

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



VISION

TCOE envisages a society where the rural poor, both men and women, have access and rights to land, marine and other natural resources for food security and the creation of sustainable livelihoods - a society that is responsive to the needs of the poor and that recognises and values the potential of all its citizens.

MISSION

TCOE commits itself to building a mass based national formation of poor rural peoples organisations with strong, democratic and accountable leadership that is able to organise, mobilise and coordinate the struggles of all sectors of the rural and coastal poor, including women, small scale farmers, commodity groups, fishers, farm workers and youth, for control and ownership of natural resources.

Such a formation will actively forge links with urban and rural organisations and institutions at local, national, regional and international levels that advocate for basic services, economic rights, social and environmental justice and an end to poverty.

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



We have come to the end of another eventful year. A key event in 2024 was the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States in December. His rise to power has introduced new global geopolitical dynamics. On the local front, the South African National General Elections in May 2024 resulted in the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU). The election results ended the African National Congress's (ANC) political dominance since 1994. Cyril Ramaphosa continues to serve as

the country's President with a cabinet composed of members from different political parties, which introduces complexities in policy decision-making and implementation.

South Africa also faced the impacts of climate change as storms caused floods in several provinces (Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Gauteng, North West, Gauteng, and the Eastern Cape). The extreme weather highlighted both the challenges of climate change and the country's shortcomings in maintaining infrastructure capable of withstanding climate disasters. The floods were especially devastating for smallholder farmers TCOE works with. This group suffered significant losses in crops and livestock due to the floods, greatly affecting their livelihoods.

However, state support for affected farmers was not forthcoming. Rather than implementing government-led support measures, the President requested that the private sector contribute relief to households impacted by floods. The lack of assistance to smallholder farmers during disasters is associated with the country's neoliberal economic policies, which emphasise reliance on the private sector. This approach reflects longstanding critiques of limited government support for smallholder farmers in favour of commercial agriculture, consistent with neoliberal principles. Consequently, infrastructural deficiencies further illustrate the constraints inherent in this economic model.

Because of the state's failure to support the affected farmers, TCOE assisted some of the smallholder farmers through the Development Fund, which is a revolving fund. It helped in rebuilding and rehabilitating the damaged farming operations

caused by climate disasters. The question of alternative strategies for TCOE to mitigate the effects of climate change becomes imperative. This will ensure that the organisation not only reacts to disasters but also puts measures in place to combat the impact of climate disasters.

TCOE promotes agroecology as an alternative to commercial agriculture and to mitigate the effects of climate change. The idea of agroecology hubs, which are centres where various aspects of agroecology are applied, is ideally meant to address food sovereignty for households. Although there are hubs in parts of the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Free State and Limpopo, these are too few to make a significant impact. The establishment of hubs requires the investment of TCOE in infrastructure such as shelters for propagation of seedlings, water tanks for storage, pipes for water reticulation, etc., for them to be functional. Although in some cases the farmers provide fencing, the provision of proper fencing that ensures the security of the hubs from people and animals is also a challenge.

Closely linked to the above, TCOE promotes the establishment of alternative markets for the produce of the farmers it works with. It would be important to investigate the costs of setting up the market and the costs of taking produce to the market. This will give us an idea of the contribution of the market to the incomes of the farmers. It will also tell us about the sustainability of the market at its current or there is a need to explore other marketing strategies, such as the establishment of stalls near the farmers. In that case, the costs of transporting the produce to the central market. A combination of both strategies could also be explored.

Although TCOE has started to focus on livestock as part of its food sovereignty work, the work needs to be strengthened. For instance, the meeting that brought together livestock farmers, researchers,

and scholars from across South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe enabled the sharing of experiences and best practices. The knowledge of medicinal plants for livestock as an alternative to the reliance on conventional types of medication is very important in TCOE's work. Thus, TCOE needs to do more to support the platform for the farmers to share existing knowledge, whilst also researching other alternative means to keep livestock healthy.

Lastly, TCOE's work on the democratisation of governance in municipalities and traditional authorities needs to be assessed. Democratisation of governance is an effort to promote participatory governance that promotes direct participation of people regardless of their backgrounds socially, racially and religiously. The concept applies to the governance in municipalities, areas under traditional authorities and in farming areas. What lessons can we draw from the areas with elected local leaders? Are the elected leaders accountable to the people who elected them? If not, what else needs to be done to make them accountable?

As I conclude, I would like to extend my gratitude to the communities for their resilience in the face of adversity, to our staff for their unwavering dedication, and to the board members for their immeasurable sacrifices in providing guidance and support to the organisation.

It would be remiss of me not to thank those who have agreed to partner with us on this difficult journey towards social, economic, and political justice, as well as the donor community that continues to support our endeavours. We are sincerely grateful for the ongoing support you all provide.

Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza



NATIONAL COORDINATION

2024 marked 30 years of South Africa's Democracy. However, many complex and challenging issues remain unresolved, such as the land question, the exponential high rate of unemployment, inequality and the downward spiral of the economic crisis, while food, hunger and poverty have increased exponentially. South Africa's political and economic outlook reflects a country in deep crisis and a debt-ridden society. The austerity budget cuts are imploding and resulting in the collapse of some sectors of municipal governments. The collapse of infrastructure and lack of service delivery is alarming. The situation in the country is likely to deteriorate unless drastic measures are taken.

One year into the cycle, we see a deeper climate crisis. The country has been experiencing volatile weather patterns – extreme heat combined with freezing weather; heavy rains combined with dry seasons; etc. Across the provinces of South Africa, we have witnessed weather patterns that resulted in devastating floods, particularly in KZN, the Eastern Cape and parts of Western Cape. The climate crisis is on the rise and impacting the livelihoods of small-scale producers.

We began 2024 by implementing the first year of the new TCOE 2024-2026 strategy, which focuses on four key areas: Food Sovereignty, Climate Justice, Movement Building and Rural Democratisation and Governance.

- Our movement-building efforts supported and revitalized groups across the board,

including the Inyanda National Land Movement, small-scale farmers and producers, RWA, CSAAWU (farm workers and farm dwellers), the Sunday's River Farmworker Forum and fishers in Coastal Links Eastern Cape. Local movements actively participated in campaigns for land access and advocacy around water crises in various provinces.

- In the Access to Land and Food Sovereignty stream, we are proud to report significant achievements in supporting livestock, small-scale farmers and producers. We have established 22 agro-ecological hubs nationwide, supporting producers and communities and promoting sustainable agroecological seed and food sovereignty practices among rural populations. Additionally, three community seed banks were created during the period under review. Three hubs – located in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Limpopo – have been identified as centres for agro-processing and value addition.
- The Food Sovereignty stream has maintained monthly fresh produce markets in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Free State provinces. We introduced seed multiplication and propagation in Limpopo, with plans to expand to other provinces such as the Eastern Cape. We continue to work with our partners on engaging with the agroecology (AE) policy

and applying pressure on government, which has yielded good results. Notably, the Department of Agriculture (DoA) has developed and circulated the National Agroecology Framework for South Africa (NAFSA) for comment.

- In terms of Democratization of Governance, we conducted research and engaged local municipalities regarding municipal commonage and the water crisis. Case studies highlighting challenges with municipalities and traditional authorities are used as tools to build evidence.
- Regarding Climate Justice, the new climate justice stream was launched as part of TCOE's strategic interventions in support of rural communities, small-scale farmers and producers. TCOE responded to climate disasters by providing land rehabilitation, agroforestry, and alternative climate solutions in close partnership with farmers. We employed

a holistic approach that integrates food sovereignty and movement-building for awareness and training. Furthermore, the Food Sovereignty team also worked on developing alternatives to address climate catastrophes.

Land and water campaigns have played a vital role in galvanising communities to act on their demands for equitable resource access. The above issues were addressed in an integrated manner.

Access to land with water remains a significant challenge for small-scale producers. Even those with reasonably sized parcels struggle to utilise their land optimally due to poor support from government. Structural obstacles that impede genuine realisation of water rights are not unique to one part of the country, even though each context has its own dynamics. In many villages, both household and communal landholders face ongoing struggles regarding their rights to water and have unpleasant stories to tell about their rights to water. The stories from farmers who belong to organisations representing the water needs of





the poor emphasise the interconnectedness of rights and show how the deprivation of one right often leads to the deprivation of others. Equally, the content of their experiences also foregrounds an extraordinary resilience as they survive under severe conditions of deprivation.

The political context of the Eastern Cape, particularly its history of reserved territories, continues to shape the emerging realities of rural life for the province's marginalised. The cases that follow demonstrate that water access and management sit at the heart of development in the region. As part of the water campaign, a series of workshops were conducted with associations across several provinces.

OVERALL ORGANISATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

TCOE fosters inclusivity by ensuring that rural women, youth, the rural poor, small-scale producers, and other vulnerable groups are meaningfully integrated into our strategies, and that they are able

to claim and exercise their rights in the provinces where we work. We continue to build and strengthen our engagement with our constituencies.

TCOE can be characterised as a resilient organisation; however, in 2024 we saw the beginnings of funding cuts. This signalled that it is not business as usual, and the new funding reality really pushed us to internally engage in different organisational assessment processes and begin to cut the cloth to fit the size. This also highlighted the need to intensify our resource mobilisation strategies. Despite the challenges ahead, we have managed to implement most activities outlined in our strategic document. Moreover, our advocacy interventions through campaigns such as One Woman One Hectare, UNDROP, seed policy rights, water rights and crisis and evictions were some of the highlights that helped build regular, localised efforts. Through these actions, we have strengthened partnerships and alliances, linking struggles across the urban and rural divide, and maximised the use of available resources.

Despite these challenges, the organisation remains focused and intentional in pursuing its vision and goals. TCOE remains rooted on the ground and relevant, and is well placed compared to others in the sector, given the increasing demands placed on us under the current circumstances.

ENSURING ORGANISATIONAL RELEVANCE

Through ongoing action-reflection processes, we are consciously reviewing our strategies to ensure the relevance of our work. Our current strategy is deeply rooted in the challenges faced by the country. The land and agrarian question remain central to our work. The socio-political, economic and environmental context, along with emerging challenges, necessitate constant assessment and realignment of the organisation's work for meaningful interventions.

Our strategic interventions are geared towards building resilient movements and creating alternative solutions from the ground up. This includes developing alternatives for climate justice by enhancing and strengthening the capacity of

small-scale producers, particularly rural women. The target groups and provinces we work with continue to benefit from TCOE's integrated approach. The deep inequalities experienced particularly by former Bantustans and Act 9 areas persist, largely due to dual systems of governance involving both traditional authorities and elected officials. This leads to confusion around accountability and rural democracy. The Rural Legal Centre (RLC) office in Robertson is inundated with farm eviction cases and reports of unfair labour practices, including exploitation by labour brokers.

STRENGTHENING STAFF CAPACITY

Like most organisations in the social justice sector, staff capacity development is essential. As such, we create ongoing opportunities for staff learning, and with increased digitalisation of systems, we are challenged to keep pace with new developments. Our staff's capacity must match the requirements needed to support movements on the ground. While we struggled to find a suitable climate candidate, the work continued with support from other streams. We have started discussing leadership transition strategies and succession planning for smooth, non-



disruptive processes.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Globally, the rise of right-wing governments and increased allocations to defence and military buildup budgets has resulted in budget cuts in aid and 'development funds, posing new challenges to the sector. Indications of funding reductions have been confirmed by some funders, and we anticipate further cuts in the coming years. Some donors have already signalled changes in development aid. Resource mobilisation is a central aspect of the coordination team's work, designed to

identify prospective funding sources and maintain relationships with current donors who support our vision and mission. Resource mobilisation must be viewed not as an add-on, but as a core function of our financial and organisational resilience as global trends in budget cuts and the rise of right-wing governments increase the fragility of civil society organisations.

Nonetheless, TCOE's financial status remains stable this year, despite reduced funding. We continue to build financial sustainability and stability, and national coordination efforts are in place to ensure a diversified funding approach. We have maintained the funding base for both TCOE and RWA, despite fundraising becoming increasingly stringent. Our internal finance systems and staff capacities are continually strengthened to ensure greater accountability.

BUILDING NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

We continue to build strategic networks and alliances with key partners. This has become more critical than ever, as the civil society space shrinks and funding diminishes. Through partnerships and alliances, we are able to build ongoing solidarity that continues to sustain our critical work. TCOE remains pivotal in building regional partnerships such as RWA SADC, the People's Dialogue and the Peasants Rights Consortium, and contributes in various forums. For example, our close collaboration with AE Action Collective and AE SA has helped us stay focused on food sovereignty policy engagement and developing strategic alternative solutions.



These efforts continue to build our provincial and national footprint. TCOE, through the RLC, has offered litigation processes supported by SERI (Socio-Economic Rights Institute).

STRENGTHENING MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

TCOE's work has been featured on national TV, mainstream newspapers, local radio, social media, and other platforms raising public awareness, especially for campaigns such as One Woman One Hectare and the water crisis. The launch of the RWA SA photo seed exhibition in Cape Town received considerable media coverage, as did the monthly fresh produce markets held in various provinces. Local newspapers have profiled these market days. Our Facebook page and other social media platforms are used to popularise all areas of our work, especially the market days, webinars, statements and policy submissions. Unfortunately, due to funding shortages, we were unable to print Inyanda Community News editions in 2024. However, we contributed articles to partner organisations' publications.

RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Research remains a critical pillar of TCOE's work, helping us in surfacing and deepening our understanding of issues negatively impacting the rural poor and marginalised. Documentation of cases, such as the evictions of farm workers, labour-related issues, land grabs and water studies all form part of our research activities. It is through our research that we are able to develop targeted strategies and responses. Research also informs and influences our policy work,

submissions to government portfolio committees and the development of public opinion pieces.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The TCOE National Board of Trustees (NBOT) consistently meets its fiduciary responsibilities and guides the organisational strategy. Their guidance, commitment and involvement with TCOE are greatly valued, contributing to the sustainability and stability of the organisation through their vested interest in the social justice work that TCOE is involved in, which is crucial for good governance policies. Their ongoing support and engagement in governance are encouraging.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

While this annual report showcases TCOE's achievements, it also highlights the need for continuous improvement and ongoing struggles reflected here. The efforts of TCOE, together with affected communities and movements, are building blocks for campaigns and evolving models of alternatives that address the conditions of the marginalised.

Reflecting on 2024, we express gratitude for the support received despite challenges such as the climate crisis and reduced funding. Our responses to climate disasters made a significant difference to livelihoods of small-scale farmers. The development fund created to support small-scale producers helped alleviate financial constraints that often hinder farmers from responding and reactivating their efforts to meet their goals.

TCOE must continue to create and develop innovative, relevant, and practical solutions to address the levels of crises we are facing. Our policy work and submissions have to be sharpened to ensure that our constituencies are fully involved in the processes, which includes working with networks and partners to build strong alliances and solidarity.

TCOE is a learning organisation, as demonstrated through our action-reflection spaces and rigorous organisational Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) rhythms. These internal practices allow us to improve our strategies, internal systems and procedures for greater accountability.

The participation of movements in the TCOE collective consultation and participatory process is fundamental and reflects our commitment and belief to building from below. We recognise that the social, economic, and political realities of our time are challenging for social justice organisations, hence our ongoing struggle to build agency and voice for social movements to act on their issues. Change is a process that takes time.

We also recognise the need for greater youth integration in our movements across local formations and RWA South Africa provinces. This will not only strengthen the movements but contribute to the

sustainability of future actions undertaken. In 2024, we have seen increased youth involvement, especially among young women through the gender-based violence (GBV) healing circles, arts and culture and markets. The RWA South Africa work has expanded, and we are rebuilding RWA Northern Cape while beginning to engage with KZN. CSAAWU's recruitment and organising activities now reach areas such as De Doorns, Rawsonville and Vredenberg; however, casualisation of labour is making farm worker recruitment and organisation increasingly difficult.

Leadership formation and capacity building remain central to our work, supported by popular education principles which underpin how we work with movements. It is clear that grassroots movements are becoming less passive about the right to access land, water, climate justice, seed and food sovereignty. More localised efforts are underway by various formations. However, it should be acknowledged that the power structures of commercial agriculture, agribusiness, private sector, and government departments, including traditional authorities and municipalities, remain largely intact. At TCOE, we believe this is due to weak coordination of localised community actions, fragile movements and the absence of a nationwide campaign that would not only challenge government and business but empower the poor.



MOVEMENT BUILDING



A) INTRODUCTION

Movement Building is a vital stream that brings together individuals, groups, and communities, enabling the collective action needed to address deep-rooted issues such as land dispossession, land (re)distribution and the separation of people from their natural resources and shared commons. Without a strong movement and genuine collaboration, the progress we seek in every other area would simply not be possible.

During the year under review, our movement building stream focused on supporting and strengthening local initiatives. We worked alongside landless people, small-scale farmers, producers, farmworkers, fishers, and forest dwellers, helping them to organize, connect and build solidarity around shared visions for an alternative future. Central to our approach was the belief that meaningful change must emerge from the ground up.

Throughout the year, we saw that the struggles for land, food and water are inseparable from the struggle to rebuild leadership and imagine new paths for development. Gender-based violence, violations of women's rights and entrenched patriarchy also remained persistent challenges, particularly in rural areas and within traditional authorities' jurisdiction. Addressing these issues became an integral part of our work, ensuring that movement building went hand-in-hand with promoting dignity and equity.

The ongoing national water crisis continued to

hit poor communities hardest, especially in the Eastern Cape where contaminated water and uncommunicated water cuts placed residents at risk. Our focus included mobilizing communities to advocate for solutions to outdated infrastructure, racial disparities in distribution, and the wasteful practices of large businesses and industries.

At the same time, the exclusion of marginalized groups from national budgetary and planning processes led to cuts in social spending, rising unemployment and poverty. Through the CRY of the Excluded campaign, we supported local actions demanding a fairer and more inclusive approach.

Economic instability, unresolved land questions and the impacts of climate change all shaped the context of our movement building work in 2024. By helping communities organize and strengthen their voices, we contributed not only to immediate struggles, but also to the broader effort to secure food security, social justice and environmental sustainability.

B) THE STATE OF INYANDA NATIONAL LAND MOVEMENT

STATE OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The year under review marked ten years since the Inyanda National Land Movement was established in 2014 by ten organizations as a national movement to wage a collective struggle for land and agrarian transformation and justice.

Throughout the period under review, the Inyanda National Land Movement was deeply involved

in various initiatives aimed at enhancing the lives of rural communities. These efforts included advocating for land and agrarian reforms, promoting rural democratization and lobbying for access to land and water resources. Inyanda also concentrated on securing tenure rights, communal land rights, and the rights of farmworkers and dwellers. The movement engaged in public discussions on land grabs and evictions, national political education on political economy, and a just climate transition and was active in mobilizing farmworkers and dwellers across the country, expanding its reach to new areas.

During September 2024, the collective held a National Strategic Management Team Meeting to review the state of Inyanda and reflect on the progress made since the last self-reflection in November 2022. The meeting featured robust discussions on the ongoing leadership formation of Inyanda and identified several areas where strategic interventions could further strengthen the movement and expand its operations. These included:

- The Movement Building Stream has the potential to provide even more strategic direction and support to Inyanda in their campaigns.
- Enhancing coordination by Inyanda Leadership at both local and national levels would further unify efforts and maximize impact.
- Increasing human resources within the Movement Building Stream would bolster support for Inyanda's initiatives.
- Strengthening the capacity of local community organizers, currently two

representatives from each movement, would enhance their ability to effectively organize in larger areas.

- Securing financial support for coordination and communication would further empower these local organizers.

