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2025

ANNUAL

REPORT

ABBREVIATIONS

AASA:	ACTIONAID SOUTH AFRICA
CBDP:	COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANS
CH:	CITY HOPE DISASTER RELIEF
CSO:	CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION
DPP:	DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN
DPRF:	DISASTER PREPAREDNESS RELIEF FUND
EC:	EASTERN CAPE
EFAST:	EMERGENCY FAST ACTION SUPPORT TEAM
GBVF:	GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE
GEN G:	GENERATION G
IDP:	INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN
IFIS:	INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
IHART:	INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND RESILIENCE TEAM
KZN:	KWAZULU NATAL
LRPS:	LOCAL RIGHTS PROGRAMMES
NFI:	NON-FOOD ITEMS
NSP:	NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN
OZA:	OXFAM SOUTH AFRICA
PLC:	PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE
SRHR	SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS
SLPS	SOCIAL LABOUR PLANS

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ABOUT ACTIONAID SOUTH AFRICA

AASA is a rights-based organization working for gender justice, good governance, and the eradication of poverty. We challenge patriarchy and extractive economic systems, amplify the voices of women, girls and young people, and build agency through grassroots organising, partnerships, and feminist alternatives. Our work is grounded in South Africa's constitutional commitment to human rights, but we recognize persistent failures in implementation as we implement our Theory of Change.

VISION

ActionAid South Africa (AASA) has a clear vision of realising social justice through supporting the actions and power of people whose lives are most affected by inequality, injustice and oppression. And so, we commit to supporting social movements of the vulnerable, excluded and marginalised, prioritising our support for womxn-led feminist movements.

In a post-apartheid South Africa, we have seen some successes in realising individual rights, but collective rights' realisation of people living in poverty and marginalisation, has been limited. To AASA, structural change is required to realise social justice.

MISSION

To eradicate poverty and injustice by working with people living in poverty and exclusion, civil society organisations, activists and movements wherever they are.

Message from the Country Programme Manager

2025 for ActionAid South Africa (AASA) was the year that demanded resilience, clarity of purpose, and a renewed commitment to human right based work grounded in community leadership. Against a difficult socio-economic, rising food insecurity, and recurring climate disasters. Our work remained rooted in the lived experiences of the communities we partner with. The floods in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape were not isolated incidents. They exposed the close linkages between climate change, poverty and the breaking down of governance systems.

Throughout 2025, AASA continued to operate at the connexion of humanitarian response and long-term social justice. Emergency interventions in Mthatha and KwaZulu-Natal prioritised dignity, safety, and community partnerships, while supporting recovery through locally driven disaster preparedness initiatives and mitigation approaches. This reflected a shift away from seeing communities as passive recipients of humanitarian aid, towards recognising their role as first responders through the establishment of AASA Emergency Fast Action Support Team (EFAST) teams in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal to support efforts of building climate resilience.

A rights -based approach to social justice remained central to our work. Through Generation G and the Young Urban Women Movement, we supported leadership development, political education, and economic literacy among young women and youth in both urban and rural areas. During a year in which South Africa assumed the G20 Presidency and marked our programmes focused on ensuring that international commitments had meaning at community level. This included influencing GBVF budgeting through social audits and launching the Gen G Engage App to improve access to justice for survivors.

Our climate justice work, particularly through the Climate Just Transition for Mining-Affected Communities project, highlighted the impact of placing human rights approaches in the hands of those most affected by extractive industries in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Women and youth in mining-impacted areas moved from the margins to active participation, shaping local and national discussions on a just transition, the Green Economy and including engagement with the Presidential Climate Commission.

Beyond South Africa's borders, AASA continued to act in solidarity with global struggles for justice. Our advocacy on Palestine reflected a clear and consistent position, human rights are universal and indivisible, and silence in the face of oppression cannot be an option.

Sakhile Zungu
Country Programme
Manager



THE 2025 OPERATING CONTEXT

In 2025, ActionAid South Africa (AASA) operated within a volatile national context defined by the duality of political renewal and deepening socio-economic fragility. While the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) offered a stabilizing influence on macro-economic policy, the year was characterized by an extended instability for the country's most marginalized. Record-high unemployment (reaching 33.2% in Q2) and a national poverty rate estimated at 68% created an environment of extreme hardship, particularly in the Eastern Cape, KZN, and Limpopo.

Our social justice work unfolded against this difficult backdrop. Severe winter floods in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal destroyed homes, roads, and crops, leaving families without shelter or income.

Women and children were especially affected, carrying the heaviest burden of displacement and food shortages. These disasters reminded us, in painful and practical ways, that climate injustice and economic injustice are inseparable.

Even in the midst of these challenges, 2025 was a year of determined action. By deepening collaborative partnerships with grassroots feminist movements and civil society coalitions, AASA was able to fast-track its mission, providing rapid humanitarian response while holding the new administration accountable to the promises of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. This report reflects a year of navigating crisis through collective resilience, striving to turn political transition into tangible rights-based outcomes.

Gender and Women Empowerment

2025 coincided with South Africa's G20 Presidency and the Beijing +30 review, placing a global spotlight on the country's gender policies. However, the reality on the ground remained grim, with 1 in 3 women having experienced physical violence in their lifetime. AASA's focus on the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF was critical as the government launched the National Council on GBVF. Programs in Gauteng and KZN had to navigate high rates of "economic abuse," where women were systemically excluded from financial decision-making, further trapping them in cycles of violence.

Poverty and Economic Justice

In 2025, over 10.8 million South Africans lived below the food poverty line. While inflation moderated to roughly 3.3%, the cost of the basic food basket remained high.

Climate Justice and the Humanitarian Situation

February and June 2025 saw devastating floods. In KZN, infrastructure collapse and mudslides caused billions in damages, whilst in the Eastern Cape, Mthatha faced a national state of disaster after rivers burst their banks.

