



# INYANDA national land movement community news

December 2025

## Rural Schoolchildren Face Dual Threats from Pesticides and Unsafe Water

*By Dr Bradwill Joewindean Jansen*

**A** new study into pesticide exposure at rural schools has revealed alarming environmental health risks facing children in farm schools, highlighting systemic neglect in South Africa's agricultural regions. In

September 2025, the Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU) and the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE) launched a joint water testing campaign in response to escalating reports from educators and

community members about the poor quality of water in farm schools across the Langeberg area. The results revealed that only 8 out of 18 schools tested had safe water, with the remaining schools showing microbial contamination and unsafe drinking conditions.



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## Pesticide Exposure

The water study followed a month-long investigation across the 18 schools in June 2025, capturing testimonies through surveys and interviews with educators and principals and focus groups with farmworkers and parents, while fieldworkers documented environmental evidence. The investigation showed that 14 of the 18 schools are located within 500 metres of active spraying zones and that children and educators are frequently exposed to pesticide drift during school hours.

Teachers reported that chemical mist often drifts into classrooms without warning, forcing lessons to be interrupted or, in one case, an evacuation. Learners regularly experience headaches, nausea, respiratory problems, burning eyes, dizziness, and rashes during spraying periods. Educators also noted that concentration and attendance decline sharply during spraying seasons, undermining children's right to education.

## Water Contamination

The results of the water testing revealed that 56% of schools tested exhibited varying degrees of pesticide residues. Using community-based testing kits supplied by the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), the study found that only 8 schools had safe water. The remaining 10 schools showed microbial contamination, with samples turning black within 48–72 hours - evidence of high bacterial loads. Teachers and parents reported frequent cases of diarrhoea, stomach cramps, vomiting, rashes, and fatigue among learners.

Chemical residues such as nitrates and pesticides were also detected, posing additional risks including endocrine disruption and neurotoxicity. Teachers observed slower comprehension and weaker performance in reading and arithmetic, linking poor water quality directly to learning outcomes.

## Cognitive Impacts: Evidence from UCT Study

A broader scientific study published in November 2025 by the University of Cape Town's Centre for Environmental and Occupational Health Research and the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, found similar results. The study reported on data collected from 445 school children ages nine to 16 between 2017 and 2019 in the Hex River Valley, Grabouw and Piketberg in the Western Cape. Results showed:

- 12 of 13 pesticides were detected in over 98% of children tested.
- Higher levels of chlorpyrifos and profenfos were linked to poorer cognitive flexibility.
- Exposure to pyrethroids and triazoles was associated with weaker inhibitory control.
- Researchers warned that chronic, low-level exposure during childhood and adolescence - critical windows of brain development - may cause lasting impairments in attention, problem-solving, and self-regulation.

The UCT team concluded that pesticide exposure compromises executive function, a set of higher-order processes essential for academic achievement and behavioural regulation. These findings reinforce the community-based evidence from Langeberg and Overberg, showing that environmental hazards are not only making children sick but also eroding their developmental potential.

## Structural Inequality

Both studies highlight that affected children are overwhelmingly from farmworker families in historically marginalized rural communities. Farm schools often rely on untreated boreholes, tanks, or rivers rather than municipal water systems, leaving them vulnerable to contamination. The proximity of schools to spraying zones and the absence of protective buffer policies further expose learners to environmental hazards. Researchers describe the situation as a form of environmental racism, noting that

urban and suburban schools are not subjected to similar risks.

## Policy Failures

The findings point to significant governance gaps.

- No legal buffer zones exist around schools to prevent pesticide drift.
- Farmers are not required to notify communities before spraying.
- Municipal and provincial authorities do not regularly monitor rural school water supplies.
- Departments of Education and Health provide no systematic guidance or support.

As a result, schools and parents are left to manage crises without institutional protection.

## Community Response

Despite these challenges, communities are mobilizing. CSAWU and TCOE have used the visual evidence of contaminated water samples - bottles of water turning black within days - as organizing tools in public meetings. Parents, teachers, and learners are demanding:

- Pesticide-free zones around schools.
- Mandatory warning systems before spraying.
- Regular medical screenings for affected children.
- Infrastructure investment to connect farm schools to safe municipal water.
- A transition toward agroecological farming practices that reduce reliance on chemical inputs.

## Conclusion

Together, the investigation and water studies reveal a dual crisis undermining both health and education in rural South Africa. The evidence shows that farm schools are not safe learning environments but sites of exposure to toxic chemicals and contaminated water. Researchers warn that without urgent policy intervention, rural children will continue to suffer preventable illnesses and educational setbacks.

# MUSIEK, KUNS EN POLITIEKE OPVOEDING VERSTERK JEUGLEIERSKAP

**V**an 28 tot 30 November 2025 het die Rural Legal Centre, saam met vennote in die Langeberg- en Overberggebiede, 'n dinamiese en lewendige jeugkamp by Rustic Venues in Wolseley aangebied. Die kamp het 45 jongmense uit verskeie plattelandse dorpe saamgebring en 'n energieke ruimte vir leer, gesprek, kreatiwiteit en gemeenskapsbou bevorder. Die doel was om jong mense aan nuwe idees bloot te stel, hulle leierskap te versterk en hulle begrip van die uitdagings in plattelandse gemeenskappe te verdiep.

## TEMAS EN LEERAKTIWITEITE

Die kamp het op twee hoof temas gefokus: Feminisme en Sosiale Geregtigheid, en Klimaatverandering en Klimaatgeregtigheid.

Op Saterdagoggend het Denia Jansen die sessie oor Feminisme en Sosiale Geregtigheid gefasiliteer. Baie deelnemers het erken dat dit hul eerste kennismaking met die term was, en hulle was opgewonde om nuwe begrippe te leer wat direk met hul daaglikse ervarings van ongelykheid en genderrolle verband hou. Die sessie het gesprek, persoonlike refleksie en groepwerk aangemoedig, en dit het deelnemers gehelp om die teorie met hul eie lewens te verbind. Teen die einde het baie gewys dat hulle graag meer oor feminisme wou leer en dit in hul gemeenskappe wou toepas.