We also agreed that aligning the efforts of staff members supporting TCOE/Inyanda at the regional level with the broader goals of Inyanda would ensure a more cohesive and unified approach. The National Platform agreed to meet bi-monthly for planning and developing a campaign strategy and act together on identified common issues, while individual sectors still had their autonomy to respond to issues that affected them.

THE STATE OF LOCAL MOVEMENTS/ FORUMS/ ASSOCIATIONS

During 2024, Inyanda formed alliances with like-minded organizations and movements, such as the South African Water Caucus and the Environmental Monitoring Group, to share information and experiences in the struggle for water justice. The movement had also organized platforms and protests at provincial and national levels to challenge budget cuts on essential services and build partnerships and solidarity in action.

Some of these efforts have yielded positive outcomes, such as improved access to water in Raymond Mhlaba and successful legal battles against seismic blasting and natural resource extraction. However, challenges persist, including unethical practices by traditional leaders who continued to transfer land

to large corporations and agribusinesses, leading to new forms of dispossession.

Municipal commonage remained a contentious issue as municipalities often sell land to the highest bidders. Inyanda has also implemented various awareness programs on climate change and the water crisis, encouraging communities to join the fight against the government's austerity measures.

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A NATIONAL WATER CRISIS CAMPAIGN

Inyanda was actively addressing the national water crisis through various initiatives and activities across South Africa. The movement focused on mobilizing communities and forming alliances with like-minded organizations to tackle water-related issues. Inyanda affiliates were instrumental in these efforts. Our strategy focused on building coordinated provincial actions that would contribute to a national water crisis campaign. In the Western Cape, a process of mobilization, follow-up, and assessment of the crisis took place to support community struggles in Hoekoe, Zoar, Genadendal, and other areas. This process served as a springboard for rebuilding Mawubuye and highlight its impact. In the Free State, Botshabelo facilitated the water crisis response with a localized action plan. Both external and internal mobilization and awareness activities were included in this plan, led by local movements and supported by broader movement building. Water stewards, chosen from local groups, were appointed as committees to champion these efforts. During the Women's Month in August, the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape hosted several popular education



programs on "Women and Water." In September 2024, a national event was hosted. This event was organised together with the Johannesburg Water Crisis Committee, the South African Water Caucus, the African Water Commons Committee, and AIDC, among others. Ultimately, Inyanda's water campaign aimed to build coordinated provincial actions to contribute to a national water crisis campaign focused on addressing the failure of local municipalities to deliver clean water, the poor and aging water infrastructure and the racial disparities in water distribution.

INYANDA'S COLLABORATION ON LAND AND MUNICIPAL COMMONAGE

The Inyanda movement focused on advocating for land rights, communal land rights, and the rights of farmworkers and dwellers and were involved

in popular dialogues on land grabs and evictions, national political education on political economy, and just climate transition.

One of the key areas of focus was the struggle for access to commonage land. In Blaauwkrantz, the movement's involvement dates back to 2006, where a supposed white farmer mentor claimed a larger stake than the black beneficiaries. This case was sent to court for litigation, and the movement has been actively working to resolve the issue. Additionally, there have been engagements and demonstrations by livestock farmers struggling for access to commonage land for grazing. Agreements were reached with local municipalities to distribute identified commonage land.

Inyanda has also been involved in building alliances with like-minded organisations to strengthen their efforts - for example, links were forged to collaborate on commonage land access and land use/agroecology. The movement has also engaged in political schools to address issues of land access, the violation of rights of farmworkers and dwellers, and illegal evictions.



Overall, Inyanda's work on land and agrarian transformation aims to create a more equitable and just land distribution system, ensuring that the rights and needs of rural communities are prioritized and protected.

C) CAMPAIGNS WAGED BY LOCAL MOVEMENTS

1) MOPANI FARMERS ASSOCIATION (MFA)

International Visitors Exchange: The Mopani Farmers Association (MFA) hosted visitors from an organisation based in France, as part of an exchange learning programme in Limpopo. The purpose of this visit was to bring women together to share experiences regarding equality, decision-making, unemployment, and the challenges women face in accessing land and other socio-economic issues. The session included both women involved in agriculture and those participating in RWA (Rural Women's Assembly) activities outside of farming. Issues of poverty and hunger were strongly highlighted, as was concern about the small number of people actively participating in food production. Nevertheless, some women shared encouraging success stories about accessing and using land, including growing vegetables in small spaces within their yards or homesteads to feed their families and generate income through the sale of surplus produce. The exchange also included a field trip to several Agroecology (AE) Nodes, such as the MFA AE Centre and Dr. Shongile Primary Agriculture, which serve as important educational sites.

Exchange visit: RWA members who are engaged in

agriculture within MFA travelled to Ga-Mamabolo in the Capricorn District for an exchange visit in commemoration of International Women's Day. The gathering focused on the welfare of women in rural communities under traditional authorities. Several commitments were made during this event:

- Landlessness and hunger were identified as two of the most pressing challenges facing RWA, who are primary food producers.
- RWA is committed to fighting against landlessness and hunger and calls for collective action to create a future free from hunger.
- The group pledged to ensure that every household has a subsistence food garden.

Access to water: The MFA expressed solidarity with the Khashani community in response to the water crisis in Khashani village. The local municipality's failure to deliver services prompted pressure from MFA, resulting in a resolution of the issue. SABC 2 interviewed community members and farmers about the situation, highlighting how they relied on river and dam water for themselves and their livestock.

Access to Land: Chief Ntsanwisi and allies attempted to intimidate members of the Davano Fresh Produce Cooperative with eviction threats. MFA intervened and advised the cooperative to address the issue further, with the LRC (Legal Resources Centre) now involved in providing assistance. MFA continues to support members' efforts to access land. Currently, two cooperatives have received support and

collectively gained access to seven hectares within their village.

Democratisation of Governance: MFA pledges ongoing solidarity with members and communities who face threats from some traditional authorities, especially in the Greater Ba-Phalaborwa area. Communities in Mahale, Nondweni, and Prisca are among those affected. MFA organised and facilitated a workshop on the democratisation of governance in Nondweni, attended by 66 representatives from the three communities. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of residents' rights and address concerns about abuse of power by traditional authorities.

Evictions: In Mahale, the self-proclaimed Chief evicted members from their land, destroying infrastructure and produce. This Chief is also challenging the Mlondobodzi family with intentions of eviction, attempting to allow white commercial farmers to take over land near the river. A committee was formed, including Mahale farmers, the Mlondobodzi family, members from Prisca farm/village, and the secretary from a progressive Chief who supports the land struggle, alongside a movement-building and research team. The disputed land, near the N14, is a vineyard farming area where commercial farmers (Loxtons and Spangenberg) operate. Residents were previously relocated, with the new residential area established by the apartheid municipality. Most residents remain farm workers or unemployed and do not own their houses.

Media: Media coverage of these events has increased following a statement released by the

TCOE media desk about the eviction of small-scale farmers in Mahale village. Ground Up, a media group based in Cape Town, has committed to covering all actions and activities affecting small-scale farmers and their communities. Their current reporting includes the story of Chief Ntsanwisi's land acquisition for a citrus project, as well as the eviction of 20 small-scale farmers in Mahale village. This heightened media attention is important for publicising the land struggles of MFA, RWA, and Inyanda, and for strengthening our local movement.

Strengthening Inyanda: MFA continues to strengthen its base, working with 68 youths who are receiving on-farm skills training through selected member cooperatives. Supporting efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty is essential for the association's growth.

Education and Training: MFA collaborated with DC Academy, an AGRISSETA-certified service provider, to facilitate a workshop on gender-based violence (GBV) on 18 and 19 June 2024. Forty-eight people participated, primarily from fully functional farmer cooperatives. The goal was to raise awareness about the growing incidence of GBV in the workplace, especially among cooperatives predominantly constituted by women, who have reported harassment and threats from men.

Networking: MFA continues to network with various institutions to influence their agendas towards the association's needs. Both members and non-members have identified skills shortages as an obstacle to self-reliance and sustainability. MFA has recently established partnerships with Indalo, for training in running successful businesses, and

with DC Academy, focusing on educating registered farmer cooperatives about factors contributing to GBV.

2) MAKUKHANYE LAND RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Building Alliance and Solidarity: Makukhanye continues its efforts to improve service delivery and uphold the rights of farm workers, dwellers, and women. Over the past year, the organisation has built connections with Cry of the Excluded to advocate against austerity budgets around the time of the national budget speech in February. Makukhanye also collaborated with the Provincial Water Crisis Committee, working to address the water crisis affecting Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, surrounding local municipalities, and the Eastern Cape at large.

The Worker Forum serves as a platform for farm workers and dwellers to challenge violations of workers' rights. Issues addressed include land grabs and evictions. Makukhanye has launched recruitment campaigns in Dispatch and Gunguluza, resulting in new memberships. Members have shown commitment by consistently paying their dues, which supports the organisation's sustainability.

Water Campaign: Efforts to improve access to water in the Sundays River Municipality are paying off. Boreholes are being constructed, and the project is nearing completion. The handover to the community is expected to take place in April or May 2024.

Access to Commonage: Last year, livestock farmers held demonstrations and engaged with local authorities to secure access to commonage land for

grazing. Meetings with the municipality in February and March 2024 led to an agreement to allocate identified commonage land to farmers by April.

The struggle for commonage access in Blaauwkrantz continues. Mentor white farmer Rudman has claimed a larger share than black beneficiaries, at a ratio of 51 to 49 percent. This dispute dates back to 2006 and has been pursued by Makukhanye and the Inyanda Land Movement, with the case even reaching the courts. Rudman asserts that beneficiaries are responsible for rates and tax debt incurred during their tenure and wishes to sell the portion of land he claims. The March meeting produced several resolutions:

- No further meetings will occur about this matter without beneficiaries present.
- Lawyers are tasked to investigate the origins and liability of the debt.
- Beneficiaries do not agree to the sale of the portion, as it would impact workers employed there.
- Makukhanye will research municipal financial records related to game farming on the land.

Gender-Based Violence Awareness: The GBV awareness programme includes a strategy that uses music videos. Local gatherings were organised in

Sundays River, Uitenhage, and Kouga Municipality to raise awareness about GBV and patriarchy. Music videos and other tools were used during these sessions. The local media also spotlighted these social issues, including the rise in municipal tariffs, to broaden public engagement and understanding.

4) MAWUBUYE LAND RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Throughout 2024, TCOE focused its intervention efforts on strengthening Mawubuye as an organization. This approach was shaped by a series of strategic reviews that highlighted challenges in sustaining campaigns around land and water issues. In January 2024, TCOE convened a leadership meeting at its offices to develop an operational plan aimed at building Mawubuye's capacity. The following priorities were identified for the year:

- Revival of membership in areas where organizational structures had either collapsed or were facing issues with cohesion.
- Expansion of the membership base into new regions.
- Development of inclusive leadership, particularly among women, youth, and livestock producers.
- Renewed campaigns for access to land and water.





Expansion of Membership Base: A series of roadshows and localized engagements with livestock farmers began in March and continued until mid-April. Visits to new areas such as Napier, Teslaardal, and Elim were conducted, alongside efforts to rebuild Mawubuye's presence in Caledon and Riviersonderend, where the organization had previously lost its footprint. These roadshows targeted livestock keepers, who formed the core of the membership and provided a foundation for land-focused campaigns. The expansion activities remained ongoing throughout April, and the first meeting in the Overberg region saw a successful turnout of forty livestock keepers from various towns. Further outreach was planned to reach additional areas including Grabow and Villiersdorp. Key issues raised during the meetings included limited access to land and water and challenges with livestock impoundments in the Theewaterskloof area. Farmers agreed to form a committee to organize outreach in remaining towns and to take the lead in engaging government officials to

improve farming conditions. In Teslaardal, some farmers had access to land while others did not. In many cases, land was being sold to white buyers, forcing small-scale farmers to relocate their cattle for grazing. The situation in Caledon remained unchanged, with ongoing difficulties in securing commonage land and a lack of acknowledgment by the municipality regarding its responsibility to make such land available. The Theewaterskloof municipality continued selling commonage land in areas such as Greyton; for example, the case of erf 595 was under review following objections by organized small-scale farming groups from Greyton and Genadendal.

Revival and Consolidation: Mawubuye leadership arranged meetings with the farmer group from Riviersonderend, a former member of Mawubuye whose relationship with the organization had collapsed due to aging leadership and relocation of some leaders. TCOE had previously supported this group with impoundment cases, and this visit aimed to rebuild relations. Engagements

also took place with farmers from Swellendam, who were members of Mawubuye, as part of broader efforts toward revival and consolidation. Additional meetings were held with farmers in the Langeberg municipality, where McGregor small-scale farmers succeeded in arranging municipal consultations to identify land for relocating their pigs. Floods during the previous year had resulted in significant losses among pig farmers. RWA and Mawubuye leadership worked with the LRC on the One Woman One Hectare campaign. They participated in local land use planning processes in Langeberg and submitted written proposals concerning the identification and allocation of commonage land.

The organization collaborated with the Forum of Cry of the Excluded to submit input on the State of the Province address. A pamphlet detailing the state of land reform in the province was developed and presented to the Premier. The Premier's office provided a written response to the organization's submission.

Advocacy and Dialogue: Mawubuye continued to host political dialogues with small-scale farmers, engaging them in discussions about challenges related to land and water access. The organization also worked to build awareness of policy impacts on livelihoods and advocated for the needs of its members. Engagements on water rights and the new Water Bill were held to inform submissions, and livestock meetings were organized to advocate for fair water redistribution for livestock farmers. Regular meetings focused

on livestock management and health.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Policy Advocacy:

Monthly review meetings were held to assess progress and plan future activities. Mawubuye conducted a land access and land audit to better understand patterns of land distribution and access, along with the bottlenecks that persisted. The organisation collaborated with other stakeholders to advocate for more effective land redistribution policies that address historical inequalities in land ownership and to propose support measures for small-scale farmers.

5) ILIZWI LAMAFAMA

General Meeting: On February 9, 2024, Ilizwi Lamafama organised a general meeting aimed at creating a platform to discuss access to land, the Eastern Cape water crisis, GBV and the forthcoming May national public elections. The state of Ilizwi Lamafama was also a critical item on the agenda. More than 120 delegates from Ilizwi's area of operation attended the meeting. This event assisted in shaping the water campaign and helped prepare for the National Movement Building Planning Meeting.

Links were established with Tshintsha Amakhaya on May 16, 2024, focusing on areas of collaboration and future campaigns around commonage land access and land use/AE.

Youth Day was commemorated on June 15, 2024, and the occasion was used to raise awareness about climate change, global warming, and the impact on the environment and the country's economy. Discussions centred on effective responses to adapt

to and mitigate against these effects. The activity mainly attracted youth and women, and local social media outlets were invited to profile the event.

Meeting with COGTA: In November 2024, COGTA (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs) held a meeting with representatives from the Eastern Cape Inyanda and TCOE staff members. It became clear that COGTA was not prepared to address the demands and requested that Inyanda/ Ilizwi Lamafama provide concrete information. The memorandum of demands was formulated according to each municipal area and the specific issues affecting communities. Delegates were asked by COGTA to expand on the information contained in the petition and to provide detailed locations to enable COGTA to act accordingly. This engagement meeting followed the provincial march to Bisho.

Consultation Workshop on the National Water Act:

A public consultation workshop on the National Water Act and the Water Service Act was held on February 21, 2024, and brought together a delegation from the leadership of Ilizwi Lamafama to participate in discussions. Key questions raised included:

- The duration of water licensing and whether any studies were conducted regarding the 2% of water allocated to HDI (historically disadvantaged individuals), and whether municipalities were included in these statistics.
- Systems to ensure accountability of officials and management of alien species.
- Clarification of section D of the Amendment and the boundaries established.

The department responded that areas under agriculture, forestry, and mining would be protected and that the minister would publish a list of these areas. The act included provisions for mining adjacent to these areas, and government employees would be held accountable if they failed to fulfil their duties. However, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the answers provided.

Meeting with the Water Caucus: On March 15, 2024, Ilizwi Lamafama held a solidarity meeting with the Eastern Cape Water Caucus and other stakeholders to discuss the growing water crisis in the province. Delegates from various municipalities, mostly from the old Transkei and Ciskei regions, which were severely affected by the crisis, participated in the meeting.

Key challenges identified included:

- Aging water infrastructure and the



government's inadequate response.

- Local communities accessing water directly from rivers without purification, resulting in health hazards, with children being particularly vulnerable.
- Load shedding was cited as a contributing factor to the crisis in some areas.
- Communities were required to purchase water and pay for its transportation.
- Mobile water tanks could not reach the majority of residents in affected communities.
- Sewer pipe bursts led to contamination of water intended for consumption.

The meeting produced demands to present to the provincial government in preparation for a protest planned for May 2024. Ilizwi Lamafama organized a follow-up meeting in April 2024 with the Eastern Cape Water Caucus to reflect on the water crisis and develop a collective response strategy. Local actions took place in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality, followed by meetings with communities in Middledrift and further engagement with Raymond Mhlaba Municipality to address water and other service

delivery issues.

6) BOTSHABELO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS MOVEMENT

Film screening: On 20 January 2024, the local movement embarked on a recruitment and expansion campaign with a particular focus on young women. On the same day, BUM conducted a film screening training attended by 52 participants, the majority being young women.

Protests and campaigns: A demonstration was held on 24 March 2024, where the movement disrupted an event organised by the Minister of Employment during the Labour Job Fair at Botshabelo Stadium. In March, the movement also organised a Provincial March to the Premier's Office and Eskom to submit demands regarding the energy crisis, austerity budget, and unemployment. The first quarter was not conducive to executing the organisation's programmes, particularly door-to-door campaigns and branch revival meetings, as it coincided with the election season.

Strengthening alliances: In April 2024, BUM visited its branches and established executive committees in seven branches to strengthen local organisation. On 17 May 2024, the local movement pledged solidarity with the Amadiba Crisis Committee, the SA Green Revolution Council, and Coastal Links during the Bloemfontein Court Case against the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy.

Care and hygiene: A soccer tournament was organised on 17 June 2024 to engage women and



youth, during which 50 women received hygiene packs. A petition with 128 signatures was signed to pressure the University of Free State to accept students who had been rejected, and 15 youths were assisted with re-application.

Roadshows: From 18 to 21 June 2024, BUM and CSAAWU organised roadshows to raise awareness of farmworkers' rights among union members and farm workers in the Eastern Cape and the Free State province, specifically in Senekal, Bethlem, Marquard, and Paul Roux.

7) COASTAL LINKS EASTERN CAPE

Access to Marine Rights and Land: The coastal communities faced significant challenges regarding access to marine rights and incidents of land grabs by large companies, often carried out in collaboration with traditional leaders and the provincial government. The local movement of fishers undertook an educational campaign focused on rights and land access across five municipal areas: Mnquma, Ngqushwa, Nyandeni, Port St Johns, and Lusikisiki. This campaign included more than 500 participants, the majority of whom were women. Government officials engaged on these issues, such as access to squid and abalone species, and the movement demanded inclusion in the Squid Project.