Our Key Priorities



Promoting Women's rights and Gender Equality :

Address all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination through advocacy, partnerships, law reform, and awareness-raising.



Championing Leadership and Economic Empowerment :

Strengthen youth leadership through civic education, enterprise development, and digital organising.



Advancing Climate Justice and Resilience :

Advocate for climate policies that prioritise justice and sustainability for marginalised communities.



Strengthening Human Rights and Democratic Governance :

Advance civic participation, state accountability, and the protection of human rights defenders.

AASA'S FOOTPRINT IN 2025

Where we worked

[A map of South Africa highlighting the primary operational hubs where the 4,549 participants are located]



Gauteng: Gen G + YUWM + Global Platforms Climate Justice Campaign

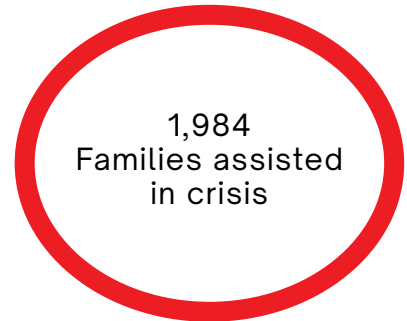
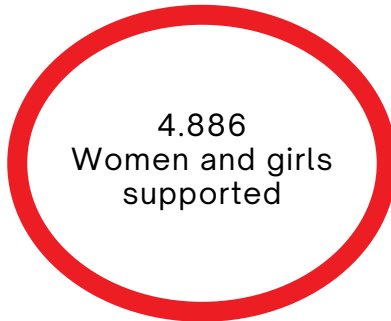
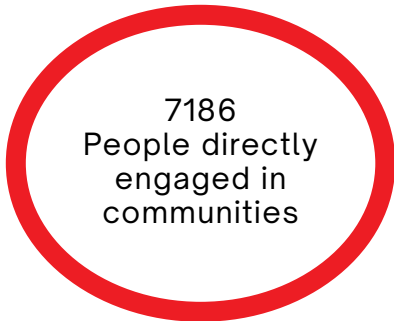
Eastern Cape: Gen G + DPP + Humanitarian Response

Limpopo: YUWM + Climate Just Transition for Mining-Affected Communities

Mpumalanga: Climate Just Transition for Mining-Affected Communities

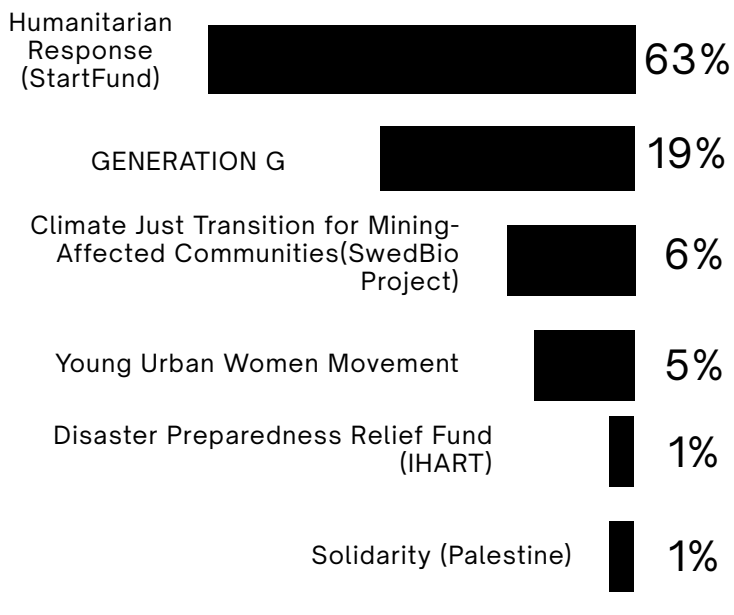
KwaZulu-Nata: Gen G + DPP

WHO WE REACHED

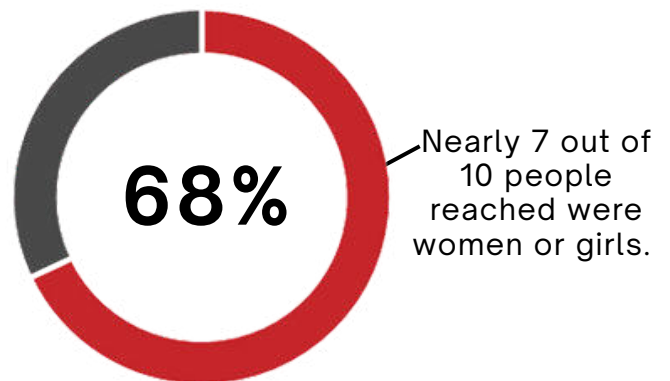


12 794 ONLINE REACH
POLICY CHANGED. DIGNITY PROTECTED. VOICES AMPLIFIED

Strategic Reach



Women & Girls at the Centre



Crisis Response: Acting Fast, Preserving Dignity

- **4549** people reached
- **1,984** families supported
- Family-level support reduced protection risks.