In die middag het Andile Zulu van AIDC die sessie oor Klimaatverandering en Klimaatgeregtigheid gefasiliteer. Hy het duidelik die verskil verduidelik tussen klimaatverandering as 'n wetenskaplike feit en klimaatgeregtigheid as 'n politieke en sosiale stryd. Jong mense het gepraat oor

droogtes, hittegolwe, stygende voedselpryse en besoedeling, en hoe dit plattelandse gemeenskappe harder tref. Baie deelnemers het gesê dit was die eerste keer dat hulle die woord "klimaatgeregtigheid" gehoor het, en hulle het waardeur hoe die sessie die verband tussen die omgewing, grond, lewensbestaan en wêreldwye ongelykheid verduidelik het.

## KREATIEWE UITDRUKKING

Omdat kuns en kultuur belangrik is in jeugontwikkeling, het die kamp kreatiewe sessies aangebied waar deelnemers hul idees op nuwe maniere kon uitdruk.

Denise Tallard, 'n kunstenaar van Genadendal, het 'n praktiese kunswerksessie aangebied. Sy het gewys hoe eenvoudige materiaal gebruik kan word om idees in betekenisvolle kunswerke te verander. Deelnemers het kuns gemaak wat feminisme, grondstryd, klimaatsonreg en hul eie ervarings uitgebeeld het. Vir baie het dit nuwe selfvertroue gebou en gewys dat hulle versteekte talente het.

Die musieksessie, gelei deur Kazimla, 'n jong koorleier van Zolani, was een van die hoogtepunte van die kamp. Deur saam sing, ritme-oefeninge en liriese uitdrukking het die jongmense 'n nuwe lied geskep, geïnspireer deur die naweek se temas. Die sessie het eenheid en trots gebou en gewys hoe

musiek 'n sterk vorm van aktivisme en genesing kan wees.

## IMPAKTE

Die deelnemers het huis toe gegaan, geïnspireer, ingelig en vol selfvertroue. Baie het gesê die kamp het hul oë oopgemaak vir nuwe idees en vir hulle die taal gegee om die struikelblokke in hul gemeenskappe te beskryf. Die kamp het 'n veilige en bemagtigende ruimte geskep waar jong mense oor identiteit, geregtigheid en die omgewing kon dink, terwyl hulle nuwe netwerke met ander plattelandse jongmense gebou het.

## GEVOLGTREKKING

Die jeugkamp was 'n groot sukses. Dit het 'n transformerende leerervaring gebied aan jong mense wat dikwels nie toegang tot sulke ruimtes het nie. Deur politieke opvoeding, kuns, kultuur en kreatiewe aktiwiteite te kombineer, het die kamp gehelp dat jong mense nie net die konsepte verstaan nie, maar dit ook emosioneel en persoonlik ervaar.

Die kamp het jeugleierskap in die Langeberg- en Overberggebiede versterk en weer gewys hoe belangrik dit is om in plattelandse jeug te belê. Wanneer jong mense die regte kennis, ondersteuning en ruimte kry, staan hulle op met moed, kreatiwiteit en toewyding om verandering te bring.



# TCOE Joins Global Agroecology Convening in Brazil to Strengthen Farmer-Led Research and Climate Advocacy

*South African delegation aligns with global movements at IPA-Global's first international convening.*

**T**he Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE) joined more than 90 participants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe at the first IPA-Global Convening on Participatory Action Research (PAR) for Agroecology and Climate Advocacy. Held from November 17 to 21, this landmark gathering brought together social movements, farmer networks, researchers, and advocates to deepen collective learning and strengthen global solidarity for climate-resilient food systems.

Made possible through the vision and support of the Agroecology Fund, the convening created space for farmer-to-farmer exchanges, political dialogue, and collective strategy. It reaffirmed agroecology as not only a science and practice, but a movement and political project for justice.

## **Collective Learning and Advocacy**

Grounded in popular education and participatory co-learning, the convening highlighted how community-generated data - from water management to indigenous seed care - provides evidence of climate resilience and food sovereignty. This evidence is not abstract; it is rooted in lived realities and strengthens advocacy for policies that reflect diverse territorial contexts rather than

imposing one-size-fits-all models.

Sessions explored how PAR strengthens communities' ability to speak for themselves in policy spaces, shifting narratives and influencing decision-makers. By documenting farmer-led practices and ecological innovations, movements can build legitimacy and challenge dominant industrial models of agriculture.

The convening also emphasised the role of women and youth as agents of change, ensuring that agroecology transitions are inclusive and intergenerational. Popular education processes were showcased as vital for building political consciousness alongside technical skills, reinforcing that agroecology is as much about power and justice as it is about farming methods.

## **South African Contribution**

The South African Agroecology Action Collective, anchored by TCOE, presented its national initiative **"Strengthening Climate Resilience by Scaling Up Agroecology."** This project maps grassroots agroecology nodes, facilitates farmer-to-farmer learning, pilots ecological input models, and advocates for a National Agroecology Strategy grounded in justice and participation.

The initiative aims to reach 400

producers through farmer-produced ecological inputs, while building provincial platforms that connect local networks into a national movement. For TCOE, the convening was a moment of alignment, showcasing farmer-led research, strengthening national networks, and forging deeper ties across the Global South.

The South African delegation also contributed to poster fairs and convergence sessions, sharing experiences of scaling agroecology and advancing climate advocacy. These exchanges reinforced that agroecology movements across Africa confront similar challenges - from land struggles to ecological input sovereignty - and can benefit from coordinated strategies.

## **Lessons from Brazil**

Field visits to agrarian reform settlements and Brazil's National School Florestan Fernandes (ENFF), founded by the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), illustrated agroecology as both technical practice and political education. ENFF embodies agroecology as political praxis, combining training in ecological farming with political education that sustains long-term movement resilience.

Themes emerging from panels and exchanges included:

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- Land reform as foundational to agroecological transformation
- Political education as essential to sustaining movements
- Critiques of global climate negotiations and carbon markets
- Defence of indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge against extractive “green transition” models.

These reflections echoed global concerns about carbon markets and “just transition” narratives that risk detachment from local realities. Participants emphasised the need to challenge the power of industry within climate policy spaces and to elevate community-led alternatives.

