.

Siphelele Ndlela joined the ILP programme in 2018. She decided to establish a tuck shop where she sells groceries, fruit and vegetables, in order to supplement her husband's income. The vegetables sold in the Tuckshop are produced by her, from her thriving vegetable garden. She credits ACAT with teaching her the skills to become a successful entrepreneur.



Virginia Zwane is a single parent and breadwinner. She tries her best to produce vegetables despite water shortages, and the sandy soil which does not retain water. Nevertheless, she is able to feed and support a family of 10 children with the money she gets from her grass-mat sales.



Babhekile Mabuza joined 2 years ago. Now she grows vegetables for home and for sale. This has improved her situation – now she's able to support her family, and no longer buys vegetables from town. She serves on a local development committee and encourages people to do development projects for their own benefit.



Siyazizamela Co-op was established by the members of Isulabasha G5 in 2018 after they realized the power of working together. The members saved and contributed money to purchase fencing materials and agricultural inputs. They hired a tractor to do land operations. Then the members approached the Department of Economic Development for registration of the Co-op. They are now in the process of negotiating with the Department of Agriculture for further assistance in the development of the co-op. The training they get from ACAT's field team is equipping them for future endeavours, as well as day-to-day running of the business. Members of the co-op work together and share ideas. Their produce is supplied to supermarkets in the surrounding areas. Members have also joined the locally formed SLG to save and borrow money to purchase inputs.



Mlondi Mbatha joined in 2018 to improve his life. He now grows crops and vegetables in big fields, and is developing a farming agri-business. He is keen to learn more agricultural skills as he has a passion for producing crops. He has planted more vegetables in order to gain improved profits.

Thelisile Ngcobo joined the programme after attending an Asilimeni Day where she was greatly motivated by the demonstrations, and by seeing G5's produce. She also keeps small livestock including poultry, sheep and pigs which are kept for home consumption. She is always willing to help people become more self-sufficient like her.



Khethiwe Khumalo joined Bambanani G5 to learn new agricultural practices. She is very diligent in her work, and is willing to help other G5 members. She recalls the joy and happiness they had the day when they harvested for the first time. She always recommends ACAT's training and assistance to other people.



Alexinah Mthethwa joined Bambanani G5, two years ago. Now she applies what she learned from ACAT, including this experiment to conserve water. As a result of her improved situation, she is now in the process of extending her house, and recently bought a fridge.





Thokozile Nkabinde is 65 and has been in the programme since 2007. She wanted to learn more about agri-business – and since then she has never stopped growing crops and vegetables. She says:

"Saving money monthly has helped me build a house and put tiles and a ceiling on it. Savings helped me buy a Jojo Tank and goats. My house looks good and strong. I enjoy a balanced diet and a good quality of life. I am now saving to buy a car. I am also in the Zone committee where we handle all the work of the Zone."



Sarafina Mthethwa (82) joined ACAT in 2008. Before joining, she planted crops, but not in a productive way. Now she grows winter and summer crops to feed her family and sells the surplus. She says:

"I have enough food for me and my family, as well as enough to sell. On the business side, I make and sell plastic mats. I look after 10 grandchildren whose mothers have passed on. Through saving I have improved my house which was in a very bad condition."



Thakasile Nxumalo re-joined the programme in 2018. Long ago she was a member of ACAT, and she used to save money, so when she found her old saving book, she asked about ACAT and she was referred to Thakasile Hadebe (ACAT CEO). After they met, they started three groups in the KwaMshini Nhlalakahle Zone. They also sent two pastors to attend the recent Pastor's course at ACAT.

"I really love planting, saving and processing vegetables. I have started with the CV course, because I want more knowledge. I have a vegetable garden and pumpkin garden. I have just become a member of a SLG, and our group has started cooking lessons where we cook vegetables and make juices with an aim to earning money."

Khanyisile Zuma loves business and making her garden profitable. She has a broiler business, and sells airtime and electricity.

"Because of my improved situation, I bought floor tiles for my house. I am a CV in our Goodhome Zone, and I help with workshops, gardens, business and the childrens' programme. I also teach Sunday School."



Nomusa Ndlovu joined in 2012 to learn more about farming and health. She attended area workshops on how to grow vegetables in a sustainable way, basic bookkeeping and business. Because of her enthusiasm, she completed the Community Volunteer Course and now helps her community, especially with the children's programme. As a business, she makes and sells building blocks. She has a small vegetable garden, and a big plot where she grows maize and dry beans. She sells maize and beans, but this year the drought affected her crops. With her savings she bought a water tank and many items for her home.



Lucas Kubheka joined ACAT in 2009. He says:

"As a family we have a catering business and we rent out white wedding dresses. My wife is the one in charge of this. I joined ACAT because I enjoyed the gospel aspect, and after studying the Bible, I was made pastor of our church. I have started my own garden, and have attended the pastors' course and CV 1 course at the ACAT Centre. This year I planted 200 heads of cabbage, from which I've already made R1500. I am still selling them. This year I joined a SLG and I already can see the difference it is making."



Ever since she joined ACAT **Gabisile Khumalo** has been an example to her neighbours. She joined in 2009 because she saw group member's gardens producing more than hers. She has a business where she sells mattresses, fridges, TVs, cupboards, pillows, and washing basins. There is a lot of improvement evident at her home. She is a very active lady. During her spare time she cuts grass from the mountain, and makes grass brooms for sale. She has a productive vegetable garden, and a bigger one for maize and potatoes. Her children are now capable of running her business and planting for production. She recently bought a Jojo tank through the SLG. She says:

"The water I save really helps in the garden. I am so grateful to ACAT for this programme."