Beyond Numbers: Systematic Change

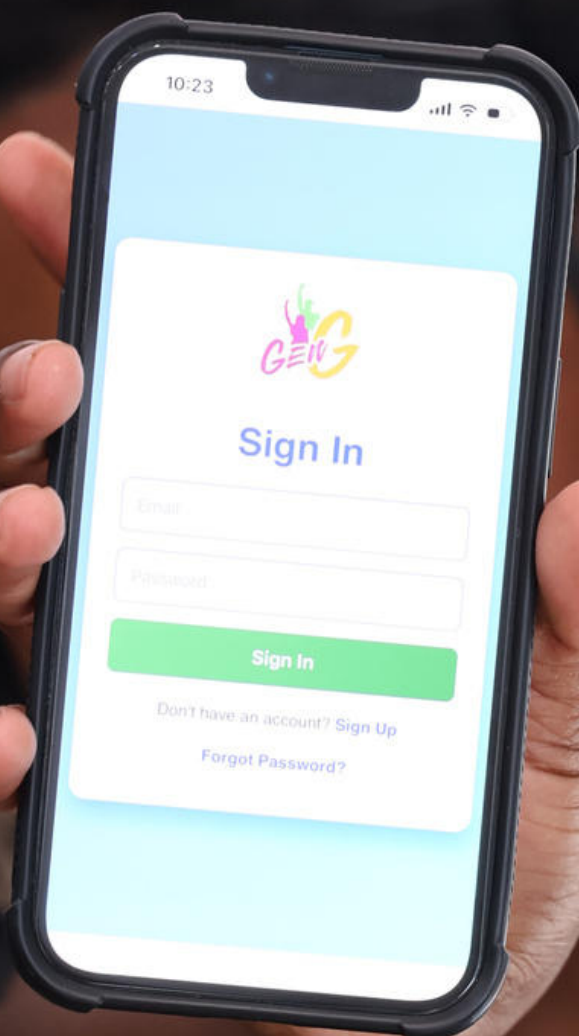
Policy influence: Parental leave was officially passed
Innovation: Launch of the GBV GenG Engage App

PROMOTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY

The Year of the "Gen G" Champion

In 2025, ActionAid South Africa, in collaboration with local partners, allies, and social movements, made significant strides in combating violence against women and girls. The Generation G South Africa coalition program reached a critical maturity point, successfully bridging the gap between grassroots activism and institutional policy. Operating across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape, the program empowered a new generation of "Gen G Champions" to challenge the systemic roots of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

Digital Access to Justice: The Gen G Engage App



A landmark achievement of the program in 2025 was the official launch of the Gen G Engage App. The app, designed as an access to justice tool, garnered significant interest, particularly for its case monitoring feature, which enables survivors of sexual and physical abuse to document their cases and fulfil legal requirements through guided prompts.

This ground-breaking digital tool provides:

- A guided case-monitoring feature that allows survivors to document abuse and fulfill legal requirements.
- A centralized reservoir of reporting guidelines, GBVF policy papers, and youth participation toolkits.
- A digital community platform that sustained activism even as the funded project phase concluded.

Additionally, there was robust engagement with GBVF advocacy practitioners during the Human Rights Festival held at Constitution Hill, many of whom expressed enthusiasm about incorporating the app into their work.

Civic Accountability: Audit to Action

Recognizing that GBVF cannot be solved without resources, we bridged the gap between activism and municipal governance.

IDP Training: In uMzumbhe and Mthatha, we addressed a critical knowledge gap where only 5% of participants initially understood Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). We successfully capacitated youth to advocate for GBV-specific budgeting in the 2025 consultation processes.

Social Audit Roadshows were also conducted in Orange Farm and Thembisa, resulting in a unified Memorandum of Demands presented to the National Assembly, calling for GBVF to be declared a National Disaster.

Gender Transformative Approaches

AASA conducted a series of intensive Gender Transformative Approaches workshops in Soweto, Durban, and Mthatha. The workshops targeting young professionals and activists, equipped them to adapt the six interrelated principles of GTA to local township and rural contexts to contribute to a more inclusive society. These sessions moved beyond basic awareness to tackle deep-seated power dynamics and intersectionality, exploring how race, class, and gender intersect in the daily lives of participants.

To accommodate the heavy emotional toll of gender justice work, the 2025 rollout integrated psychosocial support into all workshops. This essential safety net ensured a healing environment for

participants triggered by sensitive discussions. By adapting GTA to local township and rural contexts, AASA empowered youth and CSO leaders to drive sustainable, grassroots gender justice.

Traditional and community dialogues

We reached into the heart of conservative and volatile spaces to foster peace

The Royal Engagement

We convened a high-level joint engagement with the Nqadu Royal Kingdom, government stakeholders, and over 70 local youth. This dialogue was strategically designed to center traditional leaders as catalysts for change in the fight against GBV.

The engagement facilitated critical reflections on cultural practices that perpetuate violence while fostering commitment to gender equity within rural communities. By securing the Royal Household's pledge to support survivors and challenge harmful norms, the initiative successfully advanced community-based prevention strategies and bridged the gap between traditional governance and youth-led human rights advocacy.

Conflict Resolution

A violence prevention dialogue in rural Mvezo was convened to address rising social tensions. The initiative provided a safe platform for youth, survivors, and community leaders to identify the root

causes of local conflict through shared experiences. By fostering collaboration between community structures and traditional leadership, the dialogue established a foundation for locally driven strategies centered on healing, inclusion, and sustainable peacebuilding.

Menstrual Dignity & SRHR

In an impactful intersectional initiative at the Nelson Mandela Museum, ActionAid South Africa reached 104 learners through a programme linking Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) to the prevention of Gender-Based Violence. By highlighting the critical connection between period poverty and increased vulnerability to exploitation, the project addressed systemic barriers to dignity and safety. To practically support this, dignity packs were distributed to ensure learners could remain in school and maintain bodily autonomy, effectively fostering a

supportive environment that reduces stigma and empowers young people to assert their rights.

Independent Advocacy: The Marriage Bill

In a landmark achievement for youth-led advocacy, the Provincial Leadership Committee (PLC) independently hosted a webinar to analyze the Marriage Bill and its impact on the South African legal context. The session engaged legal experts on the development of a unified framework for civil, customary, and religious marriages, while highlighting critical concerns regarding child marriage and divorce inconsistencies that disadvantage women. While acknowledging the Bill's potential to promote equality in custody and maintenance, the PLC advocated for a stronger feminist lens to ensure the legislation effectively dismantles systemic gender disadvantages.



**CHAMPIONING
LEADERSHIP
AND ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT**

Shaping the Feminist Wellbeing Economy



In 2025, the Young Urban Women Movement stood as a defiant response to the intersecting crises of neoliberal austerity, climate change, and gendered inequality. Recognizing that urban spaces often privatize survival and exploit women's labor, YUW focused on building feminist economic literacy and civic agency among women aged 15–35.

