AFRICA COOPERATIVE ACTION TRUST (ACAT) - Lilima Swaziland

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY, 2014

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ACAT VISION

To practically demonstrate God’s love for the transformation of disadvantaged rural people through appropriate and sustainable development programmes.

ACAT MISSION STATEMENT

To empower, enable and equip disadvantaged rural people to improve and sustain their own quality of life spiritually, physically, materially, socially and environmentally.

ACAT CORE VALUES

📖 **God-Centered Organization:** “We value developmental initiatives that are on a mission with God”

📖 **Transparency:** “We openly do our business and share information with all our partners”

📖 **Integrity:** “We are guided by Godly work ethics and demonstrate a high level of professionalism in everything we do”

📖 **Honesty and Respect:** “We strive to be truthful and honour all people in a Godly manner, regardless of status,”

📖 **Accountability:** “We competently deliver on the business of ACAT as if it were our own”

📖 **Excellency and Continuous Improvement:** “We strive for outstanding performance and continuously look for better ways of doing things”
1.0. Chairman’s Financial Year 2013/14 review

1.1. Introduction

In my annual review last year, 2012/13, reflecting on the developments and all that we experienced during the year, I elated to describe that year as a year of “consolidation and effectiveness”. This was because we were still working towards recovery from the effects of the global financial crisis that left us with no option but to consolidate our efforts and programmes while ensuring efficient and effective allocation and application of the limited resources that had been made available to the organization. Given all the financial challenges that compelled us to exercise extra diligence in the management of our resources, I am persuaded to describe our financial year 2013/14 as an extension of the “consolidation and effectiveness” period for ACAT Swaziland. We shall continue to “consolidate” until it becomes safe to expand the allocations of our God given resources.

The stringent austerity measures that were implemented in the Eurozone seem to have paid off as some positive economic indicators have been observed in this economic block as they started recording a positive economic growth by the end of 2013. The US’s net import of oil has declined from 13 million barrels a day to 7 million barrels a day. Crude oil prices, being one of the major drivers of inflation, the global inflation rate is expected to be somewhat contained in 2014 or to move downwards.

1.2. Key Milestones in 2013

We shall always remember the financial year 2013/14 as a year in which one of our great leaders in the continent, if not the whole world, has ever produced, Dr Nelson Mandela, peacefully departed from this
world. History shall always remind us how the whole world came together to pay their last respect to the leadership icon that we all cherished and respected for the role he played to contribute to a better life for all humanity. The Republic of South Africa and Africa as a whole will never be the same without “Tata Madiba”, as he was affectionately known by the South Africans.

Another milestone in the year under review was the successful election of the Swaziland 10th Parliament, with a new team of legislators in both houses of Parliament and cabinet. We welcome these men and women, who have been selected because they are trusted by their respective constituencies. For us, as ACAT, we can only hope and pray that they will be used of God to create an enabling environment for the socio-economic development of the most disadvantaged people of this country, in particular those living in the rural areas.

We note with joy that our work, at Kaphunga community, where ACAT was first piloted in 1982, during the year under review, recorded 31 years of existence. We are humbled and grateful that the Kaphunga ACAT Multipurpose Cooperative which started operations in 1985 has been in operation for over 20 years without close supervision by ACAT. This is another notable and key milestone in the operation of the organisation.

Since its inception in 1982, ACAT has facilitated the establishment of six (6) legal Cooperatives, these are; Phunga, Dumako, Simoyini, Mashobeni South, Manyeveni and Siyakhuphuka (Ekufikeni). With the exception of Siyakhuphuka, all these cooperatives have shown great progress during the year under review. We are grateful for the cooperation and partnership we have with the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade. We specifically appreciate the Department of Cooperatives, for working with ACAT in all the processes leading to the eventual registration of these cooperatives. We believe this partnership will continue because we still have many established Savings and Credit groups that aspire to be legal Cooperatives one day.