### Advocacy Through Research

At the heart of IPA-Global is the belief that PAR is not only a methodology but a political strategy. Evidence generated through participatory processes can shift narratives, attract media attention, and influence decision-makers. Coalition-building and sustained investment — financial, relational, and organisational — were identified as crucial for long-term impact.

The convening built on the momentum of IPA-Global grants launched in December 2024, which awarded 22 collaborative initiatives across four continents with up to USD 190,000 each. These projects align participatory research with advocacy to influence multi-level policies and advance agroecology as a climate solution. Funded activities include research, advocacy campaigns, policy dialogues, and learning exchanges among collaborative networks.

By the end of the grant period, initiatives will deliver research-informed policy recommendations, advocacy roadmaps, and creative communication outputs. Together, they will drive agroecology as a transformative solution for food systems and climate justice.

**Strengthening South-South Solidarity**  
The SADC cohort of attendees identified shared opportunities in ecological input sovereignty, land struggles, youth organising, and climate advocacy. These exchanges reinforced the importance of coordinated strategies across Africa, highlighting that agroecology movements face interconnected challenges and can

benefit from collective learning.

For TCOE, this deepening regional and global solidarity strengthens its resolve to advance a people-led agroecology transition in South Africa — one rooted in organising, community evidence, and collective action.

### Looking Ahead

The Brazil convening reinforced that agroecology is a science, a practice, a movement, and a political project for justice. For TCOE and its allies, the lessons carried home are clear: organise, educate, research with communities, build alliances, advocate collectively, and nurture the imagination required for a just agroecological future.

The Agroecology Fund’s support not only made the gathering possible but also strengthened the global ecosystem of organisations striving toward structural transformation of food and climate systems. As agroecology gains recognition as a concrete response to the climate crisis, the convening demonstrated that solutions can and do emerge from the land, from communities, and from collective action.



# TCOE's Regional Animal Workshop Charts Alternatives to Industrial Animal Farming

**T**he Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE) and the Rural Women's Assembly hosted their second major gathering on animals in agroecology. The workshop marked a significant step in advancing regional dialogue on livestock and food sovereignty.

What began with the 2024 Livestock Owners Seminar has now grown into a regional platform. Farmers, researchers, movement leaders, and traditional knowledge holders from across Southern Africa came together to explore alternatives to industrial animal production.



## From Seminar to Regional Body of Work

The 2024 Livestock Owners Symposium laid the groundwork for this year's discussions. That event highlighted urgent concerns:

- Industrial beef production and feedlots driving climate change and unaffordable models for smallholders.
- The need for agroecological alternatives such as indigenous plants, regenerative grazing, and farmer-led breeding.
- Recognition of livestock as a central livelihood asset for rural families facing land scarcity, water shortages, and market exclusion.

Out of this space came calls for TCOE to build a national livestock agroecology programme, document medicinal plants, and strengthen farmer-to-farmer exchanges. The 2025 workshop was the first major step toward realising that vision.

## A Convergence of Regions and Practices

Thirty-eight participants attended from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Swaziland, and Lesotho. The gathering included TCOE leaders, members of the Rural Women's Assembly, Inyanda, Mawubuye, and technical specialists.

Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza opened the workshop by noting that livestock had long been absent from agroecology discussions. He urged TCOE to ground its learning in practice, including on a TCOE-owned farm.

## Thematic Sessions

The programme unfolded across four structured sessions, each deepening

alternatives to industrial livestock systems:

1. **Animals and Animal Welfare in Traditional Agricultural Practices**
  - Understanding animal welfare: meanings, interpretations, and misinterpretations.
  - How industry narratives distort welfare debates.
  - African traditions, philosophies, and indigenous practices.
  - Implications for agroecological farming systems.
2. **Animal Agriculture and Climate Change**
  - Climate change and livestock production in Southern Africa.
  - Desertification: causes and solutions, presented by Andrew Ardington.
  - Adaptation strategies including indigenous breeds, rangeland management, shade, and integrated systems.
3. **Vegetation Alternatives and Landscape Regeneration**
  - Exploration of indigenous vegetation solutions.
  - Medicinal plant systems and ethnoveterinary practices.
  - Regeneration practices linked to agroecology.
4. **Natural Landscapes and Animal Production**
  - Inclusive methodologies for rangeland repair.
  - Co-creating knowledge with communities, presented by Ruan de Wet.

On the second day, participants toured Boschendal for a guided farm walk. The visit showcased how a commercial operation

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integrates livestock into diversified, ecologically managed landscapes. Rotational grazing, landscape restoration, and mixed farming systems were observed, followed by space for questions and reflection.

The visit sparked critical dialogue on how community farmers can replicate such practices under conditions of limited land, water scarcity, restrictive grazing policies, and structural inequalities.

### Outcomes and Next Steps

The workshop produced several key outcomes:

- Ongoing farmer exchanges

across borders.

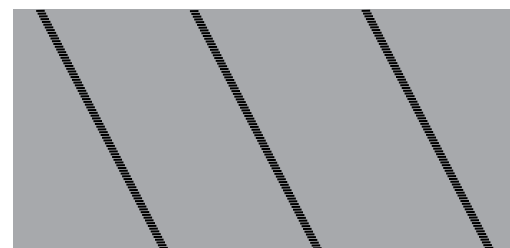
- Development of farmer-led animal welfare and agroecological protocols.
- Renewed mapping of indigenous medicinal plants.
- Recognition that markets, land access, and power relations must be addressed alongside technical methods.
- A call to establish a livestock-focused farmer network within TCOE.

### Toward a Just and Ecological Future

From the 2024 symposium to this 2025 regional workshop, TCOE and its partners have created a dynamic space

for rethinking animal production in Southern Africa. Farmers are rejecting industrial feedlots and revitalising indigenous knowledge, biodiversity-based grazing, and farmer-controlled markets.

The work is still young, but the momentum is clear. Animals are no longer peripheral to agroecology. They are central to building a just, sustainable, and culturally rooted food system.



# Naming Hunger, Honouring Wisdom: TCOE's presence at the G20 Social Summit

**F**or the first time, the G20 Summit was held on African soil, hosted in Johannesburg in November 2025. This historic moment placed Africa at the centre of global governance, with South Africa carrying the responsibility of ensuring that the continent's priorities were heard. Against this backdrop, the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE) attended both the G20 Social Summit (18–20 November) and the We the 99% People's Summit (20–22 November).