There were extensive discussions about the role of traditional leadership, noting violations of fishers' rights to land and marine resources. Traditional leaders and local municipalities are not accountable to communities and often make decisions without resident participation. It was also observed that elderly community members tended to show loyalty to traditional leaders and political parties. The community structure in the area remained dominated by traditional leadership. This institution did not have clear operational jurisdiction and often interfered with fishers' issues, including access to sea and land. Communal Property Associations (CPAs) were allocated without proper community consultation. Chiefs, in cooperation with local municipalities and government departments, violated the rights of fishing communities and restricted access to marine resources, despite many chiefs living far from the coast. These actions created confusion, disorganization, and division within the community. For example, equipment was given to one community that belonged to another, leading to conflict. A tribunal was organized by Coastal Links, in collaboration with affected communities and progressive headmen, to discuss the situation and develop strategies to address these issues. The agenda also included the impact of climate change and global warming, which had severely affected the local economy and infrastructure. Communities developed a plan to engage local municipalities on disaster funding and support for affected areas.

Water Struggles and Natural Resources: Coastal Links maintained a strong education programme





on rights and the extraction of resources, including oil, obtained through seismic blasting. Their engagement strategies included local actions, demonstrations, and legal interventions. In the Nombanjane case regarding poor water delivery, the court ruled in favour of the coastal communities, outlining specific obligations for the Eastern Cape government to address the crisis. Coastal Links and its allies, TCOE and Masifundise, continued to apply pressure on the provincial government to ensure compliance with the court ruling.

Leadership and Cadreship Building: Coastal Links Eastern Cape held its Annual General Meeting from May 25 to May 27, 2023. Seven operational areas where Coastal Links was active were represented, covering 27 villages. Only one village could not attend due to miscommunication of dates; this allowed the AGM to reach its quorum (50 percent plus one). New leadership was elected, ensuring greater representation of women and youth compared to the previous leadership. Resolutions were tabled to guide the future operations of the movement.

This platform allowed for in-depth reflection, thorough contextual analysis, and the development of an appropriate campaign strategy to address the challenges faced. The organization also held critical

self-reflection on the impact of their interventions and considered ways to improve. This included reviewing leadership capacities, commitment, and determination to the cause, as well as strengthening and consolidating leadership. Possible co-option and thus the reshuffling of leadership were considered as possible actions.

Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) meetings took place on June 14, 2022, and August 8, 2022. These meetings provided an opportunity for CLEC leadership to periodically reflect on impact, challenges, and to develop strategies for future interventions. The PEC reviewed financial management and disbursement trends, debating ways to strengthen Coastal Links' financial capacity. These meetings promoted accountability and transparency in finances and project implementation, fostering two-way accountability between Zingisa and Coastal Links. Narrative and financial reports, expenditure patterns, variance, and project impact gaps were also reviewed.

The state of the organization was discussed in detail, with a focus on leadership building and campaign development. Topics included access to rights and marine resources, extraction of natural resources by large corporations, and land grabs for GMO production. These reflections assisted

the organization in strengthening campaigns, involving more stakeholders for greater impact, and provided strategic political direction, including support from allied partners and alliances.

8) NORTHERN CAPE

Media: In January 2024, Radio Riverside was invited to participate in a meeting with the Paballelo and Rosedale small-scale livestock farmers, as well as the TCOE Movement Building Stream. The aim was to highlight the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality's delay in adopting the draft Commonage Land Policy, despite the farmers having provided input on two occasions. During this meeting, Radio Riverside, the livestock farmers, and TCOE verbally agreed to collaborate on a documentary showcasing the challenges faced by small-scale farmers working on commonage land. This documentary was aired in February 2024. Following its broadcast, both the municipality and the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development responded to the issues raised during a subsequent meeting.

In February 2024, Radio Riverside also conducted an interview with the Movement Building Stream (Northern Cape), introducing the TCOE and focusing primarily on its work through the Food Sovereignty Stream. This interview led to new connections between the Movement Building Stream and a youth group in Keimoes, located approximately 35 km from Upington. The same month, Movement Building Stream representatives participated in an interview with SABC News 404. The discussion focused on election manifesto promises, agrarian transformation challenges, and water issues. Overall,

the Movement Building Stream Northern Cape worked closely with the TCOE media unit on a range of media-related initiatives throughout the year.

Land and Water Campaign: Backyard farmers, primarily women and youth, produced vegetables collectively in areas such as Rosedale, Kameelmond, and Keimoes, although they mainly worked from their own backyards due to challenges with accessing larger land parcels. The Rosedale group submitted a letter to the municipality, requesting permission to use a piece of land they identified near the community where members of *Gesondheid Uit die Ground Stay*. However, by the end of the reporting period, they had not received a formal response from the Dawid Kruiper Municipality. Further investigation was still required regarding land along the Orange River for Kameelmond food producers to enable production at a larger scale.

Paballelo and Rosedale small-scale livestock farmers continued to operate on the Hondejaag commonage land, where they faced limited grazing resources, lack of rainfall, high temperatures, and scarce water sources. Several meetings were held with municipal officials, but these yielded only promises without tangible results. Meanwhile, livestock farmers in Kuruman farmed on communal land and faced ongoing water shortages. Discussions with the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform took place, aiming to secure support through the CASP programme. These discussions explored the need for mobilizing support beyond the membership, partnering with like-minded organizations, considering legal action, and

organizing popular actions such as marches.

Building solidarity: The June 16th commemoration event in Upington was highly successful, drawing participation from organizations such as WOMIN and the Popular Education Network. Attendees came from Kameelmond, Rosedale, Paballelo, Namaqua areas, and Keimoes. The focus was on building alliances and fostering solidarity through shared struggles, particularly regarding land and water access. Organizations shared their experiences, identified common challenges, and formed a committee to facilitate the exchange of information and coordinate future campaigns. A professional nurse was also invited to speak on health issues relevant to the group.

Building alliances: During the reporting period, efforts concentrated on forging alliances with

organizations, networks, and movements committed to water justice, including the South African Water Caucus, the Environmental Monitoring Group, Water is Love, and the Johannesburg Water Campaign. These collaborations enabled the sharing of information and strategies in the ongoing struggle for water rights. The Movement Building Stream also addressed the struggles of small-scale livestock farmers, farmworkers, and farm dwellers, working with partners such as Ground Up online news and an international group advocating for the rights and living conditions of farmworkers.

D) BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

Zingisa / Delta Partnership Intervention

A provincial women's movement launch and partnership event took place on August 28, 2024,



with 60 participants in attendance. The primary goal was to establish a provincial women's voice to lobby and advocate for women's rights and an end to GBV in the region. This initiative stems from the efforts of the Zingisa/Delta partnership in empowering women's voices at both local and district levels.

The platform served to strengthen alliances and partnerships across the province, reinforcing the ongoing struggle for women's emancipation. Delta's Board Members also participated, playing a significant role in shaping the discussions and process. After the election of new provincial leadership, a general discussion addressed the contextual challenges facing the Eastern Cape. Attendees emphasized the need for the newly formed provincial structure to reposition itself to better address these prevailing issues. Concerns were raised about the justice system's failure to tackle some of these challenges, highlighting the importance of engaging relevant departments.

The meeting resolved that the newly elected leadership should reflect on the challenges and strategies discussed and develop a draft action plan to be presented at the provincial general council.

PROVINCIAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY DIALOGUE AT CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

On October 23, 2024, a dialogue on Food Sovereignty was held at Chris Hani/Cofimvaba. Women from Nyandeni Local Municipality, Dr A Xuma Local Municipality, and Ntsika Yethu Local Municipality attended, aiming to foster community-led food initiatives, promote locally produced food, and build

local markets through climate-resilient agriculture.

The event provided a platform for small-scale crop producers to reflect on production trends and challenges, particularly regarding access to markets and the organization of those markets. The most critical issue identified was access to land and the need for government support to ensure effective and productive land use. This challenge was directly linked to shortcomings in South Africa's Land and Agrarian Reform Programme and the dominance of market- and export-driven production models.

Debates explored the importance of a food production model centred on household food security, locally produced food, and food systems tailored to local dynamics and culture, feeding the nation first and selling any surplus. The current mode of production and food system, criticized for prioritizing profits and exports while excluding marginalized, poor communities, was a central topic.

Another significant focus was the water crisis: access to water for both consumption and production, especially considering the impact of climate change and global warming on food security and sovereignty. The ongoing energy crisis also affects food production and the livelihoods of the poor. Branding and packaging of produce remain challenges that require further attention.

Support for RWA's "One Woman, One Hectare" access to land campaign was recognized as a key strategy to

help women obtain land and participate effectively in building local economies. The need to form alliances for action and solidarity was emphasized, along with lobbying government to create more opportunities for small-scale producers in local marketing spaces. Participants advocated for developing independent systems for grading and branding locally produced food, as well as implementing their own assessment model to certify agroecological food production.

EXPANDING THE FOOTPRINT OF INYANDA, RWA AND CSAAWU IN THE NORTHERN CAPE

The Movement Building stream and CSAAWU have been making strides in mobilizing and organizing farmworkers and dwellers in the vineyards of Kanon Eiland and Raaswater, as well as developing concrete contacts and commitments with workers in Loxtonville near Keimoes. RWA has welcomed new members from Paballelo, Rosedale, and Kameelmond. In Upington, the RWA has access to a 1,800-square-meter garden, and another site has been identified for Paballelo members, with ongoing engagements in progress. A coordinating committee was established to facilitate RWA activities and events. The movement building team has received a mandate to provide strategic direction, guidance, and support.

E) LEADERSHIP AND CADRE DEVELOPMENT

The Movement Building stream conducted several political schools across provinces in 2024, focusing on access to commonage land and water, climate

change, and re-imagining Inyanda.

These schools brought together 45 participants from RWA and Inyanda at Botshabelo in the Free State from 21 to 22 October. In the Northern Cape, two decentralized political schools were held in Upington on 23 and 24 October, with 15 participants including food producers and livestock farmers. The Eastern Cape hosted two schools: one in Port Elizabeth Kwanobuhle on 13 and 14 November with 39 participants, and another in the OR Tambo District Municipality, Libode, with 15 participants. Limpopo's provincial school took place at the MFA office from 27 to 28 November, attended by 27 participants.

A workshop on land rights was held in the Northern Cape on 29 and 30 October for 20 participants, focusing on consolidating research on land rights in the area. These gatherings aimed to unite marginalized groups such as rural dwellers, farmworkers, farmers and the unemployed, to share experiences and develop joint strategies for improved land access, tenure security, and collective resistance to the loss of common resources. Contextual analysis and discussions on the Government of National Unity addressed issues facing these sectors, especially the shortcomings of the land and agrarian reform programme in delivering land and post-settlement support. Challenges around land access, violation of farmworkers' and dwellers' rights, and illegal evictions were debated, supported by relevant case studies. There was also engagement with the draft policy on commonage land in the Northern Cape to address access challenges, particularly for livestock



farmers. The issue of water access was highlighted by discussions on local municipalities' failure to provide clean water for consumption and irrigation. Ageing infrastructure, leaks, and water losses were identified as major problems. Community access to green and blue reports remains limited. The debates aimed to build a coherent strategy for consolidating and strengthening land and water campaigns.

The Northern Cape Farmworkers and Dwellers Report will be available between January and February 2025. Significant findings include the standard of living and working conditions on farms. Addressing these challenges requires a focus on building CSAAWU in the Northern Cape Province. Struggles for access to marine resources, the impact of seismic blasting and the extraction of natural

resources by large companies under Operation Phakisa were also debated. The challenges faced by small-scale fishers in accessing the sea and the creation of Marine Protected Areas were discussed in depth. Climate change remained a priority on the agenda, with discussions on its impact on food security and sovereignty, as well as its effect on water and natural resources, including marine life. Participants also engaged with the issue of budget cuts on social services and their link to the delivery of land, water, and other essential services such as health, which contribute to rising unemployment.

Deliverables from the political schools included:

- Nomination of a coordinating committee to advance the re-imagining of Inyanda.
- Facilitation of Provincial Platform Joint Campaign Strategy Development Meetings and identification of strategic alliances and partners.
- Engagement with local municipalities on Green and Blue Drop Reports.
- Area-specific campaigns for 2025, informed by regional dynamics.

Study Circles by Inyanda Local Movements

Online study groups and circles, led by Makukhanye and Amandla in the Eastern Cape, are held periodically to address issues related to farmworkers' rights and labour relations. These platforms are also used for developing campaign strategies and fostering solidarity in action. A small committee coordinates these sessions, mobilizing members and distributing materials and information. In the Western Cape, Mawubuye and CSAAWU have

established study circles focused on farmworkers' rights and access to commonage land.

F) MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout the year, several significant achievements were realized across multiple regions and initiatives.

- Inyanda, Free State RWA and Bum organized provincial platforms and protests to address and challenge budget cuts affecting essential services. At the national level, Inyanda/TCOE, in alliance with other partners, led coordinated efforts to build solidarity and take collective action on this issue.
- One long-standing struggle centred on access to commonage land in Blaauwkrantz, where the mentor white farmer, Rudman, claimed a 49% stake against the 51% held by black beneficiaries. This dispute, dating back to 2006 and led by Makukhanye and the Inyanda Land Movement, was taken to court for litigation. Rudman had demanded that beneficiaries pay rates and settle tax debt accrued during their tenure. He also attempted to sell his claimed portion of the land. The dispute was ultimately resolved through legal processes.
- Coastal Links Fishers, actively resisted oil and gas extraction through protests and legal action, resulting in the suspension of extraction activities by court order. Additionally, fishers arrested for fishing without licenses successfully won their



court case. The Nombanjana Communities, with the support of Inyanda/TCOE, also secured a High Court victory regarding water provision, and infrastructural improvements are currently underway despite ongoing challenges. The broader movement for the “Right to Say No” has been instrumental in empowering coastal communities to halt extractive projects by large corporations.

- Botshabelo Unemployed mobilized youth and young women through sports initiatives and advocacy around employment and austerity budgets. Meanwhile, Mopane Farmers Associations engaged youth and young women by offering skills development programs and promoting agroecology.
- Ilizwi Lamafama made progress on the longstanding crisis of water access and outdated infrastructure in Raymond Mhlaba. Notable improvements include cases of water reticulation and enhanced water provision. Ilizwi participated in water policy development platforms to influence

- policy direction—marking a shift in focus from primarily food security projects to broader policy advocacy.

Collectively, these efforts underscore a year of meaningful progress and community-driven change.

G) KEY CHALLENGES

- The limited understanding of municipal processes among the election candidates leaves them vulnerable to manipulation by officials and members of the ruling party. For example, Proportional Representation (PR) councillors from the Unemployed People's Movement (UPM) and Makana Citizen's Forum (MCF) are often marginalised by officials within the Makana Local Municipality. These councillors have also reported instances of being intimidated by officials, particularly when they raise concerns emerging from their engagement with local residents. Additionally, independent councillors are frequently deployed in wards where they are not well known, which further limits their effectiveness.
- Access to marine and land resources remains a significant challenge for coastal communities. Fishers' cooperatives, although established, are primarily controlled by government departments and do not receive adequate support. The allocation of fishing permits is limited to a

small number of individuals, with adverse consequences for food security.

- Furthermore, national coordination and communication within the leadership of Inyanda remain obstacles to the effective implementation of national resolutions and actions.

H) CONCLUSION

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that successful campaigns demand sustained effort through a variety of strategies. Immediate results are rare, and complex challenges cannot be solved by single actions. But perseverance and mobilisation from below also shows that positive outcomes and victories can be achieved. The growing requests from Inyanda for legal assistance highlight the importance of maintaining the momentum of our formations and preventing demobilisation. Looking ahead, our focus will be on consolidating and strengthening study circles to deepen our collective work. We also remain committed to advancing the rights of coastal communities regarding access to marine resources, land, water, tenure, and communal land. Additional priorities include supporting farmworkers and dwellers, facilitating dialogues on land grabs and evictions, expanding national political education on political economy and a just climate transition, intensifying the national struggle over the water crisis, and mobilising farmworkers and dwellers across new regions. Together, we will continue to build resilient movements that respond to the urgent needs of our communities.



RURAL WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY (RWA)



A) INTRODUCTION:

The year 2024 unfolded against a backdrop of deepening political, socioeconomic, and environmental crises. Across South Africa, rural communities faced intersecting challenges: persistent poverty, rising unemployment, escalating food prices, and the worsening effects of climate change. Landlessness remained a critical barrier to food sovereignty, while entrenched inequality and systemic gender discrimination continued to undermine rural women's ability to claim their rights and build sustainable livelihoods. These conditions were further aggravated by poor service delivery, corruption, and the exploitation of low-paid and informal workers, disproportionately affecting women and youth..

Amid these realities, the Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) remained a steadfast voice for rural women, advancing collective action to secure land, protect rights, and strengthen community resilience. Rural women continue to be the backbone of local food systems, cultivating land, preserving seeds, and sustaining households, yet they face structural barriers to secure tenure, access to resources, and inclusion in policy decision-making. Recognising that transformation requires both grassroots mobilisation and systemic change, RWA actively engages with policy processes as a critical pathway to dismantling inequality and protecting rural livelihoods.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)

serves as a central framework in this work. RWA uses UNDROP to guide its actions across all thematic areas, land and agroecology (AE), climate justice and the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) to educate women about their rights, strengthen their political agency and build collective power. This approach is powerfully embodied in the One Woman One Hectare (1W1H) campaign, which demands that every rural woman has secure access to at least one hectare of land to produce food, generate income, and build climate-resilient livelihoods. By using UNDROP as a guiding tool, the 1W1H campaign connects land struggles to broader rights-based advocacy, integrating land access with practical training in AE, seed sovereignty, climate adaptation and campaigns to end GBV. In 2024, the campaign gained renewed momentum, amplifying rural women's voices in policy dialogues and reinforcing the principle that access to land is a non-negotiable right, and the foundation for food sovereignty and gender equality.

B) UNDROP

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas remains the cornerstone of all RWA's campaigns, workshops, and advocacy initiatives. Throughout the reporting year, RWA intensified its efforts to ensure that South Africa's status as a UNDROP signatory, a commitment made in 2018, is translated into real action. Despite the government's formal support for the declaration at the United Nations, no policy or legislative framework has yet been put in place to protect peasants, small-scale food producers, and

rural women who face daily struggles over land, water, seeds, and markets. RWA has consistently called on the President and other duty bearers to implement UNDROP by embedding its principles into national agricultural, environmental, and rural development policies.

Workshops and mobilisations created spaces where rural women connected their daily struggles to broader systemic issues and learned practical ways to organise for change. These workshops consistently:

- capacitated communities on land and resource rights, emphasizing how secure access to land, water, and seeds is central to livelihoods and human dignity;
- linked land rights with women's rights and GBV, showing how dispossession and patriarchy reinforce each other;
- promoted food sovereignty and AE, advocating farmer-managed seed systems (FMSS), biodiversity protection, and alternatives to corporate-controlled agriculture;
- built advocacy skills for holding government accountable to its 2018 UNDROP commitment, equipping participants to demand policies and laws that protect peasants' rights.

KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- **Monthly Meetings, Ndhambi Village:** Provided a platform for victims and survivors of GBV to share their experiences and challenges in how cases are handled

by families and communities. Discussed the role of law enforcement in supporting victims and linked GBV issues to the 1W1H campaign, UNDROP, AE and climate change.

- **International Women's Day Commemoration, Mamabolo Village, Polokwane:** Brought together participants from Capricorn District to recruit new members and raise awareness about UNDROP and 1W1H. Discussions focused on food justice, sustainable farming, and the link between fair food access and environmental sustainability.
- **UNDROP and Climate Change Workshop, Guwela Village:** Targeted youth and backyard gardeners, encouraging the establishment of food gardens to reduce reliance on store-bought, non-organic food. Youth participants expressed interest in agriculture as a viable career path.
- **One Woman One Hectare Campaign, Climate Justice, Land Audit and Tree Planting, Polokwane:** Women from Sekhukhune, Mopani, and Capricorn districts gathered for discussions on UNDROP and climate justice, followed by the planting of fruit trees. The event resulted in a plan to increase RWA visibility in each district, recruit members, and establish a Limpopo leadership committee.
- **International Peasants Day Workshop, Mdantsane NU3:** Attended by 45 multiple-generational women participants, and a few men. The workshop opened with a Mystica, a reflective session connecting

participants to nature and their rights, and commemorated the massacre of Landless Peoples' Movement peasants in 1996 in Brazil. Discussions focused on the struggles of rural women in food production and land rights.