Cooperatives are useful for the economic and social structure of a country since they use local initiatives and local economic strength. They are also well-equipped to combine the advantage of local activities with regional and national networking. They are therefore seen as the best root to economic empowerment and poverty alleviation for the disadvantaged rural people of Swaziland.
1.3. Keeping the mandate and fulfil the promise

The ACAT Board through the Management has continued to work towards the fulfilment of its God given mandate that is aimed at the empowerment of the disadvantaged people of Swaziland, mainly the rural poor, so that they are able to improve and sustain the quality of their lives without being dependent on external support. Our efforts, even in the year under review, were channelled through our three complimentary programmes that we have, over the years, been delivering in an integrated approach to ensure effective and efficient allocation of our limited resources. These are;

1.3.1. Entrepreneurial and Skills Development Programme (ESDP)

This programme has continued to focus on helping our people to develop skills for income generation in order to create self employment. During the year under review 3,798 households were actively involved in our savings and credit model of creating financial resources to enhance micro-lending for socio-economic development even for the very poor people of this country. These households translate to close to 40,000 people whose lives have been positively affected by our savings model in 2013/14.

This program has also placed special attention in the consolidation of 8 communities in preparation for ACAT’s phasing out of these communities in the next two years. As our approach in community development work is to ensure proper and sustainable development of target communities, we believe it is important that communities should be assisted to grow to a point where they become self sufficient, by giving them the confidence and ability of driving their own development at some later stage. To this end, we are proud to have produced a handful of communities that have continued to grow even after ACAT’s deliberate phasing-out of those communities.

1.3.2. Sustainable Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Programme (SAIDP)

This programme focuses on the promotion of food security at household level, using mainly sustainable approaches that are affordable even to the very poor family. It is pleasing to note that the Sustainable Agriculture Programme, through its training and extension work, enabled 320 new small farmers in 2013/14 to improve their soil fertility, food production, health, income, self-esteem and addressed water storage challenges by collecting rain water from their roof tops whenever it rains.
We are grateful to our various partners that specifically supported this programme. These include partners such as Bread for the World, Global Environment Fund, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Food Agriculture Organisation and Department of Agricultural Research and Specialised Services (Ministry of Agriculture), whose support contributed to our efforts to promote various food security activities for our people in the rural areas where ACAT has her presence. With the challenges of climate change, already affecting every aspect of our lives, this programme has been challenged to also promote innovative technologies that have been recommended to be relevant for adaptation to the climate change production activities. We see this as critical if our work is to be relevant in mitigating the impact of climate change now and in the near future. It is against this backdrop that we appreciate all the financial and technical support we have been afforded by our various partners in the development work. The majority of our people and even the country’s economy are heavily dependent on agricultural activities and therefore a key sector in the development of this country.

1.3.3. Training Centre and Demonstration Unit (TCDU)

During the Year under review the Mbuluzi Training Centre actively provided capacity building trainings for our staff and our target communities. For ACAT staff, the organisation has an obligation to provide ongoing

*(Photo: Secretaries in attending training in Mbuluzi ACAT Training Centre)*
training in order to ensure that they are fully capacitated and always ahead in terms of new technologies in the organisation’s key focus areas. With regards to communities, the Centre continued to play a pivotal role in building the capacity for our people supporting our efforts in the various communities by equipping the target people with skills to drive their development with confidence and understanding. During the reporting period alone, about 500 people received various trainings at the Centre. These trainings lasted for five intensive days. On another note, over 20,000 people were exposed to one day trainings in the field using our Extension Officers facilitating trainings together with the TCDU staff.

We are grateful that during the year under review, our Centre received support in the form of sewing machines that were made available to ACAT through the generosity of Micro-Projects with funds from the European Union (EU).

We are also grateful to note that our German friend, Help for Brethrens, supported the construction of two classrooms to house our new sewing and computer training activities that are planned to take place during the financial year 2014/15.

Efforts have been made and shall continue to be made to reshape and reposition the Centre to ensure its relevance amid the ever-changing environment, in equipping our clientele with skills for self sustaining. To this end, we are grateful to those partners who have already started supporting us in this regard.

1.4. Collaboration, Partnerships and Networking

Even during the period under review, we made efforts to increase our collaboration and strategic partnership with other players in the field of development. We acknowledge that ACAT cannot achieve much alone, we need others to synergize our efforts with, in order to achieve our strategic goal and make an effective impact in our work. We continue to cherish the unbroken partnership and working relationship we are enjoying with our line Ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture. Our relationship with this Ministry is as old as ACAT, dating back in 1982 when ACAT started work in the Kaphunga Community. As ACAT, we consider our role as that of facilitation of development of the people of Swaziland in support and complementing Government’s efforts to promote food security and socio-economic development of this country.