The Social Summit, hosted by the G20 presidency, created a space for formal and informal networks including youth movements, women's organisations, faith-based groups, organisations of persons with disabilities, community forums, and grassroots structures to convene and engage on global issues that directly impact people's daily lives. TCOE

participated in these discussions to observe, contribute, and ensure that rural voices were represented in discussions on inequality, climate, and food justice.

At the We the 99% People's Summit, coordinated by civil society groups and held at Constitution Hill, TCOE and its affiliates participated in and co-hosted a number of events to amplify the rural voice and presence. Part of the Rural Women's Assembly's photodocumentary seed exhibition, Guardians of Seed, Land and Life was displayed, highlighting the importance of seed sovereignty and agroecology. Later, the new CSAAWU film *Uncorking the Bitter Truth: Slavery's legacy in Cape wine* was screened, exposing the realities faced by farmworkers in Western Cape's wine industry. These activities ensured that TCOE and the Inyanda National Land Movement was visible and impactful across the Summit programme.

### Co-hosted Events: Listening to the Seeds and Stories in the Soil

On 20 November, TCOE co-hosted two participatory events with partners that drew full houses and strong engagement. *Listening to the Seeds* was designed as an interactive session linking food justice to memory and collective action. The programme included a guided reflection on what seeds can teach about care and justice, followed by a creative activity where participants wrote, drew, or collaged messages onto cards. These were added to a Community Quilt Wall, a collective artwork symbolising solidarity and ecological wisdom. A seed exhibition and seed-sharing space added practical grounding to the dialogue. The session connected food justice to lived histories and community resilience, with participants emphasising the importance of seeds as a foundation for food sovereignty. *Stories in the Soil: Local Wisdom* for

a Changing Climate highlighted the experiences of small-scale farmers, fishers, and farmworkers in responding to climate change. The session opened with participatory videos showcasing community-led solutions, followed by small-group story circles facilitated by grassroots activists. Insights were captured through live graphic harvesting. By the end, participants had identified barriers and enablers to food sovereignty, contributed to a draft People's Communiqué on Food & Climate Justice, and forged new relationships across movements. Responses confirmed that centering grassroots voices made the discussion more relevant and solutions-focused.

The co-hosted events were organised in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Stiftung Cape Town, the Africa CSO G20 Climate, Energy & Sustainable Finance Network, Association for Rural Advancement, Indigo development & change, SAFCEI, Women on Farms Project, and the Social Change Assistance Trust. Together, these partners amplified collective messaging on food justice and climate change, linking the work to ongoing campaigns that demand people-centred approaches and the

inclusion of rural voices in decision-making.

### **Beyond Food Justice: Standing Against GBV**

TCOE also joined the GBV Shutdown at Constitution Hill, standing with activists against gender-based violence. Although the protest was broken up by police, the demand for justice was clear: economic justice and gender justice are inseparable, and both must be at the heart of global and national agendas.

### **Where to from here**

The G20 may not legislate, but it sets the tone for how governments respond to crises. This year's Leaders' Declaration invoked the African philosophy of Ubuntu - "I am because we are" - and committed to solidarity, equality, and sustainability. Leaders acknowledged that 720 million people still face hunger and 2.6 billion cannot afford healthy diets, pledging to strengthen local food production and invest in smallholder farmers and fishers. They also recognised Africa's disproportionate debt burden and promised to explore debt-for-climate swaps, while committing to expand

renewable energy and clean cooking solutions for the 600 million Africans without electricity.

Words matter and these commitments are significant, but they are not enough. As pointed out in the latest issue of *Amandla*, other important words are 'unmentionable' in G20 discourse: land redistribution, multinational agribusiness, intellectual property, genetic engineering, profiteering and speculation. Unless the root causes of hunger are recognised and addressed, the words will remain hollow and will not lead to improved lives of those affected by hunger, climate shocks and inequality.

The consistent presence of TCOE at Constitution Hill underscored this point, reminding the world that small-scale producers are not victims but experts, and that agroecology, land rights, and accessible climate finance are urgent priorities.

The Johannesburg Summit concluded with clarity: if the G20 can speak of Ubuntu, then it must honour it by listening to the voices of rural communities.



# Inyanda National Land Movement and the struggle for Water Justices

**“Access to clean drinking tap water and access to land with water for production”** is a long-standing campaign for the Inyanda National Land movement. Since 2021, the Inyanda National Land Movement devoted its energies and resources in the fight for water justices. The Inyanda National Land Movement has been cooperating closely with the Movement Building Stream of the Trust for Community Outreach and Education to raise awareness on the national water crisis through organizing speak-out sessions in various communities in the Western Cape province, Eastern Cape province, Free State province, Limpopo province and the Northern Cape province; by organizing and participated in dialogue sessions, organized protest marches and pledge solidarity with rural communities and their organizations in the fight for water justices, build capacity in understanding the importance of the **Integrated Development Plan** and its importance to include access to water and land with water in the IDP and the **water services plans** that are based at the district municipalities as authorised **water** both the **National Water Act (as amended)** and the **Water Services Act (as amended)**.

As part of the commitment to

intensify the struggles water justices, the Inyanda National Land Movement and the Movement Building Stream devoted time and resources to engage from September 2025 to November 2025 in case studies in three provinces, namely, the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Northern Cape provinces. The purpose of the case studies was to:

- Gather empirical evidence of the challenges experienced by rural and peri-urban communities and local movements engaged in food production activities
- Track progress with regards to the campaign for water justices and land with water.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025, the Inyanda National Land Movement and the Movement Building Stream of the Trust for Community Outreach and Education organized in the Eastern Cape province a dialogue to discuss the water crisis in the province. The invited amongst others, were the Department of Water and Sanitation (EC provincial office), the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (EC province), non-governmental organizations, civic associations, local movements and rural communities. As an embarrassment to the communities, both the DWS and COGTA have not

attended the dialogue without any apologies.