The program bridged the gap between the high-level boardrooms of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the vibrant, informal streets of Johannesburg and Mamelodi. By linking global macroeconomic policies to the daily "time poverty" caused by unpaid care work and climate-induced service failures, we equipped young women to not only navigate the current system but to advocate for a Feminist Wellbeing Economy. This is a story of young women choosing solidarity over isolation and truth over silence, transforming from individual survivors of a fractured economy into collective architects of a just transition.

Economic Literacy, Global Systems and Grassroots Economic Engagement

The YUWM successfully demystified complex global financial structures through youth-led workshops on the IMF and World Bank, empowering young women to articulate how international policies like deregulation and reduced public spending exacerbate gendered poverty. This theoretical understanding was grounded through grassroots immersion, where participants engaged directly with women street vendors in Johannesburg to gain a first-hand, empathetic understanding of the innovation and resilience required to survive within the informal economy. By linking macroeconomic conditionalities to local hardships, the program transformed abstract concepts into actionable knowledge, fostering a deep sense of solidarity among urban women navigating systemic economic inequalities.

Civic and Political Literacy

The program successfully strengthened the political "muscle" of participants by blending digital mobilization with historical context and intersectional advocacy. Utilizing WhatsApp as an accessible virtual classroom, "Political Thursday" sessions allowed young women to engage with experts to build robust political manifestos and advocacy strategies. This theoretical learning was grounded by excursions to Constitution Hill and Freedom Park, which connected contemporary economic struggles to South Africa's history of rights and resistance. Furthermore, integrated LGBTQIA+ solidarity and allyship workshops ensured that the pursuit of economic justice remained truly intersectional, empowering participants to champion the visibility and rights of all marginalized identities within their communities.

Climate Justice and the Care Economy

The program pioneered the connection between environmental collapse and the "double burden" of domestic labor: Urban Climate & Care Workshops: Young women used storytelling

to map how water cuts and power outages increase their unpaid care load, generating "action posters" for community-level advocacy.

Sustainable Urban Practices: Through immersive visits to Victoria Yards and a solar-power enterprise, showcasing tangible urban agritech and green economy solutions. These excursions provided participants with practical exposure to climate justice, demonstrating how sustainable urban development can drive a just transition. By witnessing these models firsthand, young women were equipped to advocate for local initiatives that integrate environmental resilience with economic opportunity.

Practical Skills and Sustainable Livelihoods: Mamelodi Baking Training


In partnership with the Women in Action traders, the 3-day session covered critical topics such as the care economy, public financing, and the link between micro and macro-economics. Here, theory was met with practice through high-impact skills transfer. This dual-track approach equipped participants with tangible livelihood skills while deepening their understanding of systemic economic structures. The program's success earned recognition from government stakeholders, validating this model as an effective tool for both grassroots entrepreneurship and economic advocacy.

Impact and Future Outlook

The YUWM program served as a primary vehicle for systemic change, successfully strengthening feminist consciousness while equipping participants with the actionable strategies needed for sustainable livelihoods. By explicitly linking complex global economic systems to local realities, we have empowered young women to step into leadership roles, drive grassroots innovation, and actively contribute to a just and equitable future. This priority reflects our commitment to ensuring that empowerment is not merely theoretical, but a practical tool for building community resilience and dismantling the economic barriers that face young women across South Africa.

**ADVANCING
CLIMATE
JUSTICE AND
RESILIENCE**

The SwedBio Project: Climate Just Transition for Mining-Affected Communities



For decades, mining-affected communities across South Africa and Malawi have been "expert witnesses" to the destruction of their own environments, witnessing water pollution, land degradation, and broken social promises. However, their expertise was rarely invited to the decision-making table.

In 2025, the SwedBio-funded project successfully disrupted this cycle. By applying ActionAid's Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), we transformed "vulnerability" into "vocality." We moved beyond simply discussing mining impacts to equip communities in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KZN and Gauteng with the technical and political tools to navigate the Just Transition. This isn't just a story about environmentalism; it is a story of reclaiming power, ensuring that those who have historically paid the price for mining are the primary architects of a new, green, and fair future.

Before the project began, these mining-affected communities in South Africa were confronting a complex set of environmental, social, economic, and governance challenges. Although communities were fully aware of the impacts of mining on their land, water, livelihoods, and wellbeing, their concerns were often ignored by government departments and mining companies, leaving them without meaningful participation in decisions affecting their future.

The *Climate Just Transition for Mining-Affected Communities* project directly responded to these challenges by strengthening local organising, building community capacity on Just Transition, and equipping communities with the tools to advocate for themselves using ActionAid's Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).

Climate Justice & Rights Awareness Participatory dialogues were held in Ermelo, Bronkhorstspuit, Mokopane, Newcastle. These dialogues focused on mining impacts, climate change, and Just Transition principles, with special attention to women and youth.

The project successfully bridged the gap between high-level policy and grassroots reality by empowering 395 community members in mining hubs like Ermelo and

Mokopane to decode complex national transition frameworks through three strategic pillars:

- **Human Rights & Corporate Accountability:** We conducted UN Policy Workshops to educate communities on the UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights. The outcomes of the workshop included increased understanding of the treaty and strengthened advocacy strategies integrating human rights and gender responsiveness.
- **The Social Audit Advantage:** We facilitated Participatory Social Audits where communities designed their own questionnaires and mapped audit areas to assess mining companies' Social Labour Plans (SLPs). This created a body of credible, community-led data that was used to challenge corporate non-compliance.
- **Influencing the Presidential Climate Commission:** AASA ensured that the "Just Transition" wasn't just an abstract framework discussed in Pretoria. We linked community voices directly to national bodies, ensuring that decarbonization strategies reflect the lived realities of those in coal and mineral belts.