We have made efforts to be part of those NGOs that actively participate in activities organised by the Coordinating Assembly of Non-Government Organisations (CANGO) for the benefit of its membership. As a result CANGO has been one of our collaborating partners even during the year under review.
We have also been privileged to work with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in the implementation of the Swaziland Agriculture Development Programme (SADP) where our role had been to facilitate the promotion of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in 10 Rural Development Areas (RDAs) to improve agricultural productivity amongst our small holder farmers. We continue to appreciate such a partnership as it adds great value to our work.

We are happy to have added Lipangwe Organic Manure Demonstration Farm (LOMADEF), a Community Based Organisations (CBO) to the list of organisations that we collaborate with for value addition of our work. The latter is a Malawian CBO whose focus is also in sustainable agricultural activities.

1.5. Appreciations

My sincere thanks go to our Board of Trustees who have over the years given themselves selflessly to provide a consistent strategic guidance and oversight of the organisation. The level of commitment in availing their time, full contribution in deliberating issues was invaluable. As a result, by and large, meetings have been taking place as scheduled and quorums met as expected. By this the Trustees demonstrated their understanding in that a fiduciary comes with a certain level of responsibility. That is to say, they have a legal responsibility for managing somebody else’s money. What this really means is that they have been placed in a position of trust and there may be consequences for betrayal of that trust.

(Photos: Some ACAT founding Trustees Rev. Dr C P M Gumedeze (L) and Mr M J Simelane during a Board Meeting)

We are so grateful to those organisations and foundations that partnered with ACAT through funding our
work. Without their support and confidence in us, we would not have extended our hand of support to all those who benefited through our work during the year under review. We are committed as a Board to ensuring that all received funding is utilised as per its designation. We look forward to fruitful and continued support even in the years to come.

1.6. Conclusion

We are grateful to the Almighty God for his providence and sustaining power. We are humbled, once again, as we stretch ourselves to the new Financial Year, 2014/15, with some assurances from some of our faithful friends and supporters who have already indicated their willingness to go with us yet another mile, as long as we continue to focus our efforts and energies in helping the disadvantaged Swazis from the rural areas improve and sustain the quality of their own lives, in all aspects.

While this is a challenge, we are committed towards its achievement as it is in line with our motto; Food, Faith and Work for Africa, for this is the reason for ACAT’s existence.

Mr. Miccah S Nkabinde (Chairman).

(c) June, 2014
2.0 Director's Progress Report, March 2013 – February, 2014

2.1 Introduction
The report covers activities carried out between March, 2013 and February 2014 a period that marks the financial year of ACAT Swaziland.

We are pleased to present highlights of achievements and probably challenges encountered during the year under review which ended February, 2014. Despite all the financial and material challenges we might have experienced during the course of the year we are grateful that this report presents achievements as evidence that our various programmes have once again stretched themselves beyond limit in order to deliver the promise we made with all our various funders of our work during the year under review.

2.2 Administration and Finance
Since the beginning of the year we fully applied ourselves to monitor our ailing cash flow to ensure that we do not spend above our means. As a practice, at the start of each financial year, we took time to reflect on our work in the previous year in order to help us plan for the New Year. Even this year, all ACAT staff participated in a week long planning process to review our work and set targets for the Year.

Throughout the year, we continued to exercise careful and very strict spending in order to keep all our operations going within the available resources entrusted to the organization by our various partners. We
are grateful to the very close support and guidance given to us by the Board, through the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC).

We have continued to intensify our fundraising efforts in order to keep the organization going. During the reporting period several contacts, through proposals, emails, telephone and where possible personal meetings have been made with various potential funders in an effort to raise resources for meeting our budget for the next financial year, 2014/15

Finally, we are grateful to have been able to produce our newsletter at the end of the reporting period. It is already found in our website, which we hope will improve our image in order to remain attractive and competitive within our sector. Our website is closely monitored such that we keep track of the numbers of people visiting our website on weekly bases.