## Key learnings in the period under review

- The affiliates of the Inyanda National Land Movement are dedicated in the struggle for water justices and access to land with water
- Localised struggles for access to clean drinking tap water are pursued by local movements
- The Nombanjane village in Centane led by the Coastal Links have resorted again for the second time to litigate against the Amathole District Municipality
- Commercial farmers in the Limpopo are cutting off water from the small-scale farmers to access water for production
- Therefore, their livestock need to walk for kilometres before reaching water to drink
- The livestock are dying due to limited access to water
- The outcome of the dialogue urged Inyanda National Land Movement and the Movement Building Stream to support assist communities and local movements to intensify the struggle for water justices.



# Suurbraak Agro-ekologie Werkswinkel Plant Saad van Verandering

**O**or drie dae, van 29–31 Oktober, het dertig deelnemers uit TCOE se gemeenskapbasis in Suurbraak bymekaargekom vir 'n Agro-ekologie (AE) werkswinkel wat teorie, praktyk en gemeenskapsleer verweef het. Onder leiding van Reinette Heunis en Edmore Parichi was die doel van die werkswinkel om begrip van agro-ekologiese beginsels, klimaatsveerkragtigheid en volhoubare voedselproduksie te verdiep, terwyl deelnemers toegerus is met praktiese vaardighede om terug te neem na hul gemeenskappe.

Die sessies het die grondslag van agro-ekologie ondersoek en gesprekke het ekologiese diversiteit, grondgesondheid, voedingstofherwinning en voedselsoewereiniteit as noodsaaklike pilare van volhoubare boerdery beklemtoon. Die kontras tussen industriële landbou en agro-ekologie is duidelik gemaak: terwyl industriële boerdery dikwels lei tot verlies aan biodiversiteit, gronddegradasie en 'n swaar afhanklikheid van chemiese insette, bied agro-ekologie 'n regeneratiewe alternatief wat gewortel is in plaaslike kennis en kollektiewe aksie.

Kruie het besondere aandag gekry, met smeerwortel wat uitgelig is as 'n "wonderplant" vir sy veelvuldige gebruike. Deelnemers het geleer hoe dit kan dien as 'n kompos-aktivator, natuurlike kunsmis en grondbouer, terwyl dit ook omgeskakel kan word in tees, deklaag en kompresses. Hierdie sessie het die belangrikheid van die integrasie van kruie in tuine beklemtoon om biodiversiteit en veerkragtigheid te versterk.

## UITDAGINGS AANPAK EN OPLOSSINGS VIND

Klimaatsverandering was 'n ander kernfokus. Deelnemers het besin oordie uitdagings wat produsente in die gesig staar — onreëlmatige reënval, droogte, hitte-stres en plaaguitbrekings — en bespreek hoe agro-ekologiese praktyke gemeenskappe kan help om aan te pas. 'n Sessie oor saadwette in Suid-Afrika het komplekse regulasies soos PIA en PBR ontleed, terwyl boere se regte onder die Internasionale Saadverdrag beklemtoon is. Die belangrikheid van gemeenskapsaadskepping en die beskerming van inheemse variëteite is uitgelig as sentraal tot voedselsoewereiniteit.

Praktiese sessies het die teorie tot lewe gebring. Deelnemers het tuinuitlegte ontwerp met behulp van metgeselplanting en wisselbou-strategieë, met Bokashi-fermentasie geëksperimenteer om grondgesondheid te verbeter, en boomplant-tegnieke geoefen om ekologiese herstel te ondersteun. Hierdie oefeninge het deelnemers selfvertroue gegee om agro-ekologiese metodes in hul eie kontekste toe te pas.

Terreinbesoeke het verdere diepte bygevoeg. Die groep het 'n plaaslike kwekery besoek om saailingproduksie te verstaan, 'n wurmboerdery-opset verken om oor vermikompos te leer,

en 'n hidroponiese stelsel waargeneem wat waterdoeltreffende verbouingsmetodes demonstreer. Hierdie besoeke het werklike voorbeelde van agro-ekologie in aksie gebied en gewys hoe uiteenlopende benaderings gemeenskapsvoedselstelsels kan versterk.

'n Paar hoogtepunte het ingesluit:

- Tuinuitleg-oefeninge wat deelnemers aangemoedig het om oor watervloei en grondvoorbereiding te dink.
- Praktiese Bokashi-bereiding, wat getoon het hoe eenvoudige fermentasie afval kan omskep in ryk grondverbeterings.
- Boomplant-demonstrasies, wat die ekologiese rol van bome in herstel en veerkragtigheid beklemtoon het.

Teen die einde van die werkswinkel het deelnemers hul vertroue uitgespreek in die toepassing van wat hulle geleer het. Die kombinasie van interaktiewe gesprekke, praktiese demonstrasies en blootstelling aan plaaslike innovasies het hulle toegerus met beide kennis en vaardighede om voedselsoewereiniteit en klimaatsveerkragtigheid te versterk. Soos hulle terugkeer na hul gemeenskappe, dra hulle die saad van verandering saam — gereed om volhoubare voedselstelsels te kweek wat gewortel is in waardigheid, veerkragtigheid en plaaslike wysheid.



# ARC Visits Eastern Cape Agroecology Sites as National Framework Takes Shape

**T**he Agricultural Research Council (ARC), appointed by the Department of Agriculture to lead national research on agroecology, toured several sites in the Eastern Cape from 1-5 December. The visits, facilitated by the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), offered a vivid picture of both the promise and the challenges facing smallholder farmers as South Africa prepares to roll out its National Agroecology Framework (NAFSA) in 2026.

The Ngqeleni and Libode sites revealed both resilience and strain. Farmers spoke openly about the persistent challenge of water scarcity, which undermines household gardens and community food systems. While rainwater harvesting and runoff capturing were identified as potential solutions, most gardens still lack affordable storage systems. Gender dynamics were also evident: women are at the forefront of cultivating leafy vegetables, organising workshops, and selling surplus produce, while men and youth remain less engaged. Yet there were sparks of hope — a youth group contracted under CPW/EPWP is running a productive clinic garden, showing strong potential to become local role models if supported with training and mentorship. Despite these wins, composting and biodiversity practices remain limited, leaving crops vulnerable to pests. Farmers also noted that market demand pushes them toward cabbage rather than indigenous crops, even though heirloom seeds were proudly showcased during a community meal.