Addressing Gender Inequality and GBV in Mining Areas

Prior to the project, women in these mining-affected communities carried a disproportionate burden of systemic neglect, facing land loss, environmental insecurity, and a heightened risk of violence while being systematically excluded from decision-making processes. By linking mining-related environmental stress to economic insecurity and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the project ensured that Just Transition discussions are now gender-responsive, with women actively shaping community positions and challenging the deep-seated gendered inequalities inherent in the extractive sector. Participatory methods strengthened protective measures, improved knowledge of referral pathways, and fostered women's leadership and agency in governance.

While the project reached hundreds, several structural hurdles remain:

- Limited enforcement of regulations and weak policy implementation in the extractive sector continued to undermine accountability and community protection.
- Resource constraints restricted the ability to conduct continuous engagement, follow-up activities, and sustained community training.
- Knowledge gaps in mining-affected communities regarding sustainable livelihoods, green economy pathways, and climate-smart approaches limited the uptake of alternative opportunities.
- Frequent policy shifts, unclear energy transition frameworks, and limited public understanding of national mining, energy, and climate policies created confusion and slowed coordinated advocacy.
- Exclusion of women, youth, and other marginalised groups from key decision-making platforms, including bodies such as the Presidential Climate Commission, hindered inclusive policy development and prevented community voices from shaping the transition.
- Limited resources to maintain follow up effectively

Our work in 2025 has laid a robust foundation for the coming years. By linking practical community-led initiatives to national policy frameworks, AASA is ensuring that the **Just-Transition** is truly just, gender-responsive, and inclusive of those who have historically borne the highest cost of industrial mining. The SwedBio project has proven that when mining-affected communities are equipped with technical knowledge and rights-based tools, they cease to be passive bystanders of environmental decay and become active architects of their own future.

2025 Strategic Milestones

Regional Strength & Solidarity: We successfully mobilised hundreds of community members across South Africa's mining heartlands (Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KZN, and Gauteng) and Malawi (Balaka and Nkhotakota), fostering a cross-border solidarity movement between the two countries for corporate accountability.

Knowledge as Power: By demystifying "Green Economy" pathways and environmental justice, we empowered participants to transition from survivors of extraction to advocates for climate-smart livelihoods.

The Rise of Local Leadership: Women and youth emerged as recognised change agents, moving beyond participation to take on decisive leadership roles within peer networks and local governance structures.

Institutional Influence: We successfully bridged the gap between grassroots realities and state policy, ensuring community priorities were integrated into Local Development Plans and elevated to the Presidential Climate Commission.

**BUILDING
COMMUNITY
BASED
HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSES
AND DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS
PLANS**

In recent years, South Africa has become vulnerable to extreme weather events owing to an array of factors which are mostly related to the adverse effects of climate change. In 2023 and 2024 alone, 80 disasters were reported in South Africa which affected more than 22 million people and costed over 6.5 billion dollars. A 2025 study revealed that storms and floods were the most common disasters in South Africa, and this was highlighted by devastating floods in June 2025 in the Eastern Cape, Mthatha that cost the lives of over 100 people, displaced 6 869 households, and left 4 724 people homeless across the province and damaged 2 145 homes.

In 2025, AASA recognized that communities affected by disasters are not passive recipients of aid, but active agents of change with deep knowledge, resilience, and insight. In the face of climate injustice, inequality, and systemic neglect, our role was to stand beside those most impacted, co-creating futures where preparedness is power, and communities are the first responders and decision-makers in their own survival. We are intentional about designing responses that are trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and that uphold the dignity and safety of affected populations.



Our interventions included:

- local disaster adaptation, preparedness and response strategies
- development of community-based risk reduction strategies,
- mobilising of humanitarian resources and support.

Our project ensuring that disaster preparedness plans addressed the unique vulnerabilities of women, children, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, migrants, and those in informal settlements, focused on intersectionality and protection. We are intentional about designing responses that are trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and that uphold the dignity and safety of affected populations. In 2025, AASA was able to translate these action points into tangible interventions which comprised the following:

Global Start Fund

Humanitarian Response: Mthatha, Eastern Cape Floods

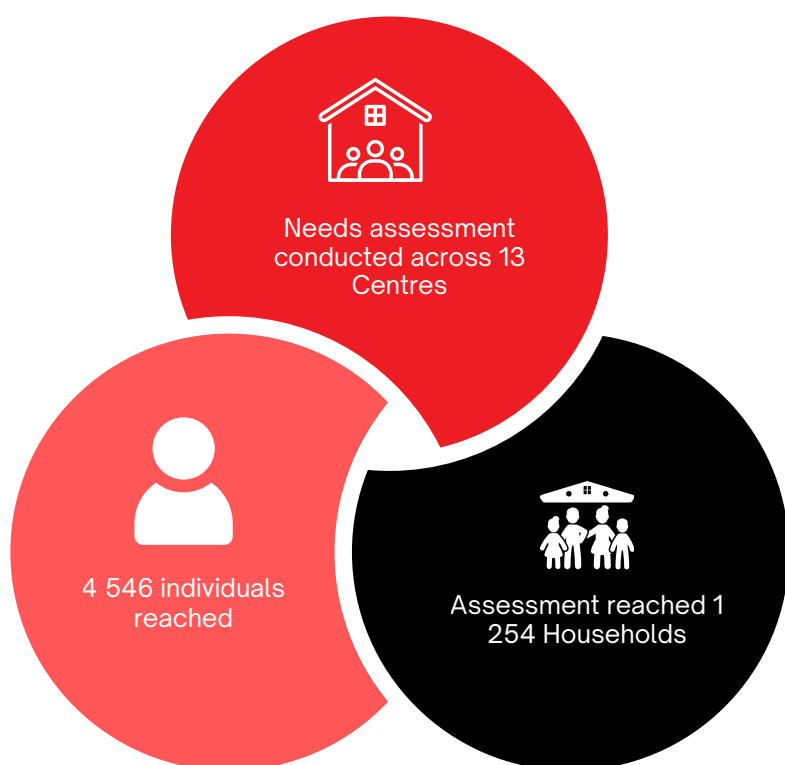
In July 2025, ActionAid South Africa, Oxfam South Africa (OZA), City Hope Disaster Relief (CH) and partners jointly led and coordinated the Mthatha Humanitarian Response action, which targeted 1200 households and was supported by the Global Start Fund (Start Fund). In collaboration with a joint Mthatha Response team, which included staff members from AASA, OZA, CH, Farmers Network South Africa, Ubuntu Restorations, and Masimanyane Rural Women was established.