### 2.2.1 Human Resource

We started and closed the financial year with an overall staff complement of 24 persons compared to 31 in the previous financial year.

We are happy to have been joined by three Interns to apply and acquire some practical learning skills within our organization. These three Interns were from Tshwane University, Ngwane Park and Limkokwing University.

We also wish to record the departure of two staff members during the reporting period, Mr Danger Nhlabatsi, our long serving Operations Manager and Mr Sandile Matsenjwa an Extension Officer who was based in Mambane community. Mr Nhlabatsi took a much senior position at Swaziland Red Cross Society with effect from 1st September, 2013 while Mr Matsenjwa was elected as a councillor (Bucopho) in the recent national elections.

During the period under review, we recruited two officers, Mr Sandile Malaza to focus in our Monitoring, evaluation activities and Mr Phila Mamba to coordinate our Sustainable Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Programme. These recruitments were partly our short term response to the departure of Mr Nhlabatsi.
Looking into the future, after the departure of Mr Nhlabatsi, the succession plan has suffered immensely and therefore forcing the organization to revisit its succession plan to ensure that the future leadership of the organisation is not left to chance.

### 2.3 Program Activities during the reporting period

Towards the end of the reporting period, the week 15 – 20 December, 2013 the organization took time to intensively review our work. We have always done this review every year in order to assess the extent of achievement of our plans for the year. This then allows us to use the remaining two months of our financial year to cover up any observed gaps in our implementation. All our extension officers, during this quarter have focused their attention to helping groups in the purchasing of farming inputs to enhance planting activities during the farming season.

### 2.4 Sustainable Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Program (SAIDP)

#### 2.4.1 Introduction

ACAT has even this year under review played a key role in assisting rural poor households to curb poverty, hunger and malnutrition problems in all the four (4) administrative regions of the country through the Sustainable Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Program. ACAT has strived to uproot the scourge of poverty among the rural poor people through provision of innovative, appropriate and sustainable crop, vegetable, poultry and seed production technologies along with household infrastructure and sustainable land management skills.

#### 2.4.2 Progress made by the program

During the year under review, the SAIDP promoted various food production technologies and initiatives to enable rural households to improve their household food security. The following achievements have been recorded by the program during the year under review;
2.4.2 Crop production

Through the Sustainable Agriculture program, ACAT assists rural smallholder farmers in all the five (5) agro ecological zones of the country to diversify their crop production as a means to achieve household food security all year round. A total of 360 families have been supported to improve Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This initiative was done in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and a number of NGOs in the communities. The GAP initiative was strategically promoted in 10 Rural Development Areas (RDA) to ensure a fair coverage of the country.

(Photo: A farmer from Phonjwana community standing in her Conservation Agriculture demonstration plot)

2.4.3 Maize

During the year under review, 2,800 farmers in 20 communities have been exposed to improved maize production technologies. The community supply activity which is facilitated by ACAT through extension staff has enabled 60 groups of farmers in the form of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) to have access to farming inputs such as tractor hire services, fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds. This activity is very convenient to farmers as they are assisted to 1) purchase at discounted prices, 2) have their inputs timely delivered at community centres and 3) realize reduced average costs of production. Through collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture 300 farmers have been encouraged to sample their soils for testing and have been able to test their soils so to apply the necessary nutrients amendment in their soils.
In collaboration with other NGOs, Lower Usutu Smallholder Irrigation Project-Global Environmental Facility (LUSIP-GEF) and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) ACAT has conducted 386 Conservation Agriculture maize production demonstrations in strategic locations in 20 rural communities. As a result of these demonstrations, 2800 farmers, each having about 0.5 ha (1.209 acres) planted Open Pollinated Maize Varieties (OPV) and the varieties were: ZM 521 and Africa 1. At the end of the reporting period, all these farmers, with support from our Extension Officers, were compiling yield data from their demonstration plots.

2.4.4 Legumes

The main purpose of promoting legume production was to improve nutrition in order to contribute to the mitigation of HIV as a result of better nutrition. During the year under review, the program conducted a total of 343 legume production demonstrations in strategic sites in the ACAT communities, the demonstrations were for various legume crops. The breakdown was as follows; 165 cowpeas, 28 beans and 150 jugo beans.