In Willowvale, the Phawu Likum

AgriPark stood out as a beacon of innovation. Established on permaculture principles, the 2.5-hectare food forest integrates diverse crops, indigenous trees, vetiver grass for soil conservation, and a solar-powered borehole feeding drip irrigation systems. Worm farming and herbal cultivation add further resilience. However, nearby home gardens remain uneven in their agroecological practices, highlighting the need for exchange visits and shared learning between households and the agripark.

The Amathole District offered a rich tapestry of agroecological experimentation. At Kulla Darma Farm, permaculture principles have created a thriving food forest of fruit trees, coffee plants, and ground covers, alongside innovative clay rocket geysers that heat harvested rainwater for household use. The Berlin AE Hub functions as a training and learning centre, hosting workshops, seed trials, and climate dialogues, while youth leadership shone through at Greenman Vetyeka's homestead garden, where strawberries, herbs, and indigenous chickens are cultivated with care. Nobahle Tsengiwe's farm in Keiskamahoe demonstrated the integration of orchards, field crops, and livestock, with produce sold directly to schools and clinics. Meanwhile, the Isithembiso

Multipurpose Centre in Ncera Village showcased solar boreholes, biogas cooking, seed banks, and agro-processing, linking food production with community services. At Kaysers Beach, KSFI's small farm impressed with its charcoal-cooled storage room for vegetables and Nguni cattle grazing systems, underscoring the creativity of local farmers in adapting to resource constraints.

Across all sites, ARC officials expressed admiration for the breadth of agroecological work in the province, noting the creativity and resilience of farmers. At the same time, they flagged areas for improvement, particularly the need for stronger record-keeping and more consistent biodiversity practices. For TCOE and its partners, the visits affirmed the power of community-led agroecology while underscoring the importance of continued advocacy.

As South Africa moves toward implementing NAFSA, the lessons from the Eastern Cape will be critical. They highlight both the systemic challenges — water scarcity, market pressures, and limited extension support — and the grassroots innovations that point the way forward. From youth-led gardens to permaculture food forests, these initiatives embody the possibility of a food system rooted in indigenous knowledge, ecological resilience, and community agency.



# Food Systems and Climate Change Policy Workshop Strengthens Civil Society Action

**P**resident Cyril Ramaphosa's signing of the Climate Change Act in 2024 marked a turning point for South Africa's response to climate-related disasters. Floods in KwaZulu-Natal, prolonged droughts in the Eastern and Western Cape, and extreme heatwaves across the interior have repeatedly devastated communities, deepened food insecurity, and exposed the vulnerability of small-scale producers. The Act is South Africa's first binding legal framework to confront these escalating impacts. It mandates emissions reductions, climate plans across all levels of government, and a just transition that protects workers, farmers, and informal traders while shifting the country toward a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

The move followed years of pressure from civil society organisations, including the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), which consistently called for the Climate Change Bill to be enacted into law. From 20 to 22 October 2025, the Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ), in collaboration with AFRA, GenderCC, and LandNNES, convened the Food System and Climate Adaptation Policy Engagement Workshop in Johannesburg. The gathering brought together over 45 representatives from civil society organisations, grassroots movements, labour groups, and research networks. TCOE was an active participant, alongside SPP, which shared insights from community work to ensure adaptation policies remain grounded in lived realities.

Over three days, participants unpacked how climate change intersects with food systems, livelihoods, and communities, with special attention to gendered experiences and vulnerabilities. Day 1 set the stage by identifying priorities and actions to strengthen resilience and advance sustainable, community-led solutions. Day 2 focused on constituency visions, featured a powerful panel on the meaning of a just transition, and examined the Climate Change Act of 2024 in depth. Discussions highlighted the role and value of policy engagement in shaping just, people-centred climate and food system responses. Day 3 built momentum for coordinated strategies, emphasising collaboration across constituencies and the importance of civil society in shaping national, sectoral, and local climate plans mandated by the Act.

Participants stressed that climate disasters are not abstract threats but lived realities. Farmers spoke

of crops lost to drought, informal traders described the impact of floods on local markets, and women's organisations highlighted how climate shocks intensify existing inequalities. These testimonies underscored the urgency of building resilience and ensuring that adaptation policies reflect the voices of those most affected.

Looking ahead, participants committed to several action points. These include producing simplified and translated materials, supporting constituency report-backs, and preparing for a policy roundtable scheduled for April 2026. The roundtable is expected to bring together government, civil society, and research institutions to debate how the Climate Change Act can be implemented in ways that advance justice and sustainability. These steps aim to ensure sustained and collective involvement in the implementation of the Act, reinforcing the role of grassroots voices in shaping South Africa's climate future.



# Iworkshop yoNkqubo yeNkqubo yeZityalo zokutya kunye noTshintsho lwemozulu iqinisa iNtshukumo yeNtlalo

**U**kusayina kukaMongameli Cyril Ramaphosa uMthetho woTshintsho lwemozulu ngo 2024 kwaphawula inguqu enkulu kwindlela iMzantsi Afrika ejongana ngayo neentlekele ezinxulumene nemozulu. Izikhukula eKwaZulu-Natal, imbalela ende eMpuma naseNtshona Koloni, kunye nobushushu obugqithisileyo ngaphakathi kwelizwe ziye zaphinda zatshabalalisa uluntu, zandisa ukungabikho kokutya, kwaye zatyhila ubuthathaka babavelisi abancinci. Lo Mthetho ngowokuqala eMzantsi Afrika onika umthetho onyanzelekileyo wokujongana neziphumo ezikhulayo. Uyalela ukunciphisa ukukhutshwa kwegesi, izicwangciso zemozulu kuwo onke amanqanaba karhulumente, kunye notshintsho olufanelekileyo olukhusela abasebenzi, abalimi, kunye nabathengisi abangekho semthethweni ngelixa ushukuma ilizwe libe nekamva elisezantsi kwi-carbon nelizinzi-leyo kwimozulu.