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This team consisted of Humanitarian Leads from the 3 core partners AASA, OZA and City Hope. Other strategic units were also set up, from the Oversight Committee, Coordination team, MEAL, Comms, Logistics, Safeguarding, and Protection.

Humanitarian Needs Assessment Conducted by MEAL Team



Needs Assessment provided critical insights into the scale of the damage and the urgent needs of affected households, enabling partners to design a timely and evidence-based response.

Building on findings from the needs assessment partners jointly mobilized resources to respond as they implemented targeted interventions in WASH, provision of NFIs, school support, health, and protection.

Building on the findings of the needs assessment, partners jointly mobilized resources to respond as they implemented targeted interventions in WASH, provision of NFIs, school support, health, and protection.

Phases of response:

PHASE 1 – GBV prevention and psychosocial support to the flood victims.

PHASE 2 – 1 on 1 psychosocial support provided to the people in Mthatha

PHASE 3 - Joint coordination of logistics and procurement by the partners based on the priority items identified during the needs assessment.

**All the necessary WASH, NFIs, Food, education and health items needed were jointly sourced, transported, and warehoused at Ubuntu Restoration.

PHASE 4 – Distribution of NFI's, food parcels to 1254 Households, Uniform support to 800 children, Infant support to 200 children below 3 years, and WASH-related supplies to 1254 Households.

FINAL PHASE - Post-distribution evaluation with the Households that were reached during distribution to ensure accountability and community ownership

Through this sequence of activities, the project not only alleviated immediate suffering but also laid the foundation for advocacy and resilience building focused interventions in Mthatha. The formidable partnerships and direct engagements with the OR Tambo District municipality also ensured that there was government buy in and support for the relief efforts. By centering the response on evidence gathered directly from affected communities, partners were able to ensure that humanitarian support rendered was relevant, inclusive and timely. Through this multi-sector multi partner collaboration in the EC Response action, AASA, OZA, CH and their local partners created pathways for longer-term recovery planning and disaster preparedness.



IHART Disaster Response Fund

Disaster Preparedness Training: Johannesburg

In September 2025, ActionAid South Africa hosted a group of young South African humanitarians for the Disaster Preparedness Training supported by the IHART team of ActionAid International as part of enabling AASA to develop community based disaster preparedness plans. The initial idea was for South African organizations to receive this training to be prepared to respond to any future disasters taking place in South Africa, prompted by a disaster response led by ActionAid South Africa in KwaZulu Natal in 2024. However, this plan was overtaken by reality when the Eastern Cape region was affected by floods in June 2025.

Therefore, a team of ActionAid South Africa, Oxfam South Africa and City Hope Disaster Relief joined forces with the local organizations to expand the disaster relief in the area, supported by the global Start Fund. Just a few weeks after the finalization of this joint response, the six organizations reunited in Johannesburg for the Disaster Preparedness Training. Even though this training was meant to take place before an actual joint emergency response, the timing of the training proved to be perfect for the humanitarians to have a space to reflect on the intensive work in Mthatha,

share stories and emotions and connect the learning materials to real-life experiences. In a 5 day-journey, the group delved into topics like the humanitarian program cycle, finding funding for disaster readiness, psychosocial support, legal issues and holding governments accountable, building humanitarian networks, risk assessment, intersectional feminism in humanitarian work and looking after the wellbeing of humanitarian workers. On the last 2 days, the participants received a hands-on first aid training. During the training, IHART provided the group with a lot of information and materials on different topics related to building disaster preparedness. But this was not the most important part of the training. Above all, the training was about sharing, learning and adopting and how humanitarians can continue to do this in the often-hectic realities of disaster response.

At the end of the training, it was agreed that the next phase of this project was to revisit the affected local communities in KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape, with the goal of developing community based disaster preparedness plans to better prepare communities for future disasters.



Community Based Disaster Preparedness Plans: KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape

South Africa's Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) and Eastern Cape (EC) provinces have borne the brunt of and have suffered from the region's storm systems in the last few years. In 2024, a tornado struck the KZN province leading to loss of lives, injuries, displacement of thousands of families, destruction of homes and infrastructure. This resulted in a national disaster declaration that paved way for multi-sectoral intervention involving partners including Action Aid South Africa (AASA), City Hope and some government departments. Recently floods in Mthatha in June 2025, highlighted the lack of a well-coordinated community-based disaster preparedness plan and it was from this point of view that AASA began plans towards this process.

In conducting disaster response in South Africa, AASA realised a strong need for improved and systematic disaster preparedness and planning for better and coordinated response with the following key objectives.

- To establish operational guidelines for disaster preparedness, rapid response,

and community-led recovery, while ensuring alignment with national laws, the AASA Strategic Vision, and the Global Strategy Implementation Framework 3.

- To empower women and youth from vulnerable communities to better participate in humanitarian disaster preparedness, response, and recovery mechanisms.
- To improve resilience of communities in disaster prone areas and minimize loss of lives, livelihoods, health, and assets

AASA then kickstarted this process by conducting reflection sessions with 100 (women) and 100 (youth) from local communities in KZN and EC that revealed serious gaps in community engagement as part of disaster preparedness and response. Our assessments showed that disasters left AASA's programmes participants (women and youths) more vulnerable and exposed, prompting AASA to seek to involve communities in disaster preparedness and response initiatives for a more informed approach.