( Photo: A farmer from Sthobela community standing in her (bean) Conservation Agriculture demonstration plot)
2.4.5 Roots and tubers

Cassava and Sweet potato production has also been promoted by the program through demonstrations in communal gardens and individual farmer’s fields. A total of 86 sweet potato production demonstrations have been conducted to encourage 500 farmers who started planting sweet potato in fields. Planted varieties are (Ligwalagwala, Kenya and Brondel).

On another note, 13 new farmers were assisted with cassava production. This is one crop that has not been popular in most rural communities due to some cultural negative stories about cassava, despite all its benefits and uses. The program will continue to promote cassava production and also as a valuable food source.

2.4.6 Backyard vegetable gardens

As an effort to attain household food security and nutrition, ACAT has facilitated the establishment of 213 new permaculture backyard vegetable gardens where mostly fresh vegetables enough to feed and sustain a family are made available. Planted vegetables include: spinach, lettuce, beetroot, onions, tomatoes, cabbages, green pepper and parsley. This technology is also appropriate for arid areas and for the elderly who cannot afford too much manual work as this technology demands little work and promotes the use of locally available inputs.
2.4.7 Indigenous Poultry production

ACAT has continued to promote the establishment of controlled indigenous poultry farming. To improve the production of these kind of locally available chickens, the farmers in the rural areas who have never regarded these birds as a potential business have been extensively trained on proper management systems of chickens: both intensive and semi-intensive systems to minimize loses. There are 61 new farmers who have been trained and assisted to establish improved management of Indigenous Poultry to serve as an income generating activity while also a source of nutritional improvement in their household daily meals.

(Photograph: Mrs. Simelane from Dumako community feeding her indigenous chickens)

2.4.8 Basic Seed Multiplication

ACAT in collaboration with the Department of Research and Specialized Services (DARSS) and other players on the ground has encouraged and facilitated basic seed production at household level. A total of 70 smallholder farmers have been encouraged and assisted to plant legumes to seed access and availability. The same has been done in OPV maize, farmers have been encouraged to select good quality seeds from their harvest so that they may reserve some for the next season. During the reporting period, a total of 1500 farmers planted OPV maize for seed multiplication for next season. Also in sweet potato and cassava, farmers have been encouraged to plant and multiply the planting materials for future planting to enhance their sustainability and reduce risks of seeds shortages.
150 community sweet potato planting material producers have been established this year and 25 cassava planting material producers established.

2.4.9 Household Water Harvesting

(Photo: All smiles as this man from Mbhoke community cherishes his newly built concrete water)

The lowveld of Swaziland is characterized by shortages of rains and hot temperatures all year round hence households in the region struggle to get access to sufficient water supply for basic uses such as cooking and drinking. Limited rainfall is received in summer and streams run dry in winter. ACAT has promoted water harvesting from roof tops and proper storage of the water so that it can be sustained for the better part of the year and minimize water shortages for basic uses. A total of 63 water tanks have been installed in 63 households this year to improve water harvesting with a capacity of 1500-1700 Litres have been constructed. The harvested water can also be used to water the permaculture backyard vegetable garden. These are cheap, easy and quick to construct yet they are durable compared to the relatively expensive plastic tanks that the majority of our people cannot afford.

2.4.10 Post harvest yield management

A lot of harvested food is lost while in storage for most households in the country and this is because of poor crop storage technologies. Apart from low yields, another reason households fail to sustain themselves in terms of food is because a lot is shared with pests and other predators while it is on storage.
In an effort to minimize such losses, ACAT has trained 700 farmers on proper maize crib construction and maize storage to reduce post-harvest crop losses.

*(Photo: A poorly built maize storage crib with no protection from rat access to maize)*

At the end of the reporting period, 11 maize cribs had been properly constructed in homestead as a result of the training given by ACAT. These maize cribs prevent rats, livestock, moisture and insects to keep the maize produce fresh for prolonged periods hence decreasing loses. The same has been done in legumes, roots and tubers storages. Farmers have been trained in proper treatment of grains before they can be stored in their containers to avoid possible losses. Post-harvest management also helps farmers to keep their planting materials or seeds in good and viable conditions for the next planting season.