- **Land Dialogue, Evaton West Ext. 4, Gauteng:** Held near a site where 10 women had recently acquired land, the dialogue brought together land occupiers,

residents of informal settlements, and women engaged in community projects such as school and clinic gardens. Some participants had converted dumping sites into food gardens. SANCO and the Ward Councillor were present. The session explored local land issues, shared strategies, and promoted awareness of UNDROP.



C) ONE WOMAN, ONE HECTARE CAMPAIGN

The 1W-1H campaign was launched by RWA in 2014 to ensure that women have access to at least one hectare of land with water to grow food. This initiative responds to the historical injustices of land dispossession and the systemic inequalities that continue to limit women's access to resources in South Africa. The campaign supports land access for both household food security and income generation. Secure access to land reduces economic dependence on abusive relationships, offering a pathway out of situations of GBV. In this way, the campaign combines practical support for rural livelihoods with a broader strategy to promote gender equality and dismantle patriarchal structures.

The data on land acquisitions by RWA members in South Africa provides a glimpse into the complex realities of (lack of) land reform in the country. While it reveals stories of resilience and agency, it also highlights the limitations of current efforts and the need for more systemic and equitable solutions. The 1W1H campaign made significant strides in its mission to secure land access for women smallholder farmers. In Gauteng, 10 hectares of land have been acquired, benefiting 10 women and their communities and in the Western Cape, new members have gained access to 2 hectares of land, with three women farming crops and drying herbs on privately owned land under lease agreements.

The campaign has been instrumental in raising

awareness on land rights, advocating for policy changes and promoting sustainable agricultural practices through AE, but has also faced significant challenges. Access to land with water remains a challenge for women motivated to become producers, and disputes between traditional authorities and local farmers are a problem. A notable case involves 20 small-scale farmers, including five women, in Limpopo, who are contesting the use of communal land now allocated to commercial farming. Among them is a leader of the RWA who has farmed 5 hectares over many years and whose livelihood is now threatened. Workshops were conducted on land rights and the role of traditional authorities in managing communal land. These initiatives empowered farmers to challenge land grabbing and brought media attention through GroundUp.

Western Cape RWA members attended the Langeberg Municipal Spatial Development Framework (SDF) meeting to raise concerns about the municipality's lack of action in allocating land to women. Despite submitting applications for land as far back as 2020, no progress had been made. Our collaboration with the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) proved valuable in engaging the municipality more effectively. As a result of this partnership, the Langeberg Municipality responded with a proposal identifying six marked areas for potential urban farming in McGregor. The next step is to meet with the municipality to discuss these portions of land as possibilities for the 1W1H campaign. A written response has been submitted to the municipality to advance this process.

Province	Town/District	Number of Hectares 2022	Number of Hectares 2023	Number of Hectares 2024	Number of Women 2024
Limpopo					
	Acquired land, Food Gardens	100 hectares	55 Backyard gardens	3 ha 55 Backyard gardens- Quarter of hectare per garden	57
Gauteng					
	Sedibeng Municipality, Deneysville, Soweto (Lawley), Vaalpark, Vereeniging, Sebokeng (Zone 19), Carletonville (Wedela), Tswelopele Masakeng, Palm Springs	1 hectare	9 Hectares	71 ha including 116 (backyard gardens)	148
Eastern Cape					
	Backyard Gardens & Hubs	Approx. 5 hectares Approx. 40 hectares	22 Hectares	15 gardens, 2 hubs	93
Free State					
	Groups using school yards (leased for 3 years)	36 Hectares	30 Backyard Gardens 350 Household Garden Quarter of an hectare per garden	30 gardens	240
Western Cape					
	Zolani – Youth Garden, HUB, Breede Valley Municipal, Barrydale, Langeberg, Buffelsjagsbaai, Carlitzdorp, Genadendal – Youth Group De Doorns	2 Hectares	Less than 1 Hectare, Less than 1 hectare, 2 Guerilla Gardens, 13 backyard gardens, half a hectare, school garden (less than 1 Hectar)	3.5 ha	31 women
Total		186 Hectares	61 Hectare	95.5 ha	569

The 1W1H campaign continues to position women as leaders in land reform, challenge gender norms and demonstrating their capacity to manage resources effectively and advocate for secure land access as a solution to GBV through multi-stakeholder workshops at schools, churches throughout the country.

D) AGROECOLOGY, SEED RECOVERY AND PROPAGATION

Agroecology (AE) is an integrated approach to food production that applies ecological and social principles to create sustainable and resilient food systems. It stands in stark contrast to industrial agriculture by working with nature and local communities to build self-sufficiency. The foundation of this system is the seed, vital for maintaining crop diversity, adapting to environmental changes and ensuring long-term food security.

The importance of seeds has become a significant policy issue, particularly with the rise of corporate control. Policies like the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) threaten traditional farming by granting intellectual property rights to breeders, which restrict farmers' age-old practices of saving, reusing, exchanging and selling seeds. This has led to the criminalisation of these practices, already finding expression in seeds being confiscated from rural women cross-border traders and travellers at airports. This highlights a profound challenge where corporate interests are prioritised over the rights of local communities and small-scale farmers.

In response to these challenges, the RWA has been actively promoting AE and seed preservation. In November 2024, the RWA hosted a powerful exhibition at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town titled 'Guardians of seed, land and life.' This exhibition showcased the vital role of women in food and seed sovereignty and their leadership in defending land and seed rights against corporate influence. Additionally, the RWA has provided AE training across the country on essential practices like compost making, water management, and developing hard crop varieties. Through these efforts, the RWA is encouraging the creation of AE



hubs and food gardens, moving communities away from relying on corporate controlled food. These efforts are part of a larger network of TCOE and RWA hubs now in existence across the country, serving as vital learning sites and centres for seed rehabilitation, saving, multiplication and sharing. The RWA's work throughout the year has been crucial in strengthening sustainable and community-led food systems.

ACTIVITIES IN 2024

- **Gardens Established:** RWA recorded a total of 226 backyard gardens established across the country for 2024.
- **2x Seed Recovery and Propagation sites in Limpopo:** Established at the AE Centre in Ndhambi Village, on one hectare of land allocated by the Mopani Framers Association (MFA) and at Davano, where maize and butter beans are multiplied, engaging

youth volunteers, and contributing to local food security and seed sovereignty.

- **Youth Training at the Agroecology Centre:** where? (I think it is also Limpopo- confirm) Three young farmers are receiving hands-on training in crop selection, mulching, irrigation, and pest control. The Centre also supports the establishment of homestead food gardens in surrounding villages.
- **Community Seed Banks and Nurseries:** Continued operation of community nurseries and seed banks in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo, and the Western Cape. ensuring access to diverse and locally adapted seeds.
- **Agroecology Hubs and Nodes:** Maintenance of 15 AEhubs and two Agroecology Nodes as learning and innovation sites for local farmers, managed by Food Sovereignty Stream leaders and



women-led farmer associations.

- **Seed Exhibition in Cape Town:** Following the launch of the seed exhibition at the University of Johannesburg in 2023, showcasing indigenous seeds from SADC RWA, the SA RWA country chapter launched the photo seed exhibition in Cape Town attended by more than 400 people and with subsequent daily visitors. It was exhibited at the Castle of Good Hope a venue with historical connections with the displacement of Khoisan peoples. Furthermore, a seed policy dialogue was held which involved the UN UNDROP WG representative for Africa.

E) CLIMATE ADVOCACY AND RESILIENCE

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges facing rural communities in South Africa. For small-scale women farmers whose livelihoods depend on the land, the increasing frequency and severity of floods, droughts, heatwaves and veld fires threaten not only food production but also family incomes, community stability and well-being. These impacts are felt most acutely in rural areas, where access to resources, infrastructure and disaster relief is more limited. Climate change amplifies existing inequalities and leaves women more vulnerable to impoverishment, displacement and GBV.

CLIMATE IMPACTS ON RURAL WOMEN

Climate disasters left rural communities and small-scale producers with significant widespread losses

and destruction of both crops and livestock. In response, the RWA provided crucial aid, including food parcels and sanitary packs, to affected families. Subsequent engagements with local government exposed a critical lack of preparedness and a troubling absence of political will to assist these farmers. The absence of a dedicated disaster relief fund further highlighted the systemic neglect of rural residents, reinforcing the urgent need for continued grassroots organising and advocacy.

Simultaneously, Limpopo Province endured severe drought conditions and extreme temperatures, with highs reaching 40 degrees Celsius. This environmental stress made food production increasingly challenging due to critical water shortages and an increase in dried-up boreholes. The situation was compounded by heatwaves, which destroyed surviving crops, and veld fires, which devastated infrastructure and grazing land. By December 2024, the lack of viable grazing land resulted in the mass perishing of livestock. The culmination of these factors contributed to a marked increase in poverty, unemployment, and crime in deep rural areas, leaving many families dependent on social grants for survival.

INCREASING CAPACITY AND PREPARING RURAL COMMUNITIES TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

RWA's approach to climate change literacy is rooted in community participation and practical learning. The organisation facilitates climate study circles, training workshops, and demonstration sessions that combine

scientific knowledge with indigenous wisdom. These spaces empower women and youth to understand the drivers of climate change, identify its local impacts, and develop strategies to adapt and mitigate risks. Tree planting, water conservation techniques, composting, and the creation of climate-resilient food gardens are central to this work. By fostering environmental stewardship and leadership, RWA is equipping rural women with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to respond to the climate crisis while protecting their livelihoods and communities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CLIMATE ADVOCACY AND RESILIENCE WORK IN 2024

- Provided emergency support to flood-affected families, including food parcels and sanitary packs.
- Established climate study circles in multiple communities to engage young women in climate justice issues and resilience planning.
- Partnered with institutions and government departments to secure and distribute fruit and indigenous trees to agroecology hubs.
- Hosted tree planting demonstrations, attended by 86 community members, focusing on correct planting techniques and climate benefits.
- Collaborated with a water board agency to provide water tanks to 20 families, supporting food garden production during drought.
- Conducted training on climate change

causes, adaptation, and mitigation strategies, integrating indigenous knowledge from elders.

- Delivered workshops on compost making, Bokashi production, and Tower Gardens to promote water and nutrient conservation.
- Linked gender-based violence awareness with climate justice in community workshops to highlight the disproportionate impact of climate change on women.



AGROFORESTRY AS ANOTHER CLIMATE SOLUTION

Agroforestry is a land-use management system that integrates trees into a farm's crop and pastureland. This practice is a strategy for combating climate change by enhancing both environmental sustainability and food security. By strategically planting trees, particularly fruit trees, farmers can create a more resilient and diverse ecosystem. The trees provide shade, which helps to lower soil temperatures and conserve moisture, directly addressing the challenges of heat and drought and they also contribute to binding and minimising soil erosion. At the same time, the fruit they produce provides a direct source of nutrition, helping to build local food security and reduce dependency on

external food sources.

National Overview: Planting Events and Totals:

The RWA South Africa has made significant progress in addressing local climate change impacts through various agroforestry initiatives. A cumulative total of 645 (mostly fruit) trees have been planted to date through these efforts: Tree planting was paired with water harvesting initiatives, AE training, and awareness campaigns to ensure long-term benefits. Key highlights included preparing 10 hectares of land for future agroforestry in Gauteng, expanding training and site preparation in the Western Cape, and hosting a climate justice and leadership gathering in Limpopo where 200 fruit trees were planted despite ongoing drought.



F) GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND LAND ACCESS

Gender-based violence (GBV) is not an isolated crisis. For rural women, it is deeply connected to land dispossession, economic exclusion and the structural inequalities that climate change and poverty intensify. When women lack access to land, seeds and water, they are more dependent on others for survival, making it harder to leave abusive relationships.

The RWA confronts this reality by weaving GBV prevention and response into every aspect of its work. Through campaigns like 1W1H, seed banks, AE training and climate resilience initiatives, RWA offers women the resources, skills, and confidence to achieve economic independence and strengthen their autonomy. This approach transforms land, food and rights into powerful tools of resistance against violence and subordination.

The UNDROP provides an essential framework for this work. Articles on the right to land, food

sovereignty, seeds, water and cultural rights form the basis for RWA's advocacy, roadshows and training. By linking UNDROP to GBV, RWA shows that protecting women's rights to resources is inseparable from protecting their right to live free from violence. In our work, GBV is addressed as a cross-cutting issue, whether through climate study circles, agroecology hubs or direct action against evictions.

In 2024, RWA responded to GBV with a combination of grassroots mobilisation, policy advocacy and survivor support. Workshops were conducted linking GBV to land access, climate justice and food sovereignty, highlighting how resource rights and access reduce vulnerability to abuse. Members engaged in multi-stakeholder dialogues with churches, schools, police and social workers to build coordinated local responses. RWA GBV Champions monitored court cases, provided legal guidance and campaigned for reforms in the justice system, including calls for a dedicated GBV court roll. Roadshows and mobilisation events targeted high-incidence areas, bringing together community leaders, youth, and survivors to raise awareness and demand accountability.

WC GBV COURT CASES FOLLOWED:

CASE	COURT	OUTCOME
Case of Dimpho Skelege vs Wiseman Accused for allegedly killing Dimpho Skelege, who was his girlfriend at the time.	Caledon regional court The trial started on the 6th Sep 2022	Last appeal 23 October 2024, Remanded for April 2025
Case of Nolizana vs Thulani Accused for killing 21-year old Nolizana Mantlane.	Ashton Regional Court The trial started 27 April 2024	Last appeal 27 August 2024, Remanded for March 2025
18 Old vs Mthu Qhanqiso Sexual harassment case on a 16-year-old	Ashton Regional court The trial started the 4th of July 2024.	Last appeal 4th September 2024, Remanded for May 2025

KEY GBV-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN 2024

- Established four new Healing Circles in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Free State. Free State RWA established groups in Bloemspuit and iBotshabelo, totaling to 55 women who are victims and survivors of gender-based violence.
- Skills enhancement and development are critical in addressing GBV circumstances the women's movement conducted two trainings with 45 participants on how to create wonder bags to help save household energy.
- Expanded the Montague Mandela Square Healing Circle from 12 to 22 members, introducing craft-making for economic empowerment.
- Conducted multi-stakeholder workshops linking GBV to land access, AE, and climate change.
- Trained youth in Phalaubeni Village as GBV advocates and supported them in running awareness campaigns.
- Hosted a GBV and AE workshop at a school in Ga-Wally for early learning centres, school governing bodies, and feeding scheme projects.
- Monitored high-profile GBV cases, providing court support and legal guidance to survivors.
- Participated in a provincial GBV march to deliver a memorandum to the Department of Justice calling for a dedicated GBV court roll.
- Partnered with Thuthuzela Care Centres, SAPS, schools, and religious institutions to strengthen survivor support systems.



- Mobilised communities in Ilitha and Potsdam Mbekweni, combining GBV education with AE and climate change training.
- Presented the UNDROP booklet to the Mangaung Metro Municipal Speaker during a GBV march, linking land rights to violence prevention.

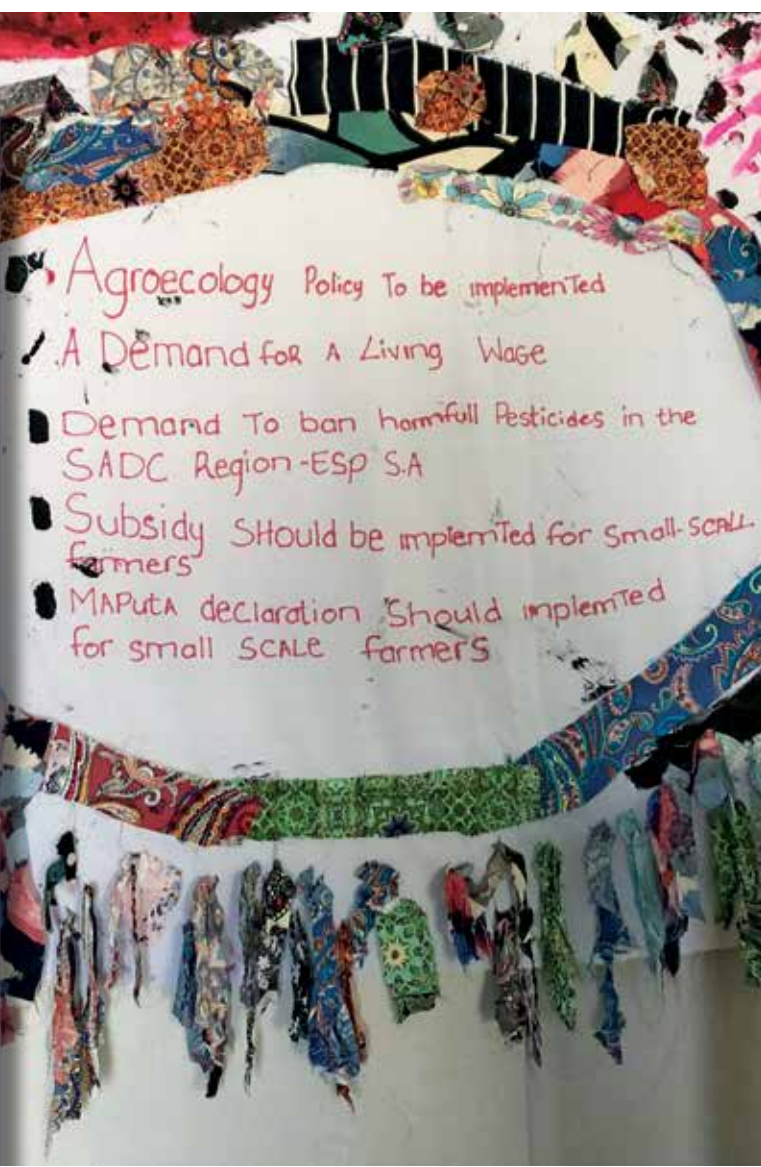
HEALING CIRCLES: SAFE SPACES FOR RECOVERY AND EMPOWERMENT

The Healing Circle initiative has been a cornerstone of RWA's GBV campaign, offering survivors a safe and supportive environment to heal together, offering survivors safe, supportive, and non-judgmental spaces to share their stories, find solidarity and

connect with resources. In these gatherings, women explore the many forms of abuse, learn about power and empowerment, and discuss how land, food, and rights can serve as practical responses to GBV. The circles also explored various topics, including the different forms of abuse and introduced craft work as a means of economic empowerment, while members have engaged in letter-writing sessions to their children, sharing lessons and experiences to promote healing.

The circles also integrate awareness on legal rights and available services through partnerships with police stations, clinics and counsellors to ensure survivors receive comprehensive care, including medical assistance, psychosocial support and help navigating the justice system. Beyond immediate recovery, Healing Circles strengthen leadership and collective voice, enabling survivors to become advocates for change in their own communities.

Case Study: Lisa, a 14-year-old girl from a farm outside McGregor (Western Cape), was raped by an elderly man in December 2023. When she reported the case to the local police station, she did not receive the required assistance. RWA intervened, ensuring that Lisa was referred to the Department of Social Development (DSD) and that her case was documented. The lack of public transport and information in rural areas has been a significant barrier to accessing justice for farmworkers. RWA's intervention restored hope for Lisa and her family, highlighting the need for trained local activists in police stations to prevent underreporting and abuse of power.



G) POLITICAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEMOCRACY

Political education is a cornerstone of RWAs work to build rural democracy. These workshops and dialogues equip rural women with the knowledge and skills to understand their rights, engage with political processes and hold leaders accountable. By linking education directly to advocacy, RWA ensures that women's voices are heard in policy spaces and that issues raised at grassroots level culminate in engagement with government.

RWA engaged in various political discussions during 2024 to address legal and cultural barriers to women's land ownership. Key advocacy strategies include:

- Educating communities about land rights.
- Challenging land grabbing by traditional authorities.
- Promoting women's access to land ownership.
- Advocating for policy changes to address systemic barriers.

In Limpopo, a political school training was conducted in Ndhambi Village, focusing on water and land campaigns. Coordinators from various movements plan to organize a national water campaign, emphasizing the need for political education, especially for grassroots leaders.

A week-long workshop on rural governance was held in Mahale and Prieska Village, focusing on evictions by traditional authorities. The workshop aimed to develop strategies to challenge these

authorities and resulted in a collaboration between the Mopani Farmers Association (MFA), RWA, and a local progressive traditional council.

Exchange visit: RWA members who are engaged in agriculture within MFA travelled to Ga-Mamabolo in the Capricorn District for an exchange visit in commemoration of International Women's Day. The gathering focused on the role of women in rural communities under traditional authorities. Several commitments were made during this event:

- Landlessness and hunger were identified as two of the most pressing challenges facing RWA, who are primary food producers.
- RWA is committed to fighting against landlessness and hunger and calls for collective action to create a future free from hunger.
- The group pledged to ensure that every household has a subsistence food garden.

Access to land with water remains a challenge for women in the Western Cape, where campaigns have inspired rural women to become producers, whether on small house plots or larger leased lands. As mentioned above, collaboration with the Legal Resource Centre has resulted in the identification of six potential areas for urban farming in McGregor and engagement with the local municipality. The campaign is awaiting further discussions with the municipality.

A Land Dialogue was hosted in Evaton West Ext.4,

near the land site where 10 women had acquired land. The dialogue was attended by people who had occupied vacant land for agricultural activities, those living in squatter camps, and RWA women engaged in projects at schools and clinics. Some participants had also transformed dumping sites into food gardens. Stakeholders included SANCO and the Ward Councillor. The objective was to facilitate a dialogue with all stakeholders and farmers to assess the understanding of land issues, share ideas, and receive advice from those with expertise.

RWA members attended an event organised by the Premier of the Free State, where they presented the challenges faced by rural women and proposed interventions to address these issues. The Premier acknowledged RWA's efforts in improving the well-being of women in the province.

RWA also hosted Pre-National Election Sessions on Women's Access to Land and Water. Recommendations to improve women's access to land and water included:

- Implementing policies to protect and promote women's land rights.
- Investing in infrastructure for reliable water access for agricultural use.
- Establishing accountability mechanisms for political promises.
- Encouraging continuous dialogue between women, policymakers, and political leaders.

RWA continues through follow-up meetings to engage with political candidates and a monitoring system to track progress on political promises

related to land and water access through written submissions and engagement with various government departments and stakeholders.

H) MEDIA, ADVOCACY AND MOBILISATION

The RWA has demonstrated significant progress in its advocacy and mobilisation efforts, particularly within the media and communications landscape. The movement successfully leveraged a variety of platforms to amplify its messages on AE, sustainable food production, and GBV. The land rights, "One Woman, One Hectare," gained considerable traction, with a highlight being the feature in the SERITI Newsletter. Furthermore, RWA utilized community radio, securing airtime on Vision FM and partnering with Thetha FM for a media and GBV survivor event. The movement's work also appeared in prominent national outlets such as the Daily Maverick and GroundUp. Social media has been a key tool, with an active Facebook page serving as a hub for updates, engagement, and attracting new members, many of whom have expressed interest in joining the Assembly through direct messages.

On the ground, RWA's advocacy and mobilisation activities have been robust and ongoing, extending beyond specific recruitment drives. The rebuilding processes in the Northern Cape have been successful, and significant mobilization efforts, including door-to-door campaigns, have taken place in the Eastern Cape. These activities resulted in a total of **500 new members** joining the RWA. This is in addition to specific events such as a mobilization effort on March 12, 2024 in Potsdam Mbekweni which engaged 20

women, had an event in Mdantsane on March 14, 2024, which attracted 50 women and resulted in 15 new membership forms. A roadshow in the Western Cape reached over **100 women**. Whereas engagements with KwaZulu-Natal is work in progress.

Other mobilisation events included a UNDROP, 1W-1H, and climate justice event in Polokwane, an International Women's Day commemoration, and a workshop in Mpangana Village. The addition of the new members mentioned in subsequent activities brings the current total to at least **1,295 members**.



ARTICLE 15:
The Right to FOOD and Food
Sovereignty

ARTICLE 19:
The Right to SEEDS

ARTICLE
Rights to WATER
Sanitation





ROP

the Rights of Peasants



ARTICLE 17:
The Right to LAND and other
Resources

ARTICLE 21:
The Right to WATER and

ARTICLE 25:
The right to EDUCATION and
Training

CSAAWU





1. INTRODUCTION

On 29 May 2024 South Africa held national elections. The ANC lost its majority and was forced into a coalition government. It ended up choosing to form a “government of national unity” (GNU) that includes 10 ideologically oriented parties, a source of tension and conflict. Capital and its key ally, the Democratic Alliance (DA) more specifically, is the dominant party after the ANC, and is intent on finding ways to decrease and dilute workers’ rights won over decades of post-apartheid struggles and to freeze/ cut from workers’ wages. The GNU has already announced more budget cuts and a wage freeze in the agriculture sector. The increase of tariffs will also have an impact of the sector.

1. UNCHANGING CONDITIONS ON FARMS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Illegal evictions and rights violation that farmworkers experience daily keep CSAAWU extremely busy. Some cases we win but some we lose - farmworkers are scared of the farm owners, who take advantage of the loopholes in the system to exploit the workers. For instance, they just wave R200-000 at our members to get rid of workers on the farm and leave the houses in which they have lived in for decades. Our members cannot resist the offer even if CSAAWU encourages them not to accept the money as this is not following legal procedures, and this despite CSAAWU having distributed a standard pamphlet that spells out every step that must be followed when bosses try to illegally evict workers. The conditions will remain unchanged if we don't see serious mass mobilisation and structural change.

2. CSAAWU IS TRYING TO EXTEND ITS AREA OF REACH WITHIN THE WESTERN CAPE AND IN OTHER PROVINCES

In the W. Cape CSAAWU is expanding to new areas: The work in De Doorns is growing and is undertaken by local workers and shop-stewards. CSAAWU held a meeting in the De Doorns library on 22 June 2024. Some of the unions who organise in the area want to pass their members to CSAAWU. There were discussions about needing a small Rural Legal Centre in De Doorns, similar to the one in Robertson. Over the past year a De Doorns committee has been established and already several farms were organised and members recruited to CSAAWU.

Building branches continues to be a big challenge- this requires additional funds and human resources capacity. Organising seasonal workers is also a big challenge, especially given the rise in xenophobic in





the last few months.

Despite the challenges, CSAAWU saw a modest increase in members: 73 new members in June 2024; 85 in July and 9 in August. On the other hand, CSAAWU also lost membership when some left work due to the “Two Pot System”.

Outreach to other provinces: CSAAWU is trying to expand its reach to 3 other provinces beyond the Western Cape. Besides the Free State, CSAAWU has also initiated contacts and undertook trips to the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape. The Eastern Cape is very important as the TCOE (Khanyisa) has already done extensive organising amongst farmworkers in the citrus sector. We need all our energy to invest in the Northern Cape and Free State as they offer possibilities of growth for CSAAWU.

In addition, CSAAWU continues to consolidate its base in Kannaland through Ladismith Cheese, this allowed us to connect with workers linked to depot of Ladismith Cheese- Sea Harvest in Johannesburg in July 2024 and in November 2024. However, for CSAAWU this is unsustainable unless our membership increases to 1000 and a field office can be established there with a strong organiser and can serve workers

locally. 17 members of CSAAWU are now trying to recruit and organise other factories to join CSAAWU. For now, we have a zoom or WhatsApp meeting to discuss recruitment methods.

3. INCREASING CSAAWU'S VISIBILITY IN 2024

- **Organised roadshows, meetings on farms and with farm dwellers:** This is our daily job. Nearly all the areas where CSAAWU operates, roadshows and farm meetings were organised, and this included agter -Paarl and in Constantia where the farm Groot Constantia was evicting farmworkers. In the period July- November numerous meetings were organised to create awareness of the evictions.
- CSAAWU organised speak outs in the Kannaland region to expose farmers, Spar and Klein Karoo Butchery and this was a great success. Migrant workers joined the union, the youth got involved and “people lost interest shopping at Spar and Klein karoo”.
- CSAAWU gathered at Vanzylsdamme to march and launch a boycott of United

Holdings – demands were for end of exploitation, compliance with labour laws, recognition of rights of migrant workers, this aiming at building solidarity between local and migrant workers

- Since 1 May 2023 our work has unified some communities. This contributed to making 1st of May Day 2024 celebrations by CSAAWU and partners a great success, when over 1000 workers and community activists descended on De Doorns.
- **Secure alliances with local leaders, schools, churches etc. to set up local community groups/digital Hubs as centres of information and learning:** We managed to get all stakeholders in Kannaland around one table: Home Affairs, Legal Aid, Municipality, Rural Development, Department of Agriculture and the Police. The main topics discussed were evictions and migrant workers, low wages, long working hours, GBV and prostitution on farms. We all agreed that we must meet regularly and work together to restore humanity and create a safe environment for all of us.
- **Promote locally run community groups/**

digital Hubs: Since 1 February 2024 CSAAWU has a digital hub in Ladismith and we have started the process of opening another in Robertson to educate our youth, develop skills on technology and use of computer etc. We had the official opening on 27 April 2024 and also held an event to commemorate 16 June – Youth Day in SA, in memory of the 1976 Soweto Youth Uprising in 1976. The event was well attended, with youth from Ladismith and surrounding areas. The digital hub is well equipped but still has a lot of needs. We started fundraising, and already raised R750,00 to buy a table tennis and rackets. The hub is busy Monday to Friday and used for entertainment on Saturdays and Sundays

- **Community soup kitchens:** CSAAWU's soup kitchens, run with our partners, are a way of showing solidarity and help workers not to build up large debts at food retailers. CSAAWU links food gardens and soup kitchens as a tool to mobilise and talk about our programmes in communities. Soup kitchens face many challenges: food shortages; limited funding; transport barriers for beneficiaries.

SOUP KITCHENS:

In Kannaland (run in 4 areas:(Zoar, Hoeke, Voorbaat and Vanzylsdamme).

- Each area has a committee of 5-6 people. We provide food once a week, and engage people about and the use of drugs, alcohol and violence and distribute pamphlets about CSAAWU. In total we reach 470 people (children, youth and adults)
- We have 2 food gardens (Zoar and Voorbaat) that provide onions to the soup kitchen.
- We get food donations from some local farmers: And do collections on the streets and shops every month.
- **In the Langeberg region:** CSAAWU provided meals for 40 homeless people daily (children, adults, seniors) relying on donations (70%) and purchases (30%) and received a R2,000 grant.

4. RURAL LEGAL CENTRE

CSAAWU continues to have the Rural Legal Centre (RLC) in partnership with TCOE and Mawubuye in Robertson deals with with evictions and abused workers and spreads the name of CSAAWU. At present the RLC remains very busy, many of the cases are linked to evictions.

Throughout the year CSAAWU's field workers and RLC assist workers to address grievances with employers, do referrals to and representations in CCMA cases (occasionally having to attend up to 3 CCMA hearings in one day), engage in wage negotiations, signing of work contracts, signing up new members (in farming and cellars, but also in other sectors), reporting non-compliance with

SIZA, WIETA standards to the respective bodies (and to Global GAP and IUF, when relevant), etc. CSAAWU's and TCOEs para-legal work includes assistance to workers employed under different conditions: permanent workers who live on the farms (including when they are threatened by evictions), workers employed via labour brokers, seasonal workers, migrant workers, etc.

Our para-legal work has extended its reach to new areas in 2024. Some of these are long-standing and ongoing cases: Ashton Goree, Avalon Springs (Montagu), BBK Worcester, Bellevue Wansbeck, Bergdal Farm (Montagu Koo), Buit It (Robertson), Buitenverwacht, De Hoop Sunbird, Eilandia, Goree Ashton, Goudmyn, Groot Breede farm, Hexpoort Farm, Hokaai (changed to Gembokkop Boerdery), Kranskop, Le Chasseur, Main Chance Farm, Middelpoos Farm (Ceres), Montagu County Hotel, Montevista (De Doorns), Morreson, Raimondi Worcester, Rassol Cleaning, Rawsonville Fairhills Daycare Centre (fairtrade), Robertson Koop, Robertson Super Spar, Rosedale Bonnievale, Rosedale Robertson, Samco cleaning (Robertson Hospital), Saron, Slanghoek Celler, Sunshine farm, Rawsonville, Trastevere Slaghius (Wolseley), Van Loveren Farms (including Vinkrivier), Wansbeck, Willow Creek, Wolvensdrift and Worcester Pallets and Woods.

In total the RLC dealt with 287 cases during 2024 (96 women; 191 males). Here we briefly summarise 3 case studies to illustrate the variety of the work and the time required to deal with cases:

a) Eviction case in Saron (115 Kms out of



Robertson): This is a case ongoing since 2023, when 25 workers joined CSAAWU, soon after which the farm owner put them on leave, without a return date. This was a “penalty” for joining a union. Workers never received leave pay. Soon after, the farm was put up for sale and under liquidation. Workers reported being without water and electricity since March 2024 – a form of “constructive eviction”, threatening 25 families and trying to get workers to move out. Liquidators claim the farm has no money. But CSAAWU knows the owner has 4 other farms in the area, and water and electricity have also been cut off in another two farms. The owner does not want to see the workers. Meanwhile there have been four CCMA hearings.

- b) Acting against eviction from the Groot Constantia (GC) wine farm** – Several workers received eviction letters, which were handed over to SERI for legal advice. In addition, on Saturday 21 September 2024 CSAAWU organised a march against the planned evictions. Groot Constantia is a state owned farm situated in an exclusive and wealthy area of Cape Town. It is an iconic wine farm rooted in slavery that has become a major tourist. After acquiring permission for the march, on Friday 20 September CSAAWU was informed, after hours, that permission had been cancelled and we would only be allowed to gather at a nearby piece of land. The late hour of the cancellation was a move by the GC management to prevent us from having a legal appeal. With transport already being organised, farm workers from

several regions still gathered and the GC management sent a representative to receive and sign a Memorandum. We managed to distribute pamphlets to hundreds of drivers and passengers at traffic lights, explaining why the protest and asking for a boycott of the GC wines. CSAAWU had the support of other organisations such as ILRIG, Witzenberg Justice Coalition, AIDC and ZASO.

- c) Buitenverwacht:** This is a farm in which CSAAWU has been organising since 2020. The main disputes have been over poor housing conditions, complaints ongoing since 2022. During 2024 we met 3 times: a) In August 2024 we met with workers and a representative of the IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurants, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers), when workers reported that during visits by the Department of Employment and an inspection by WIETA, management hides undocumented migrants and chooses the workers and houses to be inspected; b) On 22 May 2024 and 13 June we met again over the housing conditions – there is conflicting information over the information provided by the company and that provided by the workers. There is an apparent conflict of interests: repairs are being done by a supervisor on the farm and the person doing the audits is a consultant to the company.

5. CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns are ongoing around ethical consumer standards, the right to work without fear, decent



health and safety, organisational rights, and no to evictions.

- The standard pamphlet “Organise Without Fear” is a successful mobilising tool and exposes the tension on the farms and the struggle for land access. We try to ensure that every farmworker and farm dweller or rural person can understand why they remain poor. We are busy making materials such as arm bands, and flags.
- We use Mapping as a tool to raise awareness on health and safety (H&S) and increasing the workers and union’s power in negotiations.
- Pesticides campaign: CSAAWU continues to be part of a coalition of civil society organisations such as TCOE working on a pesticides campaign that is building up towards the Peoples Tribunal in 2025. This includes continuing trying to increase the capacity of each organisation to raise awareness of the impact of pesticides and expose the double standards

being perpetuated by the European Union by sending pesticides to African countries that are banned in the EU.

- CSAAWU continues to build pesticide awareness amongst farmworkers and farm-dwellers. We had a workshop with women farm workers on 13-14 September 2024, discussing impacts on farmworkers as well as on farm-dwellers and the family, due to “pesticide drift” and poison also sticking to farmworkers clothes. CSAAWU is exploring to introduce the use of a toolkit to measure levels of toxicity. CSAAWU is also having discussions on pesticides through its women’s study circles (held in De Doorns, Rawsonville, Vinkrivier and Ashton). On the 10 -14 August 2024, CSAAWU and TCOE held an Eco-feminist School workshop that looked at the impact of pesticides on women.
- As part of the collective efforts a submission was made to the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) on the 5 July 2024. This submission consisted of objections to the Draft

Regulations for Hazardous Chemical Agents (HCA) released for comment on 5 April 2024, in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993, as well as objections to insufficient public consultation especially the inclusion of farm workers and farm dwellers. There was also the demand for a ban of the 67 highly hazardous pesticides banned in the European Union.

- On 22 November 2024 the petition RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT: HOLD SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRY TO ACCOUNT FOR DEATHS AND SERIOUS ILLNESSES FROM TOXIC PESTICIDES ON THE FARM AND IN FOOD, following the death of children after buying and consuming food/s at “spaza shops” in impoverished townships,

food contaminated by agricultural poisons people use to combat rat infestations. Copy attached but available at https://t2m.io/PesticideTribunal_BanTerbufos. This was followed by a letter sent to the Minister of Agriculture (Minister Steenhuisen) on the 5 December demanding “Ban Terbufos and HHPs within 3 months or face legal action, says civil society alliance”. <https://acbio.org.za/gm-biosafety/ban-terbufos-hhps-or-legal-action-steenhuisen-says-civil-society/>

- Capacity building for women leaders on issues of gender-based violence (GBV) and FAS and how to educate others: with the support of the RWA, monthly study circles with CSAAWU women and community members were organised. On average 18-24 women participate in the study circles each month. CSAAWU also organised a feminist school for the leadership and this was attended by 34 women. Topics included GBV, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), the impact of climate change on agriculture; feminist agroecology; seed preservation and multiplication techniques; promote community-led solutions to agricultural challenges. etc. CSAAWU and RWA also organised a number of healing circles for that focused on GBV. In Montague in September 45 women with their children had a speak out on the extent of drugs in community and its impact on the rural women.

6. CSAAWU CHALLENGES!

- CSAAWU, like other unions in the country, is facing a difficult period as membership is slow



in growing. We also faced poor records, but this is being addressed with the assistance of a consultant we contracted to compile a database of all membership

- Earlier we established 9 branches; however, none were functional after six months which makes it difficult to have a workers' controlled union and real workers democracy.
- The number of permanent workers has declined and replaced by seasonal and casual workers, of which many are migrant workers. It is difficult to organise both casual and migrant workers as they are scared to join a union and of losing their jobs
- In addition, there is a lot of conflict and mistrust within the union, and this needs to be fixed.

7. CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESS IN LABOUR MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

Labour activism and organisation in SA is in a crisis. The Federations and unions are seen as neglecting workers' issues while defending the interests and self-enrichment of functionaries, and their power struggles and conflicts weaken our proud history of strong militant unions. In all the provinces where CSAAWU is trying to organise we are faced with questions: *"What makes CSAAWU different from our sister Unions, is because they let farmworkers down while still deducting membership fees?"*

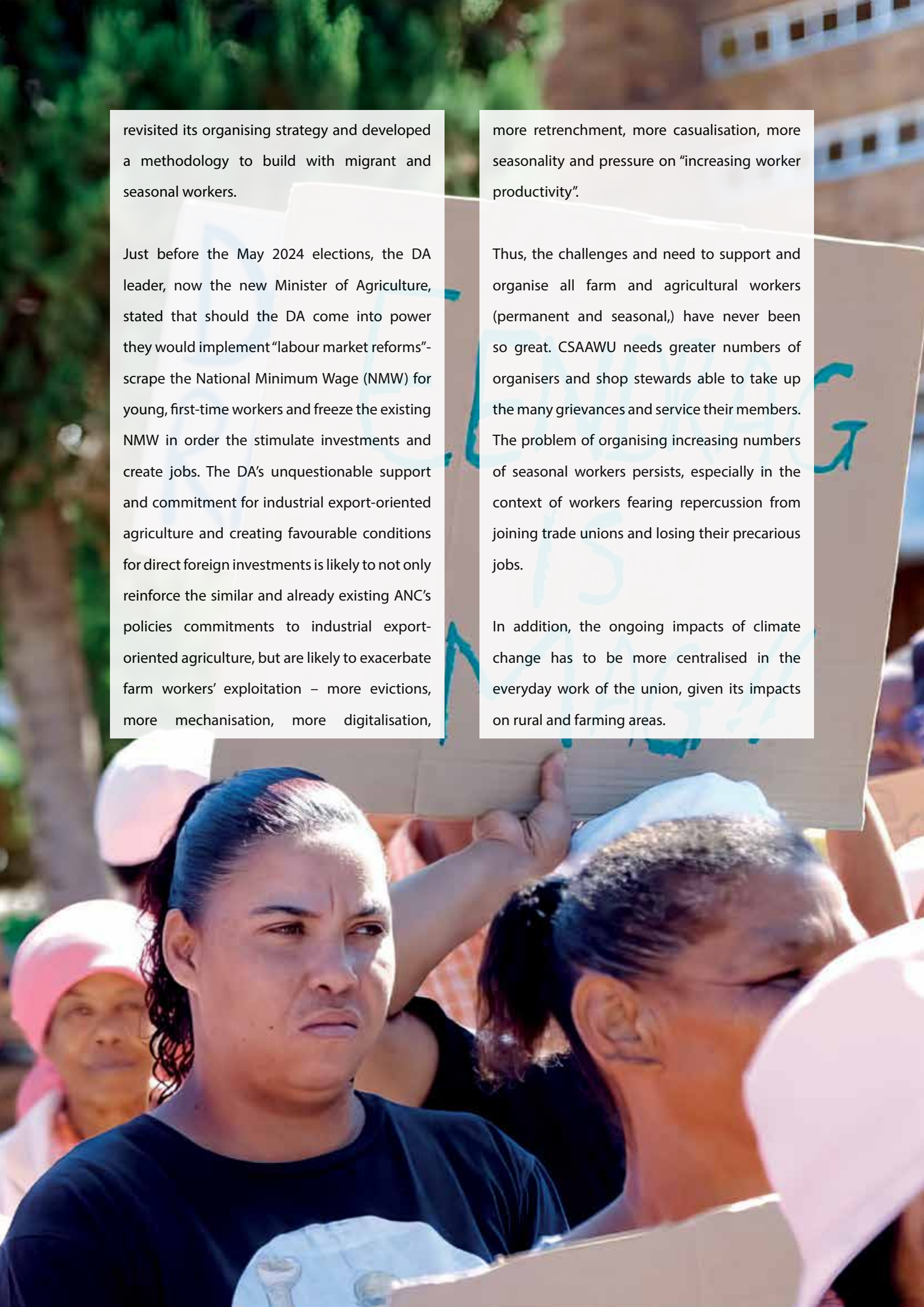
The "Two Pot system" by national government (whereby workers are allowed to claim part of their pensions) has had an impact on our membership in the Western Cape which led to a decline in membership. Workers resigned from work in order to get all of their Provident Fund, because of the spreading of wrong information that the government would take all of workers' money. This

has been the case in Ladismith Cheese.

CSAAWU and other trade unions need to increase capacity to service workers' grievances to rebuild trust in the union movement. The importance of organising migrant and casual workers remain important.

The union has struggled to raise its presence or build a public campaign around evictions and this has meant that evictions are continuing unabated. There is a dire need to strengthen local leaders and build political awareness of the challenges. Through a strategy seminar and NEC meetings discussions on the status of the branches and reports on different areas were tabled using a SWOT analysis. These meetings were extremely useful as the union





revisited its organising strategy and developed a methodology to build with migrant and seasonal workers.

Just before the May 2024 elections, the DA leader, now the new Minister of Agriculture, stated that should the DA come into power they would implement “labour market reforms” – scrape the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for young, first-time workers and freeze the existing NMW in order to stimulate investments and create jobs. The DA’s unquestionable support and commitment for industrial export-oriented agriculture and creating favourable conditions for direct foreign investments is likely to not only reinforce the similar and already existing ANC’s policies commitments to industrial export-oriented agriculture, but are likely to exacerbate farm workers’ exploitation – more evictions, more mechanisation, more digitalisation,

more retrenchment, more casualisation, more seasonality and pressure on “increasing worker productivity”.

Thus, the challenges and need to support and organise all farm and agricultural workers (permanent and seasonal,) have never been so great. CSAAWU needs greater numbers of organisers and shop stewards able to take up the many grievances and service their members. The problem of organising increasing numbers of seasonal workers persists, especially in the context of workers fearing repercussion from joining trade unions and losing their precarious jobs.

In addition, the ongoing impacts of climate change has to be more centralised in the everyday work of the union, given its impacts on rural and farming areas.



STELLUKKIS
ARRIS

the WIND

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a lush green field of leafy vegetables, possibly lettuce or spinach, growing in neat rows. The plants are vibrant green and appear to be in a hydroponic or controlled environment, with some white support structures visible between the rows. The lighting is bright, creating a sense of freshness and vitality.

INTRODUCTION

The right to food remains at the heart of our advocacy and action. During the year under review, our efforts within the Food Sovereignty stream focused on empowering communities to shape their agricultural and food systems in ways that are locally grounded, ecologically sustainable and culturally meaningful. We believe that true food security cannot exist without the ability of people to control how their food is grown, distributed and accessed. Our approach recognizes the vital role of agroecology

as both a policy framework and a practical solution. By promoting agroecology, we encourage farming practices that respect the land, protect water sources, and value seeds as a community resource. Through this work, we support the development of resilient food systems, ensuring that small-scale farmers and fishers have the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Throughout the reporting period, the Food Sovereignty stream launched and supported agroecology hubs and food gardens, engaged

Land accessed in the year 2024

Province	Area	Name	Land accessed	Land Use	Tenure Arrangement	F	M
1. Limpopo	Dzumeri	Khwezi Lehlabile Coop	3 Ha	Crop and free-range chickens and ducks	Freehold lease	8	2
2. Northern Cape	Kagung	Kagung Coop	1.5 Ha	Field crops, vegetables and livestock	PTO	8	4
3. Northern Cape	Manyeding	Mrs Nkatswang	0.3Ha	Crop production	PTO	1	-
4. Northern Cape	Upington	NCRWA	0.18Ha	Crop production	Tenure arrangement not yet finalised	10	-
5. Eastern Cape	Mdantsane	Luthando Lwendalo Environmental Movement	10 Ha	Crops and Livestock	PTO	6	10
6. Eastern Cape	Uitenhage		0.5Ha	Crop production	Open lease from a crèche	3	2
7. .	Ngceza	Livestock Group	22Ha	Livestock & Crop	10-year lease for a 10Ha and Open lease for 12Ha	4	6
8. Free State	Botshabelo	Botshabelo Livestock Committee (BLC)	4 Ha	Livestock and fodder production	10-year lease from private farmer who is a member of BLC	5	15
9. Free State	Botshabelo	FSRWA	0.9Ha	Crop production	10-year lease from a school	15	-
Total			41.88Ha			59	39

actively in policy discussions and organized political schools across the country. These initiatives have equipped communities to better understand their rights regarding land and food, and to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their livelihoods. By strengthening farmer-to-farmer extension programmes and building strong networks with partners, we continue to advance the principles of food sovereignty, placing local voices and sustainable practices at the forefront of our collective journey toward food justice.

LAND ACCESS AND LAND USE

Land continues to play a central role in advancing food sovereignty, especially for small-scale producers. The data in the Table below highlights how challenging it is for these producers to acquire land: 41.88 ha is far too little compared to the number of people working it. However, these producers are mostly working as part of collective that are mobilised and received land through the AE work on the hubs carried by the Food Sovereignty stream. Often, the limited land available to small-scale producers lacks access to water, a critical barrier to effective production. In many cases, traditional authorities, charged with the stewardship of communal land, have become susceptible to corruption, allocating land to private companies without community consent. Such companies may bribe traditional authorities to secure these lands. Accessing municipal commonage land is also difficult, and where land is made available, tenants are frequently offered only very short leases. These constraints make it extremely challenging to undertake meaningful development on the land.

AGROECOLOGY

TCOE continues to pioneer a practical response to food security and climate change: the development and support of agroecology hubs and community food gardens. The hubs are living laboratories blending local traditional wisdom and modern ecological practices to foster biodiversity, restore soil health and empower communities. By championing organic, natural inputs, TCOE alongside communities, partners and movements are helping to safeguard water and land, while nurturing resilient ecosystems where organisms thrive together.

In 2024, TCOE achieved a 10% increase in agroecological food gardens, with 22 hubs now active in the following provinces:

- Northern Cape (1)
- Free State (3)
- Limpopo (6)
- Eastern Cape (6)
- Western Cape (6).

Sixteen of these hubs feature nurseries and produce seedlings and plant materials tailored for local agroecological conditions. Each hub is designed as a centre for learning, production, and community engagement—its success rooted in essential features:

- Secure land (with long-term lease agreements of ten years or more)
- Biological fencing to reduce costs and enhance sustainability
- Reliable water access
- Seed bank facilities
- Storage rooms

- Seedling nurseries
- Livestock sections (including poultry, pigs, rabbits, sheep, cows, goats, and pollinators such as bees)
- Orchards and agroforestry plots
- Site offices
- Production of bio-fertiliser

In addition, the Food Sovereignty stream held four provincial agroecology schools in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo and Western Cape. In total we reached close to 150 people across the country. The schools covered agroecology and its benefits, seed laws and their impact on small-scale producers, livestock integration, food systems and climate resilience.

CASE STUDY: In April 2024, an agroecology hub launched in Botshabelo, Free State, was attended by participants, including youth, of the Botshabelo Livestock Committee (BLC). The primary focus of the hub was fodder production, supplemented by vegetable and field crop cultivation. The hub is located on a 4-hectare plot of land and the group was awarded a 10-year lease by one of the Botshabelo Livestock Committee members. To date, 1 hectare has been secured and prepared for use. A management committee has been formed to oversee operations. Vetch and lucerne have already been planted, and maize was planted in early August. This hub is expected to support local livestock producers by providing them with affordable feed options.

YOUTH AND AGROECOLOGY

Engaging youth in agroecology is vital to securing the future of sustainable agriculture and rural

livelihoods. Our agroecology hubs serve as dynamic centres for learning and skills development, with a dedicated focus on empowering young people as the next generation of farmers and leaders. In partnership with Gumela Projects, the Mopani Farmers Association (MFA) hosted 68 young participants in a structured learnership programme. These learners, placed in 13 cooperatives identified by the association, participated in hands-on training from June to September 2024. Central to this initiative is the Agroecology Centre, which operates as the primary hub for in-depth instruction across all aspects of agroecology. The Centre utilises a rotational approach to ensure that every learner benefits from its comprehensive training, while also involving cooperatives with advanced knowledge of agroecological practices to accommodate and mentor participants.

Additionally, our Berlin office (in the Eastern Cape) welcomed five female interns from agricultural vocational training centres to complete their in-service training at the Agroecology Centre. Four of these young women are on track to finish their internships at the end of June 2025, further demonstrating our commitment to fostering diverse talent within the sector.

Each agroecology hub is unique in its focus, contributing a range of products including seedlings, bees, various classes of livestock, bio-char, bokashi, seeds, and compost. These hubs are instrumental not only in production but also in expanding the number of food gardens supported in our communities. By prioritising meaningful youth engagement, we are cultivating a robust



pipeline of skilled, innovative practitioners who will lead agroecological transformation into the future.

ENGAGING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In February 2024, TCOE hosted an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) workshop at Nyandeni Local Municipality, Eastern Cape, in partnership with DELTA, the Rural Women's Assembly, and Zingisa. The session gathered ward representatives to deepen community understanding of IDP processes and encourage active participation, especially among women, traditionally underrepresented due to cultural barriers. Attendees were empowered to hold officials accountable, request transparent reporting, and challenge established power structures. These

efforts have made IDP processes more consultative and responsive to community needs.

In April 2024, TCOE hosted a virtual national agroecology workshop with 50 participants. The workshop was designed to facilitate engagement with the National AE Draft Policy. Two scholars contributed valuable insights on food systems and the Draft AE Strategy. It was highlighted during the workshop that the government does not appear to be expediting the implementation of an AE Policy. Civil society was encouraged to continue advocating through submissions and other efforts to ensure an agroecology policy is developed. Agroecology South Africa (AESA), a civil society organisation committed to agroecology as a sustainable strategy, remains actively involved with the draft strategy. TCOE is a member of this progressive alliance.

A Provincial Imbizo on the Food and Nutrition Security Plan was held in East London from Oct – Nov 2024. Two women from Ilizwi Lamafama represented Inyanda and TCOE. The meeting aimed at reviewing and contributing to the Food Security and Nutrition Plan 2030. However, limited access to the document hindered meaningful engagement. It was agreed that written recommendations would follow. Moving forward, a multi-stakeholder task force is planned, and an Inyanda member now serves on the Provincial Food Insecurity Council. This initial consultation highlighted potential benefits for local farmers and set the stage for continued collaboration with the Department on next steps.

TCOE participates actively in the Agroecology

Collective, which focuses on advancing agroecological practices and related policies. In 2024, TCOE engaged with the Department of Agriculture to accelerate the integration of the national agroecology strategy into policy. These discussions led the Department of Agriculture, together with the Agricultural Research Council, to shift from pursuing the agroecology strategy process to developing the National Agroecology Framework for South Africa (NAFSA). TCOE and the collective submitted comments to the portfolio committee, and these were incorporated into the first draft. The timeline for requesting feedback was problematic, as minimal time was allocated for thorough consultation with grassroots movements. This issue persisted with the second draft, which was circulated with merely a week's notice and required responses within that same week. It is important to participate in policy formulation spaces and processes to increase the capacity of small producers to influence food policies – that is crucial to move from food security to genuine food sovereignty.

TCOE hosted two national dialogues on agroecology, organised as online events to reach a broad range of participants. These discussions focused on food sovereignty and the right to food, including key policy areas such as the draft agroecology policy, land policy, seed policies, and climate policies.

SEEDS AND SEED MULTIPLICATION

Seeds are fundamental to food sovereignty. Without seed sovereignty, food sovereignty cannot truly exist. Small-scale producers have made notable progress in saving seeds, focusing on indigenous

and traditional varieties. The practice of seed saving, deeply rooted in our food production culture, has been carried on for generations, often accompanied by the free sharing or trading of seeds across borders. This tradition faced disruption with the advent of the Green Revolution, which, from the 1940s to the 1960s, introduced hybrid and genetically modified seeds. These new varieties were promoted as being more productive than indigenous seeds, but this narrative largely served the interests of agribusiness. So-called “improved” seeds present numerous challenges to Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS). The introduction of the Plant Breeders Act and the Plant Improvement Act in 2018 dealt a blow to small-scale producers. Under these laws, certain seed varieties have been patented and are now considered the intellectual property of private entities. Additionally, producers face limits on the quantity of seeds they may retain on their farms. Such restrictions are particularly burdensome for small-scale producers, especially in a changing climate that may necessitate multiple plantings due to crop failures.

During 2024, TCOE have actively engaged with the Directorate of Agriculture to discuss the national seed laws that currently impose restrictive measures on small-scale producers. A new partnership has been established to promote the FMSS. Our engagement with the directorate has led to the latter pledging support in building the FMSS. A memorandum of agreement is still to be developed in this regard.

Currently, we are able to produce about 250

kilograms of seed each season, keeping this amount for sowing after setting aside enough for food security. As we continue with seed trials and multiplication efforts, we anticipate that our seed yields will double or even triple in the coming seasons. The Food Sovereignty Stream has also begun trials for high-value seeds including maize and sunflower, intended for both food and animal feed as part of our effort to reduce feed costs for livestock producers. Sunflower is being cultivated for processing into cooking oil and sunflower cake. The cake is highly nutritious and serves as excellent feed for livestock. Indigenous seeds used in such trials are more resilient and sustainable and when such seeds are used by producers, independence from corporate seed companies is attained, as one is able to save the seeds for successive plantings.

HIGHLIGHTED (SEED) EVENTS

In June 2024, we hosted a Food and Seed Festival in Quzini Village, Eastern Cape. Delegates included representatives from the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR), Rhodes University, the Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Social Development. The festival featured a dialogue themed “Building long-term relationships between farmers and consumers,” providing a platform for farmers to showcase their seeds and products, exchange information and success stories, and trade seeds within the community. The event addressed key issues related to food sovereignty and allowed producers to connect with potential markets. For example, a woman involved in agro processing received numerous orders from new



clients who were interested in her products. The knowledge shared at the festival proved invaluable for improving and expanding producer livelihoods.

This event was complemented by the TCOE and RWA Guardians of Seed, Land and Life Exhibition in November 2024 held at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, showcasing women's vital role in seed sovereignty, seed preservation and sustainable farming practices. The event highlighted the importance of defending land and seed rights and challenged corporate control over agriculture.

MONTHLY LOCAL MARKETS

Monthly local markets were established as a response to the dominance large businesses exert over farmer livelihoods and access to food. These businesses have acted as intermediaries between consumers and small-scale producers, often leaving producers with minimal income for their efforts. In contrast, while chain stores dictate pricing, local markets allow producers to set their own preferred prices. At these markets, we encourage agro-processing and value addition, practices that help reduce food waste and increase profits for producers. Mangos and chillies are dried and brought to market, Moringa is processed into tea and various herbs are also available for purchase.

The Food Sovereignty stream holds regular market days for farmers and food producers, making it possible to sustain our monthly markets. These events are designed to unite farmers from rural and urban settings, offering them a venue to sell fresh

produce. Market days also present opportunities for farmers to exchange knowledge, and for women in our study circles to showcase and sell their crafts made throughout the year. Farmers recognize the importance of providing high-quality produce to attract more customers and understand that practicing agroecology reduces the need for excessive plastic and packaging use.

A new market was introduced in the Eastern Cape within a chain store in Mdantsane. This initiative provided small-scale farmers with direct access to the public, allowing them to sell their produce without intermediaries. This opportunity has greatly motivated producers, especially those who have struggled to move surplus crops.