The CBDP plans speak to AASA's programme of action that identifies climate crisis (which brings droughts, floods and snowfalls) as one of the transformational complexities of the Country Strategic Programme (CSP) – 2025-2028. Emergency preparedness is one of the important pillars of AASA's country strategic focus, under strategic pillar 1 – (Advancing Climate Justice and Resilience), where AASA commits "AASA will support early warning systems, emergency response and long-term resilience programming rooted in community agency and environmental justice".

The CBDP plans also validate the CSP Theory of Change and its commitment to shift power to those affected by injustice, through developing community-driven disaster preparedness plans that seek to empower women and other vulnerable groups which are being left behind.

The CBDP plans identify community-driven strategies that can be employed, including community education and awareness raising, The CBDP plans identify community-driven strategies that can be employed, including community education and awareness raising, The CBDP plans identify community-driven strategies that can be employed, including

community education and awareness raising, strengthening early warning mechanisms as well as risk monitoring.

Focusing primarily on two provinces that have experienced the most disasters, KZN and Eastern Cape; the plan defines search, rescue and evacuation strategies for affected communities, while helping to strengthen coordination amongst humanitarian actors through spelling out entry point for each actor according to their areas of speciality and comparative advantage. It also harnesses efforts of different actors – government departments, CSOs and fellow NGOs in multi-sectoral response initiatives for communities.

The plans fulfil the work of AA at a global scale as the ActionAid Emergency Preparedness and Response handbook concurs that emergencies are a strategic priority for ActionAid (AA), therefore they need to be well planned to effectively protect the communities that AA serves and preserve the gains of AA community initiatives. As a result, the CBDP plans that we have developed serve as a vehicle to sufficiently empower women and other vulnerable groups as they are disproportionately affected in the event of emergencies.

THE GLOBAL PLATFORMS PROJECT: CLIMATE JUSTICE PROGRAMME

The Global Platforms South Africa project, focused on empowering young urban women, LGBTQIA+ youth, and persons with disabilities to critically engage with issues of climate justice, gender equality, and social accountability within their communities.



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The project successfully utilized an intersectional approach to link environmental stressors (flooding, water scarcity, waste management) to systemic social injustices:

- **Feminist Political Education:** Participants developed a deep understanding of structural inequality, connecting climate change to gender-based violence (GBV) and unpaid care work.
- **Civic Action:** Facilitated community awareness walks, dialogues, and digital storytelling that empowered participants to demand accountability from local authorities.
- **Leadership & Solidarity:** Created inclusive spaces that elevated the leadership of those traditionally excluded from decision-making, transforming them into confident civic actors.

While participants remained engaged in the project, their experiences highlighted how discrimination and poor infrastructure create unique barriers to safety and mobility.

These findings underscore the urgent need for inclusive, intersectional climate justice initiatives that address these specific urban realities.

- **Environmental Justice Community Dialogue in Mamelodi** was structured to explicitly connect waste management and environmental neglect to safety, gender-based violence, and social accountability, reflecting concerns raised during earlier workshops in Mamelodi.
- **LGBTQIA+ Awareness Walk in Orange Farm** was designed as both a visibility and advocacy intervention in response to the expressed need for queer-inclusive climate justice action and safe participation in public spaces.

A standout success story from the project took place during the Environmental Justice Community Dialogue in Mamelodi, held as part of the 16 Days of Activism period. This dialogue brought together over 100 participants, including youth, elders, School Governing Body members, civil society representatives, and local government officials,



creating a rare and powerful space for intergenerational and multi-stakeholder engagement. A tangible outcome of this engagement was the community's commitment to launch a schools clean-up campaign, working in partnership with local authorities, including municipal waste management services, to provide waste disposal bins to selected schools in Mamelodi. This initiative was identified as a starting point to address the environmental pollution that overwhelms the community.

The project responded by creating safe, affirming, and inclusive spaces for young urban women, LGBTQIA+ youth, and persons with disabilities to share and analyse the ways in which climate stressors, inadequate service delivery, and social exclusion affect their daily lives. By integrating community-based social audits, advocacy, and digital mobilization, the initiative empowered marginalized youth to hold duty-bearers accountable and drive gender-responsive climate action within their communities.

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

STANDING AGAINST GENOCIDE: SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE



In October 2025, ActionAid South Africa (AASA) reaffirmed its commitment to internationalism and human rights by leading a National Day of Action in solidarity with the people of Palestine. Amidst a deepening humanitarian catastrophe and escalating violations of international law, AASA mobilized a diverse coalition to demand accountability and justice.

More than 80 participants, including faith leaders, artists, poets, students, and human rights activists, marched from George Lea Park to the US Consulate in Sandton. This peaceful demonstration served as a powerful local echo of a global demand for a permanent ceasefire and the protection of civilian life.

The demonstration demanded a call for accountability through the ICJ, the urgent

restoration of humanitarian access, and the amplifying of global voices to end the crisis.

- The march spotlighted South Africa's landmark case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), reinforcing the demand for global accountability for atrocity crimes.
- Demonstrators called for an immediate end to the blockade of Gaza, where civilian infrastructure has been systematically destroyed.
- By channeling frontline reports from Jamil Sawalmeh, Country Director of ActionAid Palestine, AASA provided the South African public with a direct window into the humanitarian catastrophe, echoing his urgent calls for an end to the 'live-streamed genocide' and the immediate delivery of aid."



While the global struggle continues, this mobilization successfully achieved strengthened solidarity networks, public awareness and support for global response. To date, ActionAid and its partners have reached over 457,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank with essential food, shelter, and WASH services which is a mission supported by the advocacy efforts of national offices like AASA.

"We invite all people of conscience to stand with the people of Gaza and to call for an end to the suffering and a future rooted in justice and peace for all."