**Table 1.0:** Summary of households and direct beneficiaries assisted by the SAIDP during the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Seed producers</th>
<th>Total households</th>
<th>Total Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>30 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legumes</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>2 891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots and Tubers</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>4 816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Poultry</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backyard gardening</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Agriculture</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>2 702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 136</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 745</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 061</strong></td>
<td><strong>42 427</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above confirms that maize continues to be the most popular crops for the small holder farmers in Swaziland. Due to drought resistance, roots and tuber crops are also the most common crop rural people venture into in their quest to diversify their food production activities.

### 2.5 Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Program (ESDP)

#### 2.5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this program is to enable communities to finance their own development. This is achieved by facilitating the establishment and development of savings and credit clubs, and supporting individuals and clubs to start up and run income generating activities. Deposits made by club members provide much needed funds for clubs to invest in income generating activities. The savings accrued enable clubs to provide members with loans to start up and develop their own businesses. Following an evaluation of this program, the ESDP was advised to continue in the 8 rural communities under the Lubombo and Shiselweni regions.

#### 2.5.2 Savings and Credit Cooperatives

Towards the end of the reporting period, the organisation carried out an internal audit of the SACCO model promoted by ACAT Swaziland. The focus of the internal audit was mainly financial management of savings in the various ACAT groups.

The results of the audit indicated that even though the target population are involved in active savings and credit activities as promoted by the organisation, their moneys were not properly recorded in the various books of accounts. This was attributed to the fact that the account books were found rather complicated for some of the group secretaries, especially those with low education levels.
At the end of the year, the organisation was still working on the improvement and upgrading of the bookkeeping system for the SACCOs, in line with the findings of the audit. The new accounting books were tested with the SACCOs and they have responded positively in support of the new bookkeeping system. As a result of the process that was still on-going at year end, the savings performance data could not be included in this report.

2.4.5 Income Generating Activities

The program has continued to encourage and assist SACCO members to start and develop income generating activities. As a result, the program recorded a total of 512 IGAs that were started in this reporting period while a total of 168 old IGAs were assisted to improve their profitability and working standard. Through the support of our Training Centre, SACCO members were trained on business management, loan management, record keeping, costing and pricing, and marketing among other topics. The majority of the members involved in IGAs use their SACCOs for capitalisation of their IGAs and pay back such loans with interests. At their year end, each SACCO pay dividends to their members which are determined based on the amount of savings, among other factors.

(Photo: For Income generation, Vegetable and hand works displayed and ready to be sold during ACAT day)
The organization during the year also took time to screen/evaluate a total of 485 businesses that have been started and developed under this program. On the businesses screened, 57% were retail shops (from farm inputs sheds, groceries to stalls), 33% were commercial agriculture businesses, 4% hawkers, 4% salons and 2% hammer mills. The 2 dominating enterprises are those that ACAT has expertise and more interest especially input sheds and agriculture activities which play a major role in attainment of food security and proper nutrition in the rural poor communities. The businesses that were most profitable were the agricultural input sheds which reach up to E32 815.00 per month during the peak season.

2.5.7 Children’s Activities

(Photograph: children from Mbhoke community captured in one of their meetings with ACAT field officers)

At the beginning of the year ACAT was working with a total of 608 children registered in the program. From this number 12 children were deregistered under the program due to different reasons; 8 of them had completed their high school education and enrolled in tertiary education. The other 4 children had migrated from the vicinity of the targeted communities. In total now we have 596 children, of whom 148 children (25%) are double orphans, 263 children (44%) are single orphans (one parent alive) and the rest 185 children (30%) classified as vulnerable even if both parents are still alive.

During the reporting period the organization has developed a Child Protection Policy which gives guidance on how ACAT staff and any other person have to interact and handle their selves around the targeted children. This tool will also be introduced and be used in the target communities as we have the mandate to
safeguard the children and make sure that every abuse that is happening in the communities is reported accordingly. In developing the policy, the children were consulted and they made substantial contributions.

2.5.7 Phasing out in some communities

In the 8 communities where the programme is being implemented it was working to phase out in these communities, as recommended in the SAIDP evaluation report (LCC, 2013). To make sure that the impact of the program is sustained beyond the phasing out, there were seven Area Coordinating Committees (ACCs) formed in each of the communities. The ACCs were trained on their duties and monitored closely while they executed their activities. These are the committees that were being empowered to manage the work in the community after phasing out by ACAT.

