



**Impact of
ACAT's Programme
on Children and Youth
– the next generation**

Report for the 6 months 2019



ACAT's aim this year is to reach as many teenagers and children as we can to involve them in activities that will enhance their home food security and give them life-long agricultural skills.

As their parents are already involved in ACAT groups, and most of them have implemented some form of food production, it makes sense to get their children involved and excited about their potential to learn the skills that will augment their health and over time their wealth! The response from the children has been remarkable and has revived agricultural interest amongst group members themselves, the community volunteers and even their on-looking neighbours! Musa Zuma our youth specialist says: *"Little hearts are much softer than adults. Give them the truth with love, and they really grab on to it"*.

Some highlights of this initiative include:

- Youth Asilimani workshops have been held in all areas, where the importance of eating nutritiously has been carefully explained to both the parents and children. Lessons on why the body needs certain foods have been made interesting and informative. Children have learned why eating fruit and vegetables is important for their physical and mental growth.
- ACAT supplies seedlings to all the youngsters attending these workshops.
- All the teenagers who attended the 5 Youth Basic Life Skills courses were trained how to make a productive vegetable garden and compost. They returned home with food production packs which included seed and compost to enable them to get started on their own vegetable gardens.

- Teenagers say that they feel left out at home but through ACAT's interventions, they feel that they have been noticed and given hope for their futures.

But as always there are challenges, including:

- A lack of fencing to prevent chickens, goats and cattle destroying their gardens.
- A shortage of gardening tools to help dig and tend their gardens.
- Many children are being raised by their grandmothers or other relatives and do not get the parental support that they need. (For instance at one course, 24 boys were asked who lives with both parents, and only 1 boy responded.)
- Some children find it extremely hard to leave the ACAT Centre after their course, because they know how tough it is back at home.



Farmer and future vet?

Zabelo Nkabinde is 14 years old and lives with her mother, brothers, aunt and cousins in the Mondlo area. Her mother is an active ACAT group member and is very proud of her daughter!

Her mother relates that Zabelo's business started when she asked her mother to buy her a female pig. This pig sadly got sick and subsequently died. Zabelo was very upset, and asked if she could try to raise another one. So they bought a second pig, and then discovered it was pregnant! She soon produced five piglets!

In the beginning Zabelo's mother helped her pay for pig feed, but now she is able to do this herself. She always cleans their enclosure, and makes sure they have water.

Zabelo is passionate about school and would love to farm and qualify as a veterinarian. When she attended ACAT's Youth Basic Life Skills course she was able to share about her pig business. Her next plan is to buy a bull!



She also is a member of the local youth gardening club and helped at their ACAT workshop this year which was well attended with children as young as 3 practicing how to plant vegetable seedlings!



Sustaining vegetables

Lungelo Mjwara and her family have not stopped producing vegetables since they joined ACAT. They say that it has sustained them as no one in the family is employed. She stays with her aunt and cousins, and the vegetables provide food for the family, and income when they produce a surplus. They also sell snacks to earn income.

Lungelo's brother (18 years old) suffered a minor stroke and as a result is unable to walk or write properly. He is slowly recovering, but this has been a very difficult time for the family. They are looking after him with great care.



Lungelo is doing well at school with her favourite subjects being Life Orientation, English and isiZulu. She would love to train to become a pilot when she finishes school. She enjoys reading and makes great use of the ACAT training manuals.





Intergenerational skills transfer

Nontokozi Ngobese and her sister live with their grandmother and aunt, Shiela Ngobese. Nontokozi is 13 and in Grade 8. Her aunt Shiela has been with ACAT for many years, and serves as a Community Extension Officer in the Nquthu area.

Shiela has an established sewing business and lately she has started to transfer the skills to her nieces.

She has also taught her nieces the potential worth of recycling waste material such as plastic. She has inspired them to collect plastic and make skipping ropes and door mats. As a result, their

homestead is always clean and neat. They also have a vegetable garden and the girls are well trained in helping their grandmother produce vegetables which they eat and sell.

Nontokozi works hard at school and her favourite subjects are technology, maths and natural science.





Beadwork business

Mawanda Nzimande is 16 years old, in Grade 11 and lives in Mzombe with her mother, granny, sister and uncle. The granny is a community volunteer with ACAT, but the rest of the adults are unemployed.