CASE STUDY

Case studies detailing stories of change showing impact on the ground

- Story 4 from the “How the Finance Flows” report:



Community meeting in Mbababe village, Kwazulu Natal, South Africa
CREDIT: Lucky Tshabalala/ ActionAid South Africa

JUST TRANSITION DIALOGUES IN SOUTH AFRICAN MINING COMMUNITIES

Coal dominates South Africa's energy landscape, and its extraction has been a major source of employment in the country for decades. As South Africa explores ways to reduce its reliance on coal in recognition of the climate crisis, the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) released a Just Transition Framework in 2022. The Framework seeks to empower workers and communities in planning, ensure fairness in distributing the risks and opportunities across society, and to address harm that has been historically imposed on workers, communities and land as a result of coal mining.⁵¹

This commendable vision is still in its early stages. Challenges to implementation have included funding gaps, conflicting agendas (including of powerful private interests), inconsistent policy support for renewable energy alternatives, insufficient coordination between national and subnational government processes, as well as efforts by different actors to narrow the scope of just transition to a purely decarbonisation agenda without social justice dimensions.⁵²

With community participation recognised as a key foundation of just transition, ActionAid South Africa initiated a series of community dialogues with women and youth in the coal mining areas of Ermelo and Secunda (Mpumalanga region), Bronkhortspruit (Gauteng), Mokopane (Limpopo) and Newcastle (Kwazulu-Natal). The dialogues created a powerful space for communities to document their lived experiences in mining-affected areas, to identify and challenge the power structures that have marginalised vulnerable groups, to identify recommendations for inclusive climate and energy policies, and to empower women and youth to raise their voices to shape just transition outcomes.

The dialogues have exposed a consistent history of environmental harm from coal mining that has degraded land and prevented farming livelihoods across the country. In Ermelo, many coal mining



MEDIA HIGHLIGHT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACTIONAID SOUTH AFRICA

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE, PEOPLE-CENTRED ASSISTANCE

ACTIONAID SOUTH AFRICA, a human rights-based entity, views the issues of gender justice, good governance and the eradication of poverty as the keys to building a more equal society



Guided by feminist analysis and a human rights-based approach, ActionAid South Africa (AASA) is a nationally registered civil society organisation that works with people living in poverty and exclusion to build sustainable, people-centred and just alternatives to injustice and inequality. It is a part of the ActionAid International Federation.

Sakhile Zungu, interim country programme manager at AASA, says the organisation integrates water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) into its work by focusing on women's and girls' rights to water and sanitation. It also addresses infrastructure issues, advocates for increased government investment in WASH, and works with communities to implement sustainable solutions to poverty and injustice.

"A good example is the efforts undertaken in the OR Tambo District Municipality in the Eastern Cape, which experienced heavy flooding in June. The rains caused extensive damage to households, infrastructure and properties. We initiated a humanitarian response, partnering with local organisations in uMthatha, as well as City Hope, Oxfam SA, uBuntu Restoration and the Farmers Network SA, to collaborate and provide a positive intervention," he says.

"AASA and its partners supported the affected population through the provision of WASH goods, nonfood items (NFI), and food security, among others. We delivered food parcels and health and sanitary kits to over 1 200 vulnerable households. In addition, we offered psychosocial support – in the form of group therapy and one-on-one counselling sessions for survivors – and gender-based violence (GBV) training."

Zungu explains that these services were delivered across the 13 centres housing the displaced and included food parcels containing the basic food requirements for an entire family, as well as NFIs, including building materials, stoves, cots, dishes and blankets – critical elements needed to restart their lives.

"Additional support was in the form of infant packs, specifically for those with newborns, including diapers and baby clothing, and some 800 school uniforms, books and stationery for the displaced children.

"In crises like these, there is often an increase in GBV because of the stressful situation. We provided GBV training on spaces where victims can be safe, how to reach out for help and how to relate to one another in an environment where everyone is cramped together and tempers can easily reach boiling point."

The organisation further ensured mobile kitchens were provided in some of the centres, which, as community halls, were not designed to care for the displaced. Oxfam SA supplied JoJo tanks for water storage so everyone had access to safe, potable water.

"At AASA, we approach situations like these from a place of mutual respect, understanding and care. For us, it is about more than merely providing support. It is equally about ensuring that survivors are treated as human beings," he comments.

"This is why we speak to their physical, emotional and mental health needs. Anyone who went through what these communities did would experience psychological trauma. For us, it is about delivering mental healthcare support, wrapped up in simple and basic humanity." The organisation currently provides this and many other types of support in six of the country's nine provinces.

"Other focuses include advancing climate resilience, prioritising the inclusion of marginalised communities in the green transition, strengthening women's rights and gender equality, advocating for law reform and championing youth economic empowerment and leadership.

"We identify as a human rights-based entity, viewing the issues of gender justice, good governance and the eradication of poverty as the keys to building a more equal society and fighting the existing systems of injustice. We do this by working at the grassroots level and partnering with underprivileged communities, rather than simply viewing them as beneficiaries," concludes Zungu. ●

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty.



SCAN THIS QR CODE TO GO TO THE ACTIONAID SOUTH AFRICA WEBSITE

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ACTIONAID SA NPC

(Registration number 2003/021235/10)

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	3	1	1
Current Assets			
Trade and other receivables	4	6 706 670	8 760 870
Cash and cash equivalents	5	316 920	2 982 377
		7 023 590	11 743 247
Total Assets		7 023 591	11 743 248
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		5 980 241	9 219 355
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	905 783	2 405 029
Provisions	6	137 567	118 864
		1 043 350	2 523 893
Total Equity and Liabilities		7 023 591	11 743 248

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023
Donations and grants received	8	23 065 321	12 965 188
Other income		-	93 269
Operating expenses	9	(26 208 255)	(10 116 433)
Operating (Deficit) Surplus		(3 142 934)	2 942 024
Interest expense		(96 180)	-
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year		(3 239 114)	2 942 024



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