Lo manyathelo walandelwa yiminyaka yoxinzelelo oluvela kwiintlangano zoluntu, kuquka iTrust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), ebisoloko icela ukuba uMthetho woTshintsho lwemozulu wenziwe umthetho. Ukusukela ngomhla we 20 ukuya ku 22 kuOktobha 2025, iInstitute for Economic Justice (IEJ), ngokubambisana neAFRA, GenderCC, kunye neLand-NNES, yabamba iworkshop yeNkqubo yokutya kunye noQhagamshelwano lweNkqubo yoLungiso lwemozulu

eJohannesburg. Eli dibaniso lahlanganisa ngaphezulu kwabameli abayi 45 abavela kwiintlangano zoluntu, iintshukumo ezisezantsi, amaqela abasebenzi, kunye nemibutho yophando. I-TCOE yayilithatha inxaxheba elisebenzayo, kunye ne-SPP, eyabelane ngolwazi oluvela kumsebenzi woluntu ukuqinisekisa ukuba iinkqubo zolungiso zihlala zixhomekeke kumava aphilwayo.

Ngexesha leentsuku ezintathu, abathathi-nxaxheba bahlalutya indlela utshintsho lwemozulu oludibana ngayo neenkqubo zokutya, indlela yokuphila, kunye noluntu, ngokuqwalasela ngokukodwa amava kunye nobuthathaka obusekwe kwisini. Usuku lokuqala lwamisela isiseko ngokuchonga izinto eziphambili kunye namanyathelo okuqinisa ukomelela nokukhuthaza izisombululo ezizinzileyo ezikhokhelwa luluntu. Usuku lwesibini lugxile kwimibono yabameli, lwabonisa ipaneli enamandla malunga nentsingiselo yotshintsho olufanelekileyo, kwaye lwahlalutya uMthetho woTshintsho lwemozulu ka 2024 ngokunzulu. Iingxoxo zagqamisa indima kunye nexabiso lokuzibandakanya kwinkqubo yokwenza imigaqo-nkqubo ekubumbeni iimpendulo zemozulu kunye neenkqubo zokutya ezijolise ebantwini. Usuku lwesithathu lwakha umkhombandlela wamaqhinga adibeneyo, lwagxininisa intsebenziswano phakathi kwabameli kunye nokubaluleka kwezentlalo ekubumbeni izicwangciso zemozulu

zelizwe, ezesebe, nezasekuhlaleni ezinyanzelekileyo phantsi koMthetho.

Abathathi-nxaxheba bagxininise ukuba iintlekele zemozulu azizo zison-gelo ezingabonakaliyo kodwa zizinto eziphilwayo. Abalimi bathethe ngem-iyezo elahlekileyo ngenxa yembalela, abathengisi abangekho semthethweni bachaze ifuthe lezikhukhula kwiimarike zasekuhlaleni, kwaye imibutho yabafazi yagqamisa indlela iintshukumo zemozulu ezandisa ngayo ukungalingani okukhoyo. La mabali agqamisa imfuneko yokwakha ukomelela kunye nokuqinisekisa ukuba iinkqubo zolungiso zibonakalisa amazwi abo bachaphazelekayo kakhulu.

Ukukhangele phambili, abathathi-nxaxheba bazibophelele kumanyathelo amaninzi. Oku kuquka ukuvelisa izinto ezilula neziguqulelweyo, ukuxhasa iingxelo zabameli, kunye nokulungiselela itafile yeengxoxo yomgaqo-nkqubo ecwangciselwe uAprili 2026. Le tafile kulindeleke ukuba idibanise urhulumente, uluntu, kunye namaziko ophando ukuze kuxoxwe ngendlela uMthetho woTshintsho lwemozulu onokuphunyezwa ngayo ngendlela ekhuthaza ubulungisa kunye nokuzinza. La manyathelo ajolise ekuqinisekiseni ukubandakanyeka okuqhubekayo nokudibeneyo ekuphunyezweni koMthetho, aqinisa indima yamazwi asezantsi ekubumbeni ikamva lemizantsi Afrika kwimiba yemozulu.

# Knowledge Exchange Visit in Suurbraak Highlights Agroecology Practices

**T**he Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE) hosted the Support Centre for Land Change (SCLC) for a two-day exchange visit in Suurbraak, bringing together 15 participants, including 11 women and 4 men, to deepen their understanding of Agroecology and explore practical methods for sustainable farming. The programme was facilitated by Reinet Heunis and combined theoretical discussions with hands-on demonstrations, offering participants a comprehensive view of agroecological practices.

## Principles of Agroecology

The first day focused on theory and principles. Participants were introduced to the foundations of Agroecology, with emphasis on how it differs from conventional agricultural farming. While industrial agriculture often prioritises monocultures, chemical inputs, and profit-driven models, Agroecology centres biodiversity, soil health, and community knowledge. The session also revisited the 13 principles of Agroecology, ensuring that participants could connect these values to their own contexts. Discussions highlighted how agroecological farming strengthens food sovereignty and resilience, particularly for rural communities facing challenges of land access and climate change.

Climate change was a recurring theme throughout the exchange. Farmers reflected on the realities of unpredictable rainfall, heat stress, and water shortages, and explored strategies to adapt to these pressures. Water harvesting methods such as swales, contour trenches, mulching, roof-water harvesting, and drip irrigation were discussed as practical solutions that can be applied in different community settings. These conversations underscored the importance of equipping small-scale farmers with tools to safeguard their crops and livelihoods in increasingly uncertain conditions.

## Practical Sessions: Making and Learning

The second day shifted to practical demonstrations, where participants engaged directly with the innovations being developed at the Suurbraak site. They learned how to produce bio and natural fertilisers, experimented with organic spray sets created by local farmers, and took part in planting sessions. The layout of agroecological gardens was also explored, showing how design and planning can enhance productivity while protecting the environment. Hands-on activities included building raised beds to improve soil health, producing natural pesticides from locally available ingredients, and making Bokashi to

enrich soil fertility. Demonstrations of intercropping techniques illustrated how diverse planting systems can improve yields, strengthen pest control, and nurture the soil.

## Knowledge Exchange

Beyond the technical skills, the exchange visit highlighted the value of knowledge sharing between organisations and communities. For SCLC participants, the visit provided an opportunity to learn from the Suurbraak community's practices while reflecting on their own experiences in the Garden Route, Central Karoo, and Eastern Cape. For TCOE, hosting the exchange reinforced the importance of building solidarity across regions, ensuring that rural voices remain central in shaping strategies for land justice and climate resilience.