As our market grows, we have created a unique logo and are working with one of the women's groups to produce shopping bags for sale. Demand for food grown using agroecological methods continues to increase, which encourages local producers to expand their output. These market days have also highlighted the importance of effective production planning, ensuring a steady and reliable supply.

PROVINCIAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY DIALOGUE AT CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

A dialogue on Food Sovereignty was held at Chris Hani/Cofimvaba. Women from Nyandeni Local Municipality, Dr A Xuma Local Municipality, and Ntsika Yethu Local Municipality attended, aiming to foster community-led food initiatives, promote locally produced food, and build local



markets through climate-resilient agriculture.

The event provided a platform for small-scale crop producers to reflect on production trends and challenges, particularly regarding access to markets and the organization of those markets. The most critical issue identified was access to land and the need for government support to ensure effective and productive land use. This challenge was directly linked to shortcomings in South Africa's Land and Agrarian Reform Programme and the dominance of market- and export-driven production models.

Debates explored the importance of a food production model centred on household food security, locally produced food, and food systems tailored to local dynamics and culture, feeding the nation first and selling any surplus. The current mode of production and food system, criticised

for prioritizing profits and exports while excluding marginalized, poor communities, was a central topic. Another significant focus was the water crisis: access to water for both consumption and production, especially considering the impact of climate change and global warming on food security and sovereignty. The ongoing energy crisis also affects food production and the livelihoods of the poor. Branding and packaging of produce remain challenges that require further attention.

The need to form alliances for action and solidarity was emphasized, along with lobbying government to create more opportunities for small-scale producers in local marketing spaces. Participants advocated for developing independent systems for grading and branding locally produced food, as well as implementing their own assessment model to certify agroecological food production.

LIVESTOCK FARMING

Food sovereignty is being strengthened through targeted support, organisation, and mobilisation of livestock farmers. The outbreak of African swine fever in George, Western Cape, in February 2024 posed a significant threat to pig producers, with one small-scale farmer suffering the loss of 47 pigs to the disease. According to the Department of Agriculture's medical officer, free roaming of animals contributed to the spread, as it allowed infected livestock to mix with healthy herds. This issue is compounded by small-scale producers' lack of access to land and essential infrastructure and poor animal housing conditions further increase the risk of disease transmission.

During the period under review, rising costs for feed and other inputs continued to restrict small-scale livestock farming. Government relief efforts, such as the Presidential Employment Stimulus Initiative (PESI), have been undermined by mismanagement. Successful applicants are issued vouchers to purchase inputs from designated suppliers, yet some suppliers inflate prices, sometimes charging double the standard rate. There have also been reports of ‘ghost’ suppliers—politically connected entities listed on the government’s central supply database without proper verification.

In response, TCOE organised local awareness sessions to educate livestock farmers about disease prevention. The veterinary services unit from the Department of Agriculture also launched a major vaccination drive to strengthen animal immunity and curb the spread of African swine fever.

ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Forging strategic alliances with land-based organisations remains central to our ongoing commitment to expanding the impact of the food sovereignty movement. Collaboration and partnership are essential for advancing agroecology, building resilience, and ensuring equitable access to resources. Over the past year, our work has been enriched through active engagement with a range of partner organisations, each contributing unique expertise and focus areas:

- Imvotho Bubomi Learning Network (IBLN)

– Rainwater harvesting and agroecological production

- African Centre for Biodiversity – Seed sovereignty
- Agroecology South Africa (AESA) – Agroecology with a focus on policy advocacy
- Seriti Institute – Development of agroecology nodes
- Breede-Oliphant’s Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA) – Water access initiatives
- Rural Women’s Assembly – Agroecology advocacy
- Development and Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA) – Food sovereignty and women’s empowerment

As an organisation, we continue to prioritise lobbying and advocacy to secure vital resources for our members. In 2024, we received 63 Jojo tanks from BOCMA in the Western Cape, a significant step forward in our struggle for water access, complemented by ongoing engagement with Langeberg Municipality.

Our partnership with Independent Development Trust (IDT) in the Free State Province has also deepened this year. IDT has provided resources for localised agroecology training, and the Botshabelo Unemployed Movement (BUM) Agroecology Hub now benefits from four interns whose stipends are funded by our partner.

These alliances and collaborative efforts are fundamental to building a robust food sovereignty movement. By organising, networking, and



partnering, we amplify our collective voice, broaden our reach, and strengthen our capacity to effect meaningful change.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Throughout 2024, TCOE played a pivotal role in driving policy development by hosting and facilitating a series of dynamic workshops, dialogues, and consultations—both in-person and online—that brought together grassroots movements, women, and youth with policy makers. Notably, TCOE's
- advocacy ensured that key contributions from underrepresented communities were not only heard but integrated into major policy documents such as the National Agroecology Framework for South Africa.
- We have continued to launch and support agroecology hubs and food gardens. These initiatives equipped communities to better understand their rights regarding land and food, and to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their livelihoods. By strengthening farmer-to-farmer extension

programs and building strong networks with partners, the organization advanced the principles of food sovereignty

- We have managed to sustain our monthly markets in the three provinces and are now working on strengthening the same in other areas. The markets have improved livelihoods of local producers and have served as an organising tool to lobby such producers into joining Inyanda.

CHALLENGES

The Food Sovereignty stream faces several practical challenges in its mission to attain food sovereignty. Addressing these requires coordinated action and creative solutions:

- Land Access: The growing demand for housing often leads to the use of grazing lands for building, limiting their ability to sustain livestock and sometimes causing tensions within communities. Collaborative land-use planning and ongoing dialogue between livestock producers and housing

stakeholders can ensure equitable access and minimize conflict.

- Security and Infrastructure: Incidents of stock theft and infrastructure vandalism, such as damage to fences and irrigation systems, have affected some areas, including the Free State Rural Women's Assembly Agroecology Hub. Strengthening community-based security measures, improving surveillance, and carefully selecting project sites help mitigate risks and safeguard valuable resources.
- Funding and Support: Accessing government grants remains a challenge, especially for women, as eligibility often requires the formation of cooperatives. Supporting the development of cooperative models, raising awareness of funding opportunities, and advocating for more inclusive grant processes to empower more beneficiaries to secure financial support, remain a challenge.

By tackling these challenges with practical strategies, food sovereignty initiatives can build stronger, more resilient communities.



CLIMATE JUSTICE



In 2024, TCOE launched a Climate Justice stream to address the current climate crisis and global heating facing our planet and humanity, recognising these as part of a broader crisis of capitalism reaching its ecological limits. The planet and its resources are more than capable of providing for the needs of its entire people; however, we live under a system of production and consumption that undermines the natural basis of life through a need for constant growth, while only a small minority of the world's population, historically in the Global North with a growing elite in the South, benefit from the results of such growth. Meanwhile, many of the effects of overproduction, consumption and climate change are felt by the world's small-scale and peasant farmers, fishers, the poor and the working class in the Global South.

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report (AR6, 2023) found that Southern Africa is already experiencing widespread losses and damages due to climate change. The region's climate has warmed more than the global average over the past few decades – a trend expected to continue as emissions continue to rise. Southern Africa has faced severe climate events, most notably, the SADC region endured its worst drought in over a century from 2023/24, affecting more than 27 million lives and causing 80% crop failure in Zimbabwe and Zambia. The El Niño phenomenon that contributed to drought across the region also brought heavy rains and flooding to areas, including Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Madagascar, impacting hundreds of thousands of people. In response, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia,

Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe all declared a state of national disaster.

South Africa faces multiple climate risks, including rising average temperatures, heatwaves, flooding, drought, shifts in seasonal precipitation, storms, wildfires, air pollution, dust storms, southward-shifting cyclones along the east coast and coastal erosion and inundation due to sea level rise. Recent years have seen a surge of costly climatic events in the country, including:

- The 2022 flooding in KZN was significant, resulting in over 400 lives lost and R17 billion in infrastructure damage, with thousands still displaced and left homeless in 2024.
- In March 2024, heatwaves struck the northeastern interior, with record temperatures in Pretoria (36.1°C), Rustenburg (37.9°C), Welkom (38°C), and Augrabies Falls (44.9°C). Heatwaves can cause heatstroke, dehydration, and higher mortality rates among those with chronic health conditions. In December 2024, eight of the nine provinces (except Western Cape) experienced two-week long heatwaves. Twee Riviere in the Eastern Cape recorded the highest global temperature on 11 December 2024 at 45.9°C.
- South Africa's 2024 fire season saw nearly 4 million hectares burned, 34 human lives lost, over 2,000 cattle destroyed, structural damage and thousands displaced. Although the total area burned was below the historical average, wildfires were more

intense, occurred more frequently, and lasted longer with an earlier onset to the season.

During the 2024 reporting period, we engaged directly with communities affected by severe weather events such as flooding, drought, and rising sea levels, conducting public education campaigns on climate justice and facilitating communication between communities and local governments.

CLIMATE DISASTER ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED IN AREAS OF OPERATION

The floods, droughts, snowfall and sea overflows experienced throughout 2024 in South Africa are a result of climate change. The floods and snowfall in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Limpopo and the subsequent destruction in the first and third week of June resulted in TCOE conducting an assessment to understand the extent of this phenomenon and inform our intervention strategy and determine which partners and alliances to engage.

Affected areas in our assessment included:

- Eastern Cape: Uitenhage in Kariega, Cambridge in East London, NU3 Mdantsane, Chaguba in Port St Johns, Manxeba in Sterkspruit, Lusikisiki
- Western Cape: Genadendal, Robertson and Suurbraak
- Limpopo: Mopani District Municipality

The assessment began with an online meeting on 4 June 2024 to ascertain the extent of the damage

caused by the floods and other related disasters. Representatives from the affected areas were part of this meeting. It was reported that some producers had lost livestock, while others had their crops completely wiped out by the floods. In Port St Johns and Lusikisiki, some houses were destroyed and those staying in shacks and low-lying areas were heavily affected. In Amalinda, close to 200 families had to be evacuated to a community hall, where there was insufficient food as the municipality claimed to have no funds and there were no partitions in the halls resulting in all genders and age groups crowded together, predisposing women and children to potential abuse.

The online meeting was followed with in-person visits to the affected areas between 7 – 11 June 2024. The TCOE then engaged the Department of Social Development, Human Settlement, SASSA, big businesses and ward councillors to develop strategies on how best to provide assistance to help the community.

We also organised a series of climate change awareness workshops in our operational areas. Ward councillors and traditional leaders participated in some workshops, which included speak-outs. Participants made the following demands, addressed to local and provincial governments:

- A clear plan to address climate change disasters must be made available and followed.
- Provision of rainwater harvesting equipment, such as water tanks.
- Desilting of dams to restore capacity.



- Collaboration between government and South African Weather Services to ensure early warning of serious and damaging weather events.
- Replacement of outdated and leaky water reticulation infrastructure.

ASSESSMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

Awareness Raising in Port St Johns: The floods in the Eastern Cape during May–June 2024, along with drought and sea overflows in some areas, prompted an education and awareness campaign in the province. This effort, led jointly by TCOE Movement Building and Food Sovereignty streams, aimed to discuss causes, impacts, adaptation and mitigation strategies and sustainable interventions with coastal communities to strengthen our campaign for a just climate transition and local economic empowerment.

We started in Port St Johns, the most affected area, and held a meeting on 28 May 2024 with forty participants where we discussed the government's inadequate response to extreme weather events and explored possible livelihood strategies and sustainable alternative food production to enhance food security. The streams also discussed the importance of agroecological food production, seed saving, and the negative impacts of industrial agriculture on climate change. It was noted that responses are more reactive than proactive, and as a collective, we need to develop long-term strategies and campaigns on climate change.

Mobilising The Youth: In line with National Youth Day, we hosted a youth event in Middledrift on 14 June 2024 with 105 participants to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the climate crisis and to develop adaptation, mitigation strategies and campaigns to advance environmental justice. This reflects TCOE's commitment to mobilising youth for active participation in protecting their future. The event highlighted the role of multinational corporations and big businesses in driving economic crises and inequalities, the disproportionate impact of pollution on marginalised communities, and the importance of advocacy on policy. The TCOE Movement Building stream coordinator also discussed the impact of coal-generated electricity on the environment and the transition towards an energy mix. Alongside these issues, there was robust discussion regarding youth involvement in drugs and the need for active youth participation in developmental programmes.

Engaging Government: During our assessment in the Amalinda Informal Settlement (Etipini), we observed that the area is not in a good condition as



most people are unemployed, there are no schools or health facilities in the area, it is situated in a wetland and is prone to dumping. On the day we visited, we met with the ward councillor, who reported that the municipality had been promising to move people but has never delivered. The RWA and Food Sovereignty team made contact with the Department of Social Development, Human Settlement, SASSA, big businesses and the ward councillor to strategise on how best we can find ways to provide assistance to help the community. This communication is ongoing.

Supporting Agroecology: Our field visit to Mdantsane revealed that, although living conditions were generally better than in Amalinda, homes and food gardens had suffered significant damage from the floods. In addition, clothing and household items were washed away, and both raw and perishable

foods became mixed and inedible. People who relocated to temporary shelter at the hall received three meals a day, with males and females separated for accommodation. Police patrolled the grounds at night to ensure safety. To support affected families, TCOE provided seedlings and other planting materials to help revive livelihoods, building on the community's existing agroecological practices. We are also mobilising campaigns focused on climate resilience and UNDROP, sharing information about climate disasters and the importance of preparing for future challenges. Engagements took place with the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, but at the national level, only 3% of affected producers received assistance, mainly in the form of seeds and seedlings to restart their farming operations.

PROJECTED CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

Temperatures across the South African interior are projected to rise at about 1.5 to 2 times the global rate. The frequency of very hot days is also expected to increase drastically. The hottest regions are the East coast, Lowveld, Western interior (including the Orange River basin) and the Limpopo River basin. These changes may impact human and animal health through increased heat stress, negatively affect crop yields, and heighten the risk of veld and forest fires. Projected changes in rainfall patterns are less certain, but the western interior, northeastern parts and the winter rainfall region of the southwestern Cape are likely to become drier, while extreme rainfall events over eastern South Africa are expected to increase in frequency.

These changes will have widespread impacts. Most worrying are the ongoing and forecasted impacts on SADC's food production and increases in the already high levels of food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger. In response, the Climate Justice stream at TCOE is developing a range of

strategies, including awareness-raising activities, educational materials and training on adaptive farming practices for small-scale farmers and food producers. We are also developing community-based disaster preparedness methodologies that embrace an ethic of care and inclusivity, as well as tools for capturing stories of climate impacts, losses, and damages for use in our advocacy work. Our work during 2024, particularly the assessments across various provinces, will help inform not just what communities need to build resilience against climate change events, but how to mobilise and engage with government for safety plans to respond to climate events as well as prevention strategies such as agroecology and agroforestry. As TCOE, we will continue to campaign for financial instruments to support small-scale farmers.

However, while our efforts are contributions towards preparing our small producers to deal with localised climate change we must continue to lobby for wider interventions and hold global and local elites accountable for their historic emissions.



RESEARCH

IN SUPPORT OF RURAL DEMOCRATISATION AND GOVERNANCE



INTRODUCTION

This section presents an overview of the research and support activities undertaken for members of Inyanda across various provinces in South Africa. Research constitutes one of the pillars of TCOE's work on movement building and lobbying for policy changes. As will be seen below, the knowledge developed through research empowers members of the movements to challenge injustices such as land evictions, land grabs and more. Most of the challenges experienced by communities are related to land governance by various institutions, such as municipalities, traditional authorities and the private sector. The issues are characterised by serious violations of the citizens' land rights in rural areas under traditional authorities, municipalities, and commercial farmers. During the period under review, our research has centred on issues of land and governance within communal areas as well as on municipal commonage land. This ongoing work recognises the complexity and evolving nature of these topics, acknowledging that meaningful research often requires a sustained commitment over several years.

RESEARCH ON LAND AVAILABILITY AND USE

TCOE's research aimed to understand the challenges that smallholder farmers face in gaining access to and use of land and other natural resources. As will be seen below, TCOE used research to support communities that faced evictions. Given TCOE's aim to democratise governance, we have organised information sessions on policies such

as the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA), Land Expropriation Bill and the Commonage Policy. In the Sakhisizwe municipal area, we collaborated with the Cala University Students Association (CALUSA) - a local non-governmental organisation to raise awareness about provisions in the Acts and to support residents to exercise their rights and be active participants in decision-making processes. TCOE also organised legal support for farmworkers and dwellers to challenge the illegal farm evictions and evictions on commonage land.

Alongside this, we have also provided targeted support by offering timely information and advice to both communities and Inyanda affiliates. Support activities have primarily involved quick desktop research to address specific questions concerning land and governance. In some cases, our efforts have combined research with practical support to help resolve immediate challenges faced by communities and movements. This report introduces and reflects on these three strategic approaches within our broader focus on land, rural governance, and democratisation.

LAND GOVERNANCE AT CALA RESERVE IN THE EASTERN CAPE

In 2024, participatory action research was conducted on land governance in Cala Reserve, using interviews, conversations, and participant observation to assess how governance impacts land access for residents. The village has been led by an elected headman since 2020, responsible for land allocation and administration. The research aimed to evaluate the influence of this leadership change.



Preliminary findings show increased democratisation in village governance. For example, the headman's committee now includes six women and ten men; five of whom are youth, with three young men and two young women. Women now make up 37.5 percent of the committee, surpassing the 30 percent minimum set by law. This inclusive structure marks a shift from the previous committee, which had only two women among twelve adult members and no youth.

Land allocation procedures have also changed. Previously, only married residents could receive land, excluding unmarried men and women. Under the current headman, unmarried individuals, including women with children, can now be allocated residential sites, provided they hold a South African

identity document. Allocation is consultative and transparent: applications are discussed at community meetings, minutes are kept, and grazing landowners are consulted afterward. Due to land shortages, only residential sites are allocated, not arable land.

These findings challenge common beliefs about rural land ownership, particularly regarding women. They also counter the view that rural residents only need urban jobs and housing, highlighting that young people remain in rural areas due to lack of urban opportunities. The Cala Reserve case shows that democratised governance is possible under traditional authorities, and with ongoing support, these systems can become more inclusive and effective.

LAND GOVERNANCE AND EVICTIONS IN MAHALE VILLAGE IN LIMPOPO

The Mahale village falls under the Majeje Traditional Council in Limpopo, which is led by Chief Mlungisi Ntsanwisi. Unlike Cala Reserve, Mahale village offers an experience of rural life with undemocratic land governance. Within the village, the Mahale Farmers Cluster is made up of 28 smallholder producers. These producers either farm on land inherited from their parents or have been allocated arable plots by Chief Mlungisi Ntsanwisi of the Majeje Traditional Council, holding Permits to Occupy (PTOs) along the Letaba River. Some have been cultivating this land since the 1990s.

In July 2022, a white farmer erected poles to fence

off the land occupied by the smallholders. Prior to installing the fence, the farmer had cleared both the fence line and the crops belonging to the smallholders. This event marked the beginning of the removal of 20 out of the 28 members of the Mahale Farmers Cluster. Chief Mlungisi Ntsanwisi granted the white farmer permission to use the land for citrus plantations. Although the landholders resisted and sought legal support from the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI), they ultimately lost access to the land. Internal capacity challenges within SERI made it difficult for the organization to provide effective support.

In addition, further land evictions appear imminent. Both the Davano Farming Enterprise and members of the Prisca community are affected. David Mlondobozi of Davano Farming Enterprise has received a notice from the Majeje Tribal Authority stating that 31 hectares of their 50-hectare holding will be repossessed. The designated 31 hectares have already been fenced off. Grazing land belonging to Prieska village has also been enclosed, and indigenous trees have been cleared for new citrus plantations.