Their lives and homestead have really improved through implementing the ACAT programme. They have planted vegetables and fruit trees, and now hardly ever buy vegetables any more. Granny also runs a creche from their house, and generates an income

from caring for children. In addition, the entire family creates beadwork for sale, and ever since Mawanda returned from ACAT's Youth Basic Life Skills course, she has been even more helpful in their bead business. She enjoys school and loves to play soccer and dance.





Business minded

Amahle Zuma is 12 years old and lives with her mother Khanyisile in the Okhahlamba area.

Khanyisile has been very committed to implement what she has learned through ACAT, and says that since she joined, her life has improved especially through her business activities.

Amahle has helped her mother in their productive garden and already is skilled in producing and selling any surplus vegetables.

As a family they raise and sell broiler chickens, and Amahle is diligent in feeding, cleaning and looking after their chickens. She says she enjoys helping wherever she can. She has also benefited from Sunday School as a result of their involvement in ACAT.



Amahle's mother says:

Thanks to ACAT's training I have learned to produce vegetables, raise chickens properly, and to run my business to make a profit to sustain myself and my family.



Inclusive approach

Thakasile Mkhonza (*left*) lives with her granny, mother, aunt and cousins in Okhahlamba.

Although she is 18 she is in Grade 7 as she is mentally challenged. She loves school, and although her ability to learn is slow, her teachers understand her very well. She never stops trying and enjoys Zulu dancing and helping around the house.

She recently attended ACAT's Youth Basic Life Skills course. She says she enjoyed the course and that it helped her

stop being shy and become more confident despite her challenges. She loves to produce her YBSL certificate and share what she learned from the course.

As a family they have been involved in the ACAT programme and have reaped the benefits of producing their own food from their vegetable garden.

Their mother is also a member of an ACAT Savings and Loans group and through this commitment, she has been able to save towards and buy a wardrobe and a

stove. And as a result of this, Thakasile has learned to bake for the family – and in time this is a skill that will enable her to earn an income.





Producing food is a habit

Philasande Ndlovu is 14 years old, in Grade 8, and lives with his mother, granny and aunts in Vulindlela. This season they produced a very good madumbe crop – what they don't eat, they sell to their neighbours. His granny Thuleleni says:

"Before we were part of ACAT, food was very scarce, but now, producing food has become a family habit! I am so happy with Philasande. He is very committed to helping us around the house, and with our food garden. I am so thankful too for ACAT and the opportunities it provides for the children of group members. Philasande attended the youth course last year, and since then his attitude has really improved. His reading has improved because he reads the training manual and Bible he received".





Great maize crop

Amahle Mvelase is 15 years old and in Grade 11. She lives with her granny and mother in Vulindlela.

Her granny Bertina has been a group member for many years, and the whole family has been involved in food production as a result.

This year they harvested a bumper maize crop.

They also produce enough vegetables to feed the family.

Amahle's granny says:

"Amahle has been a blessing and a great help around the house and garden and I appreciate her attitude since she returned for ACAT's youth course."

Amahle has learned how to bake from her granny, and dreams of having a baking business.

Amahle says:

"Visiting ACAT for the Youth Basic Life Skills course opened my mind about what I can do after Matric. I am doing well in my studies and I now dream of studying to become a doctor. My hobbies are listening to music and I really love Zulu dancing. I also love baking and perhaps one day I could open a business."



Crafty Wandile

Wandile Zuma is 8 years old and lives with his parents and grandparents in the Impendle area.

His father is an ACAT group member, and the whole family is involved in producing craft (beadwork, and wood carvings) for their business. They are also involved in producing their own food from their vegetable garden. The recent Asilimani day held in their area encouraged them all. Wandile has his own business making hats which he sells to other children in their neighbourhood.

He also has made a wheelbarrow out of recycled material. His teacher says that Wandile shows a lot of wisdom for his age, and she encourages him in his thinking and craft work.





Cabbages and business

Minenhle Mazibuko is 16 years old and lives with her mother in the Impendle area. They are part of ACAT's programme and have produced an excellent cabbage crop this season.

Minenhle enjoys gardening and is very willing to go around to the neighbours to sell their surplus vegetables.

She also helps with the family business of selling clothes, tooth brushes, underwear and socks.

They are so thankful that they are part of a savings and loans group as it has enabled them to develop their business to produce more income.



Minenhle recently attended ACAT's Youth Basic Life Skills course, and often refers to the business and food production sections of the manual she received at the course.

She is doing well at school and her favourite subjects are Geography, English and History. She wants to study to become a teacher after she completes her matric.