The Suurbraak exchange visit demonstrated how Agroecology is more than a set of farming techniques – it is a pathway to dignity, sustainability, and justice. By combining theory with practice, and by fostering collaboration between organisations, the sessions equipped participants with knowledge and skills that can be carried back to their communities. The gathering reflected a shared commitment to nurturing the land, defending farmers' rights, and building sustainable futures rooted in local wisdom.



# Hunger as Violence – Is It the Overlooked Catalyst of GBV?

**T**his year, 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children began with recognition from President Cyril Ramaphosa that gender-based violence is a national crisis. Just days before the annual campaign commenced, women across South Africa took to the streets in a country-wide protest that coincided with South Africa's hosting of the G20, calling out the gap between political rhetoric and women's lived reality of violence and femicide.

TCOE and affiliates, present at the G20 Social Summit and the We the 99% People's Summit, joined the protest on Friday, 21 November, at Constitution Hill, affirming our commitment to ending violence against women, and to highlight a harsh truth: GBV intersects with the crisis of hunger.

The Daily Maverick's reporting on food insecurity and malnutrition - nearly a thousand child deaths over 18 months - reminds us that hunger is not only conditions of deprivation, but a catalyst of violence. When families go hungry, women and girls are often pushed into unsafe coping strategies:

accepting abusive relationships for shelter, trading sex for food or work, or enduring exploitation in workplaces and communities.

And hunger does not exist in isolation. It collides with climate disasters, floods, storms and neglected infrastructure that displace families into overcrowded shelters, where the absence of food, privacy and safety multiplies the risks of abuse, creating predictable conditions where women and children bear the brunt of violence.

## When Climate Disaster Becomes Gendered Harm

Two major disasters in the Eastern Cape provide examples of how climate change, compounded by governance failures, create conditions that make women and children more vulnerable to violence.

In 2024, floods in Amalinda forced nearly 200 families into a community hall. One of TCOE's field staff who visited the area reported that "the main challenges were that there was not enough food as the municipality claimed to have no funds; there were no partitions in the halls with all genders and age groups crowded into one space, predisposing

women and children for abuse."

One year later, in June 2025, tragedy struck in uMthatha, Eastern Cape, where a bus with schoolchildren was swept away after heavy rains caused a bridge to collapse. The death toll for the area exceeded 100. This was not only a tragic accident, but a consequence of neglected infrastructure. The same failures that kill children also displace families, forcing them into overcrowded shelters where GBV risk multiplies.

## Global Promises, Local Betrayal

Even as President Cyril Ramaphosa declared GBV a "national crisis" - a shift from his earlier framing of GBV as a "second pandemic" during COVID-19 - fast-tracking justice processes will not solve the issues of food inflation and unemployment that continue to rise, intensifying household vulnerability and forcing women into unsafe coping strategies. These economic pressures compound the risks of GBV, especially in rural and farming communities.

In a January 2025 paper, *A Promise not Fulfilled: Gender-Based Violence in South Africa's Agricultural System\** (GDHP Working Paper No. 8), Naledi Joyi and Liezelle Kumalo argue that "South Africa's agricultural food system is engulfed with systematic inequalities, where gender-based violence intersects with systematic poverty and food insecurity. Despite post-apartheid reforms, women in rural agricultural contexts face heightened vulnerabilities shaped by intergenerational labour exploitation, gendered occupational hazards, and the exclusion from state response and resources including but not limited to land and resource ownership."

The research shows that food insecurity and GBV are inseparable, particularly in South Africa's rural and farming



CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

communities. Women in South Africa's agricultural food systems remain trapped in cycles of exploitation, hunger, and violence.

### Call to Action

This 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, as TCOE joined the call for GBV to be declared a national crisis, we call for hunger and climate change to be recognised as intersecting crisis contributing to gendered violence. We demand:

- Gender-sensitive disaster planning: safe shelters with partitions, privacy, and food security.

- Accountability in municipal infrastructure: drainage systems, safe roads, and climate-resilient planning.
- Integration of GBV prevention into climate adaptation: survivor dignity must be central to climate justice.
- Food sovereignty as protection: communities must control how food is grown, distributed, and accessed.

Hunger is violence. Malnutrition is violence. GBV is violence. We demand that leaders move beyond rhetoric to real investment in safety, dignity, and food justice.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SUPPORT SMALLHOLDER FARMERS**

STRENGTHEN FOOD SYSTEMS | REGAIN OUR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

**FRIDAY, 19 Dec 2025**  
**15H00 TO 20H00**  
OUTSIDE GORDON'S GYM  
9 HILL PARK LANE, MOWBRAY

**FEATURING**  
Fresh veggies and seedlings from Suurbraak, fresh fish from Buffeljagsbaai, endemic plants from Genadendal.  
Produce and plants are grown free from synthetic and toxic agricultural chemicals.  
All this and more at the Mowbray Market!

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@TCOE\_Land4Food

TCOE Rural Women's Assembly We are the Guardians of Land, Life, Seeds and Love MOWBRAY

Inyanda Community News aims to support the culture of reading, writing and political education. Stories featured in the Inyanda Community News is proudly produced by a collective of young activists from movements and community organisations across the country:

## INYANDA

National Movement:

### Community News

#### Vision

Working towards an egalitarian countryside of productive, food secure, self-reliant and active citizens that know and protect their rights.

#### Mission

Inyanda is the voice of the poor that exerts pressure for policy changes and transformation of the countryside in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of its members and of rural people in general.

#### Value and Principles

The movement shall be based on the following values:

- Egalitarianism
- Gender Equality
- Anti-racism and anti-ethnicism
- Non-sectarianism: tolerance and encouragement of sober debates of different views
- Participatory democracy
- Co-operation as opposed to competition
- Anti-capitalism
- Non-party political aligned

We would love to hear from you!

To contact the Inyanda Community News team, please email [media@tcoe.org.za](mailto:media@tcoe.org.za)

Visit [www.tcoesa.org/inyanda-community-news](http://www.tcoesa.org/inyanda-community-news) for more information