An awareness-raising workshop empowered the farmers and villagers of Prieska. The workshop addressed land rights for communities under traditional authorities and shared court judgments emphasizing that traditional authorities are not the owners of rural land. The workshop affirmed the land rights of the farmers and villagers, reinforcing that the chief's actions were illegal and should be contested.

In April 2024, an agreement was reached with leaders of the Mahale Farmers Cluster to compile information about those affected by the evictions. However, this task was not completed by the Mahale farmers, leaving the research unfinished.

Despite these challenges, the engagement with Mahale village has had a supportive impact. It has strengthened the confidence of both farmers and villagers regarding their land rights. They now understand that traditional authorities do not possess absolute power and can be held accountable for their actions.

LIVESTOCK FARMING AND RAIDS IN MCGREGOR IN THE WESTERN CAPE

On 19 November 2024, TCOE and the Mawubuye Land Rights Forum were called to support local pig farmers whose livestock had been seized by the SPCA and law enforcement officers. Authorities raised concerns about two main issues: the conditions under which the livestock were kept, and the farmers' alleged illegal occupation of the land. This situation impacted 45 to 50 men and women who had been farming on a vacant piece of municipal land by the river at the entrance to McGregor for over 20 years.

The land, situated on a flood plain, has seen livestock losses from animals drowning during floods. Although these floods were declared a disaster, none of the affected farmers received any disaster relief. Efforts to lobby the municipality for relief have so far been unsuccessful. In November 2024, the farmers invited the municipality, who was represented by the Local Economic Development (LED) manager,

to a meeting to discuss support. The smallholder farmers also demanded for access to suitable farmland. They were advised to identify appropriate land themselves, but once they did, they faced opposition from some members of the local white community who objected to pig farming on the proposed site.

Access to water remains an ongoing challenge. Farmers currently fetch water from the river using buckets. While the municipality had previously provided a water meter for farming, it has since been removed due to alleged unpaid water service fees owed by the livestock committee.

Meanwhile, the SPCA expressed serious concerns about the pigs' living conditions. Farmers were given two weeks to address these issues. On 22 October 2024, the SPCA returned and removed 11

pigs they deemed underfed and kept in unhygienic conditions. The farmers are unaware if the animals were euthanised or impounded. The SPCA also served compliance and animal registration forms, clearly outlining the consequences of non-compliance. Farmers were required to sign an agreement committing to improve the conditions that the SPCA had flagged.

TCOE facilitated several meetings between the smallholder farmers and the Langeberg Municipality to address access to commonage land. These discussions revealed that the municipality lacks proper records of its commonage land and has never sought to acquire additional land to meet local needs. Instead, the allocation or disposal of commonage land has favoured commercial farmers, who outbid local smallholders for leases at market rates.

A recent example of this is the Rooilande, a 45-hectare commonage in McGregor. Here, a commercial farmer, JP Du Plessis, won a lease through an open tender. He then sublet the land to about 14 local smallholder farmers at a monthly rental of R500 each. This arrangement occurred despite repeated requests from smallholder farmers for direct access to commonage land.

In response, TCOE sought legal support to protect the farmers' livelihoods. A consultation meeting between a lawyer and the smallholder farmers was organised in McGregor, where the lawyer clarified the rights of the farmers based on the number of years, more than two decades, that they have been utilising the land. According to the lawyer,





the smallholder farmers have recognisable rights, whether written or not, that the municipality is obliged to respect and uphold.

Armed with this knowledge, TCOE and the farmers lobbied the municipality for services and support. As a result, the municipality agreed to grant permission for the smallholder farmers to continue using the land and committed to providing services such as installing water points and improving general farming conditions. Furthermore, the mandate previously given to law enforcement to evict the farmers was withdrawn.

LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THEEWATERSKLOOF MUNICIPALITY IN THE WESTERN CAPE

TCOE and Mawubuye took decisive action to support small-scale farmers in Theewaterskloof, specifically those in Greyton and Genadendal, when their municipality proposed selling Erf 595 in Greyton for the development of a private school. Originally, the intention was to rezone this land for housing, but the Western Cape Department

of Agriculture objected, citing the land's high agricultural value.

On 30 November 2024, local farmers challenged the municipality's process for advertising the land disposal. They asserted that community members who depend on the land for their livelihoods were largely unaware of the sale notice and therefore unable to submit timely objections. Their concerns further highlighted that the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) designates the site as a critical biodiversity area, rendering it unsuitable for development by emerging farmers. Additionally, the farmers questioned the municipality's adherence to legal procedures, noting that disposal of commonage land requires approval from the provincial premier.

Community members derive significant value from Erf 595, using it for firewood collection, informal grazing of cattle and horses, and harvesting honeybush. Notably, this land had previously been earmarked for sale to the fruit juice company Two a Day, but that transaction was halted through a separate intervention by Mawubuye.

Recognising the urgency of the matter, TCOE facilitated a general meeting with Mawubuye-affiliated farmers to discuss the proposed sale and coordinate a collective response. The farmers unanimously opposed the sale and resolved to submit a petition formally contesting the council's decision.

As a direct result of these actions, the municipality withdrew its plans to sell Erf 595. This outcome represents a significant victory for smallholder farmers, safeguarding their access to vital agricultural resources and ensuring continued community benefit from the land.

WATER AND SANITATION IN KANNALAND MUNICIPALITY IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Progress in addressing water and sanitation issues in Kannaland has been slow, with challenges dating back as far as 2018. Political instability within the municipal council has affected the function of local government and disrupted service delivery. In August, the water crisis committee decided that the Kannaland Local Municipality should assemble a team to focus on informal settlement matters in Ladismith and Van Wyksdorp. The Department of Water and Sanitation requested that the agreement between the Cape Agency for Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (CASIDRA) and the municipality, regarding the allocation of water from Amalianstein farm to the community of Zoar, be implemented. In response to the community's demand for the fencing of the sewerage dam where a young boy drowned, the

fencing has now been completed.

CASE STUDY: EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION IN VAN WYKSDORP

Following our general meeting in Zoar last July, the need to expand into new areas was once again highlighted. TCOE field staff met with a group of seven producers who are cultivating four and a half hectares of land in Van Wyksdorp. With written permission from the landlord, these producers grow vegetables and sell their harvest to local schools, residents in retirement homes, and at pay points during social grant days. The group enjoys reasonable access to water sourced from an on-site dam.

There are many positives to be drawn from the producers we have encountered on these field visits. Their ability to work as a collective, engage with local markets, and take initiative in accessing land positions them as an exemplary model. The larger movement can learn valuable lessons from their approach. TCOE's movement-building efforts, together with the food sovereignty stream,



have helped foster solidarity and establish strong relationships. Through regular engagement, stakeholders are encouraged to recognise these initiatives and support them with appropriate interventions that enhance, rather than constrain, local efforts.

Despite the promising example set by these producers, broader challenges persist across the region. The government's limited responsiveness regarding water services and progressive policies for land access continues to hinder rural residents. Van Wyksdorp has emerged as a critical area for expanding our movement-building work. Our advocacy here focuses on achieving equitable access to land and water resources for all rural communities.



SUPPORTING AFFILIATES OF INYANDA

MAYIBUYE

During 2024, TCOE concentrated on strengthening Mawubuye as an organisation. This direction was guided by a series of strategic reviews that highlighted challenges in sustaining campaigns around land and water. In January, a leadership meeting was held at TCOE offices to develop an operational plan for building organisational capacity.

From March to mid-April, a series of roadshows and local engagements took place with livestock farmers. Visits were made to new areas including Napier, Teslaardal, and Elim, alongside efforts to rebuild the organisation's presence in places like Caledon and Riviersonderend, where Mawubuye had lost ground. These roadshows were organised to connect with livestock keepers, a crucial part of the membership base for future land campaigns. The first meeting in the Overberg region was well attended, with up to 40 livestock keepers present. Further outreach is needed in towns such as Grabouw and Villiersdorp. TCOE aims to extend movement-building work into other small rural towns affected by the Theewaterskloof municipality's land policies.

Key issues raised included difficulties in accessing land and water, as well as livestock impoundments in the Theewaterskloof area. Farmers committed to forming a committee to unite the remaining towns and lead discussions with government for improved farming conditions. In the Teslaardal region, some farmers have access to land, but there are instances

where land is sold, forcing livestock owners to relocate their cattle to find grazing. In Caledon, access to commonage land remains a challenge. The municipality does not recognise its responsibility to make commonage land available to smallholder farmers. Additionally, Theewaterskloof municipality is selling off commonage land in Greyton. The sale of Erf 595 was withdrawn and is under review after objections from small-scale farming groups in Greyton and Genadendal.

Mawubuye leadership held meetings with the farmer group in Riviersonderend. This group had previously been part of Mawubuye, but the relationship weakened as leadership aged and others left the area. Plans are underway to gradually rebuild ties with local farmers.

COASTAL LINKS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Support for Coastal Links continued throughout the year as the group opposed land grabbing by an agribusiness. Coastal Links remains active in challenging WIPHOLD's involvement in agricultural land in Nombanjana. With help from the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), the movement is pursuing legal action against the company. The first step in this process is to obtain official documents that detail WIPHOLD's authority to operate in the village. An application for this information, under the Protection of Access to Information Act (PAIA), is being relaunched. A previous attempt with the LRC was made in 2022, but no follow-up occurred after the required 31-day waiting period, so the process lapsed and must now begin anew.

Beyond land grabs, Coastal Links is facing attempts to the establishment of a smart city in the local area. According to a shared document, household removals are planned to make space for the development, presenting further threats to local land rights and the interests of Coastal Links members. TCOE is supporting Coastal Links by helping to interpret and clarify the implications of the smart city concept document. Coastal Links requested that TCOE and LRC attend a community meeting where the document's potential impacts will be discussed in more detail.

THE NORTHERN CAPE

In June, TCOE visited the Eenduin community, located near Keimoes and Louisville, to offer support on land tenure issues. Residents are uncertain about



the ownership of the land they live on. Discussions revealed that some families settled in Eenduin in the early 1970s after indigenous landholders were relocated from the eastern side of the Orange River to the western side. The eastern banks were subsequently developed for commercial grape farming. The relocated families now live in a closely clustered settlement that resembles a township, although it is about 20 kilometres from Keimoes and does not fully function as a township. Addressing this situation will require a land rights inquiry and further research into the historical background of the settlement.

WORKING WITH INDEPENDENT INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TCOE commissioned research into independent individual councils and organisations within local government. After the findings were presented, participants passed a resolution in November 2023 recommending that TCOE organises a platform for the group to interact.

In March 2024, a workshop was held for the candidates involved in the study. The focus was on discussing the formation of the platform, its working relationship with both TCOE and Inyanda, and planning future activities. The workshop resulted in an agreement to establish a working committee dedicated to coordinating activities in close collaboration with TCOE. Work with independent councillors and organisations aims to broaden the democratisation process beyond Inyanda's established areas of operation, and this initiative is expected to support expansion beyond the affiliates

of the Inyanda National Land Movement.

Efforts to organise a follow-up meeting were unsuccessful because most participants were unavailable. Many cited busy schedules as their reason, which has raised concerns that this may have been a deliberate attempt to undermine the initiative. It is possible that some political parties are dissatisfied with the project.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The limited access to municipal commonage land for smallholder farmers continues to signal shortcomings in land reform. Nearly three decades after the formal ending of apartheid, the goal of redistributing 30% of agricultural land remains unmet. Instead, communal lands and municipal commonages are increasingly targeted by agribusiness and mining companies. Government departments, local municipalities, and traditional authorities, who should safeguard community land rights, often facilitate these acquisitions. In provinces like the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, mining and agribusiness interests, assisted by traditional leaders, have displaced local producers. Joint ventures between commercial farmers or consultants and farmworkers have led to the further marginalisation of farmworkers and continued benefits for established farmers.

In peri-urban regions, municipalities have not addressed residents' need for commonage land to enhance their livelihoods. Few municipalities have acquired new commonage land, while existing sites are locked in long-term leases with commercial

farmers. Small-scale producers are left on small, poorly equipped plots lacking water and infrastructure, making them vulnerable to environmental risks, especially climate change. For example, recent floods in the Western Cape severely impacted small-scale farmers in McGregor and Genadendal, some of whom have farmed on floodplains for over thirty years. Where commonage is available, deteriorating

infrastructure discourages its use.

Municipalities like Langerberg and Theewaterskloof have sold or tendered off commonages, and efforts to oppose these sales have not gained enough traction. Farmers, particularly in McGregor, have reported devastating losses from floods and frustration with municipal responses. Many have raised concerns about the lack of access to land



and the tendering and leasing systems, including the 99-year leases on commonage land. Calls for unity among farmers have grown, along with demands for urgent assistance with land, water, and disaster relief funds.

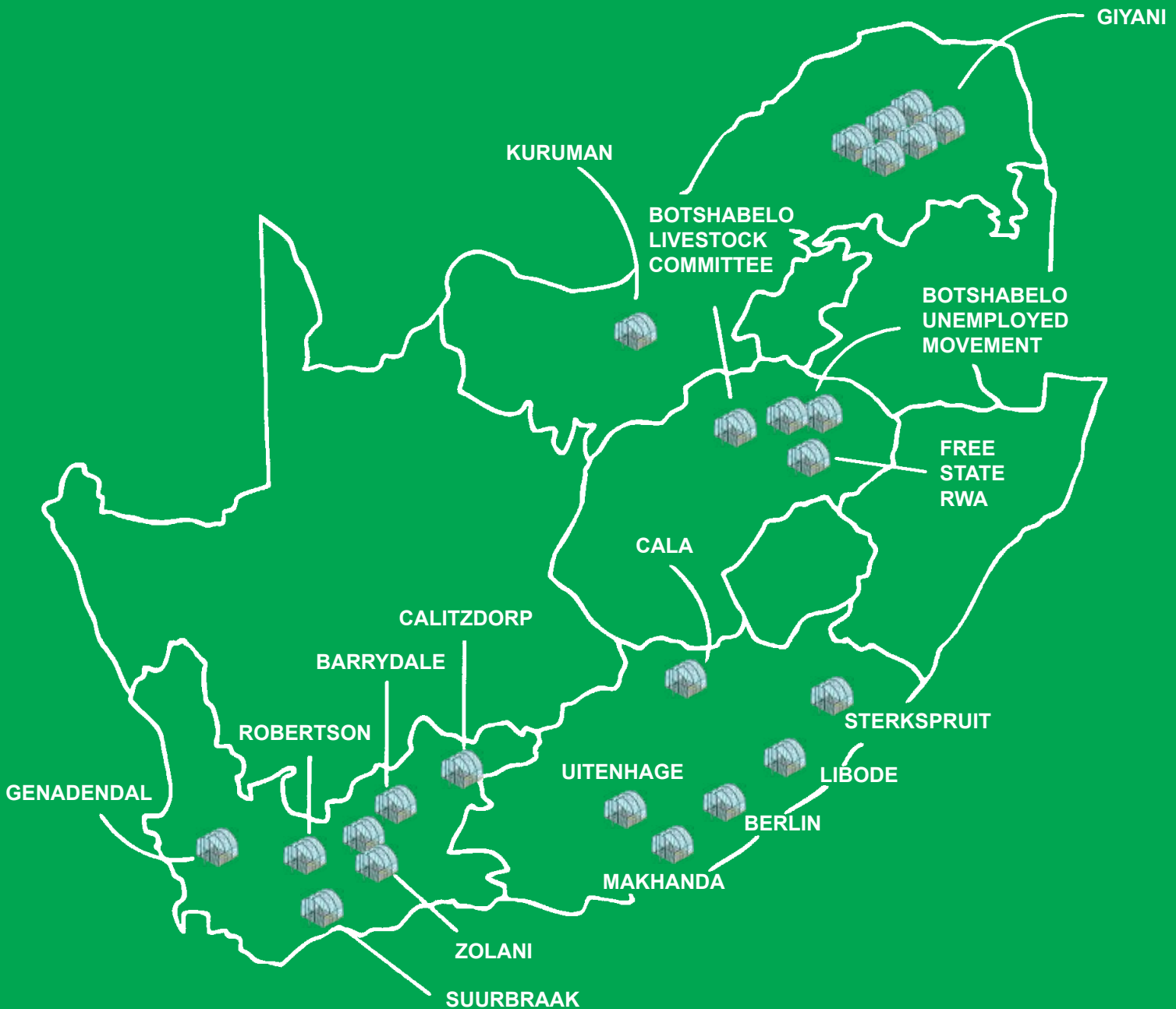
The experiences of Cala Reserve and rural Limpopo communities underscore the need to democratise land governance. Where traditional

chiefs act unilaterally, residents' land use rights are often violated. In contrast, Cala Reserve demonstrates the promise of more democratic land management.

Overall, expanding equitable access to land and infrastructure, ensuring responsive governance, and empowering local communities remain critical for sustainable and inclusive land reform.



NATIONAL AGROECOLOGY HUB DISTRIBUTION



TRUST FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 2024

NPO Registration Number: 010-229-NPO

Trust Registration Number: 2848/8

REVENUE	37 494 634,00
Grants	37 494 634,00

EXPENDITURE	
ADMINISTRATION COST	2 651 621,00
Catering and Cleaning	233 942,00
Bank Charges	263 398,00
Telephone and Fax	138 657,00
Insurance	241 202,00
Auditors Remuneration	234 101,00
Fundraising	64 716,00
Office Accommodation	153 029,00
Lease rental on operating lease	361 200,00
Petrol and Motor Vehicle Expenses	187 783,00
Depreciation of Assets	573 679,00
Repairs and Maintenance	199 914,00

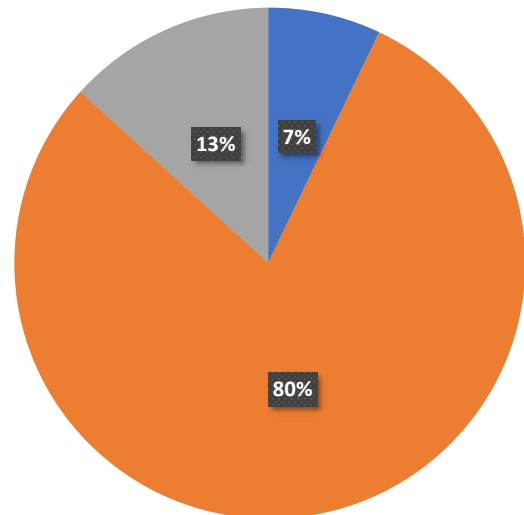
PROGRAMME & PROJECT COST	29 503 493,00
Annual Report	38 913,00
Equipment Rental and Maintenance	476 586,00
Stationery and Printing	67 899,00
Programme and project costs	28 920 095,00

PERSONNEL EXPENSES	4 911 134,00
Salaries and Contributions	4 782 328,00
Staff Development	128 806,00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2024	37 066 248,00

Surplus/ (deficit) from operating activities	428 386,00
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Donations and sundry income	1 179 836,00
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Surplus/ (deficit) for the year	1 608 222,00
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- ADMINISTRATION COST
- PROGRAMME & PROJECT COST
- PERSONEL EXPENSES

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The TCOE Collective and all the communities that we work with express our gratitude to the donor partners who have continued to support us in our journey of development and towards justice

We take this opportunity to thank all our donors and partners for a fruitful collaboration in 2024.

The Annual Financial Statements and Donor Acknowledgements includes a thank you from the TCOE.





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