Before the end of the reporting period, an internal evaluation was done, which was looking at key sustainability factors of each group, to determine which communities were ready for phasing out in the new financial year, beginning March, 2014. The criteria of the evaluation was to look at the savings and credit performance, Leadership (adherence to own constitution, quality of meetings and conflict resolution etc) and if they have a properly managed socio-economic project of their own. The outcome of the evaluation indicated that Dumako, Nkwene and Mashobeni South communities were ready for phasing out in March, 2014. These communities have strong SACCOs and mechanisms in place that will sustain the development work that has been established by ACAT in these communities.

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2.6 Training Centre and Demonstration Unit (TCDU)

2.6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this program is to support the two core programs (ESDP and SAIDP) through training and relevant demonstrations to enhance trainings when community members are brought to the Centre. The TCDU, during the year under review was working to develop a focus on up scaling organic farming which is in line with the focus of the SAIDP. During the reporting period the TCDU provided numerous communities and staff in-service trainings each running for, at most, five days. Highlights of achievements recorded during the year are covered below.
2.6.2 TCDU development

(Photograph: Secretaries inside the newly constructed classroom undergoing intensive bookkeeping)

Through support from our kind partner, Help for the Brethren (German), two classrooms have been constructed and already being used for training purposes.

The Centre towards the end of the year was working to roll out sewing trainings following support from Micro-Project and the European Union. This training will go a long way in helping out rural people with skills they may use for job creation and self-employment.

2.6.3 Trainings activities

(Photograph: SACCO Members who attended Business management training at Mbuluzi training Centre)
The centre provided numerous staff in-service training in order to equip ACAT staff for effective implementation of all planned activities for our two development program. Three (3) staff trainings on various topics were provided to ACAT staff during the year. Each of these trainings lasted for five days. These trainings covered topics such as SACCO record keeping and Farming as a business.

The training Centre, during the year, also facilitated 3 annual review meetings that involved all field and office staff. These meeting were; planning workshop, midyear review and end of year review. These meetings are done every year to ensure that the organisation is able to plan ahead as well as monitoring and evaluation of its work to ensure timely responses, where necessary, changes are made.

The Centre also facilitated a workshop on Staff orientation and repositioning, attended by all ACAT staff. This workshop was also to ensure that all new staff that joined ACAT during the year was given proper orientation in ACAT to ensure they fully understood ACAT Vision, Mission, Values and the general approach to people development.

The TCDU also provided various trainings to members of the SACCO’s in order to enhance their handling of issues that have been found to be responsible for group’s poor performances.

A total of 82 SACCO members attended trainings at the ACAT TCDU. Out of these, 14 were SACCO secretaries who were trained on bookkeeping for proper recording of SACCO books to ensure proper financial management is improved. While 58 of these were SACCO committee executive members, chairpersons and treasurers who were given Leadership and group dynamics trainings in order to contribute to the improvement of their leadership skills which is key in the development and growth of any SACCO. The 10 were new entrepreneurs who were given training on Business Management in order to improve their business understanding if they are to run profitable businesses.

2.6.4 Church support

With support from our sister organization, ACAT KZN, we supported local churches, different denominations, by giving them new bibles to help their needy members to have a bible for themselves. We have given out about 900 new bibles to individuals and groups from different church denominations who otherwise could not afford a basic bible. As a Christian organisation, this activity has greatly enhanced our relationship with local churches in the various communities where we work.
Further, ACAT has been working with churches in ensuring that children are given proper training and guidance as they grow. This is being achieved through the use of the Sunday school manuals, which ACAT developed three years ago. During the year under review we had to handle numerous requests from churches and church base organisations who are dealing with children. We distributed over a 1000 copies to different church denominations that did not have a formal curriculum for teaching children in their churches, in order to effectively contribute to an improved upbringing of children.

2.7 Conclusion

We are grateful that, with God on our side, we have made it, despite all the challenges that we may have experienced during the year under review. We remain loyal and committed to our calling to ensure that there is Food, Faith and Work for Africa, beginning in Swaziland.

Mr E.M Dlamini, National Director – ACAT Lilima Swaziland.

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