

2023

# Impact Report



LEMONAID<sup>+</sup>  
ChariTea<sup>+</sup>  
Foundation

Since its establishment, the Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation has already supported more than 82 projects in 9 countries.

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# Foreword.

*As we reflect on a year filled with both challenges and successes, the resilience and dedication of our partner organizations have once again been prominently displayed. From global conflicts to establishing new partnerships in Madagascar and Mexico, this year has highlighted the dynamic and enduring spirit of our collaborators.*




Year after year, I find myself searching for the right words to introduce the diverse content of this Impact Report. Yet, my words often seem too modest for the array of events, milestones, and impressions that accumulate over a year. The world is complex and navigating it isn't getting any easier – not for us, and not for the many wonderful organizations we work with. Currency fluctuations due to global conflicts, supply chain issues, extreme weather events, political unrest – there has been a lot to deal with, yet this report is filled with beautiful stories, examples, and testimonies: testimonies of resilience, perseverance, and commitment to the mission that each of our projects consistently demonstrates.

This summer, we had the honor of hosting an event in Hamburg with Jean Bizimana, our friend and photographer from Rwanda. We were joined by Jean and two German photographers to discuss imagery and storytelling – a wonderful event that reminded us of the impressive individuals we are privileged to work with. Notably, this year, we held a call for applications from Madagascar, allowing us the fortune to meet incredibly engaging new organizations. However, the highlight was my two-week trip to Madagascar in August. Venturing into a new project country is never easy, but it is always thrilling, and Madagascar was just that: thrilling. The island, known to many only from songs, movies, or stories, is a unique blend of endemic

flora and fauna, intriguing historical events, and incredible diversity.

This visit resulted in a new project partnership with the organization CforC (Capacity Building for Communities), and we look forward to future partnerships with other organizations. At the end of the year, we embarked on a project trip in Mexico, visiting existing project partnerships and nurturing relationships – this remains the most rewarding part of our work.

Enjoy reading this report,

  
Aileen

# Our vision.

*We support local projects that contribute to the improvement of social, economic and ecological structures – in parts of the world that are often disadvantaged in the global economy.*



**Picture description:** Vulencobo Bayinethe, a participant in the Bulungula Incubator project in South Africa, stands in his cultivated field.

## *The Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation.*

The Foundation supports NGOs and civil society organisations in various countries in the Global South.

We firmly believe that good entrepreneurial ideas exist all over the world, however a lack of access to resources often limits their successful implementation. Our aim is to contribute to a system that gives all people the opportunity to be entrepreneurial, economically integrated, and thus generate independent income.

With our approach, we want to show solidarity with people in the regions that are most affected by the negative effects of globalisation.

## *Our Vision.*

Everyone has access to independent, self-determined and sustainable livelihoods.

## *Our Mission.*

As the Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation, we support entrepreneurial and income-generating initiatives in regions that currently do not have fair access to the global economic system. We work with local organizations that implement projects for positive change and economic independence in their communities.

## *Our Values.*

**Power critical:** In everything we do, we contemplate the global power structures within which we operate. Remaining conscious of these significant disparities in power and opportunities is an ongoing imperative. It can sometimes hurt to acknowledge and reflect upon one's own privileges – and even more so to renounce them when necessary. Given our location in the Global North and engagement in the Global South, we refuse to accept that global power relations cannot be changed.

**Active:** From our inception, our motivation has been to inspire others to take action. We see ourselves as catalysts, addressing societal questions, increasing awareness about them, and ultimately aspiring to create change.

**Co-Creative:** Effecting change requires a large, collective commitment, and thus we drive transformations in collaboration with our partners.

*In an attempt to rethink development cooperation, we base our relationship on trust and on the following principle: Our local partners know best what they need to solve the local (even if globally caused) problems they are faced with.*

**Optimistic & passionate:** Our work is infused with passion, drive and unwavering optimism.

# Our focus.

*We firmly believe that good business ideas exist all over the world, but their implementation is often prevented by a lack of access to resources. We want to change that.*



**A**ll people should have the opportunity to be entrepreneurial and to generate an income for themselves. We do not believe in one-size-fits-all solutions. Rather, we truly believe that local NGOs can best assess how positive change can be achieved in their communities.

Our approach is therefore based on the promotion of regional projects carried out by local partner organisations, with the aim of strengthening their resources. Against this backdrop and based on the experience of project work in recent years, we have identified some main subject areas:

## *Our subject areas.*

Our project funding focuses on the following defined, interconnected areas: Education, access to finance, value chains and advocacy. In addition, our overlapping topics include the involvement of marginalized communities, gender equality and innovation. The climate and sustainable use of finite resources assume a vital role within our projects, without losing focus on entrepreneurship as the core of our work. These topics represent the current status of the projects funded so far and may of course change in the future.

### **VALUE CHAINS**

Growth, as we know it, tends to be exclusive and of little benefit to a large part of the population. Therefore, the aim of this area is to provide access to value creation and value chains for those often at the end of these global processes.

### **EDUCATION**

Many of our projects aim to educate people in a variety of ways on different topics. They contribute to inclusive, fair and high-quality education that enables people to make their own decisions and to understand the effects of their actions on their environment.

### **ADVOCACY<sup>1</sup>**

Campaigning for a fringe group or a specific topic is necessary to potentially generate more support or funding, or to draw attention to an underfunded topic. Furthermore, advocacy work can be a necessary activity alongside the direct implementation of projects in order to ensure their success at a systematic level.

### **ACCESS TO FINANCE**

The term 'access to finance' aims at opening bank accounts for groups that are not yet part of the official financial market or creating the opportunity for them to open an account. This constitutes

one of the most important prerequisites for entrepreneurial activity, which subsequently has a major social impact on the surrounding society.

## *Overlapping themes.*

Overlapping themes are issues that we believe need to be addressed in order to make an integrated contribution to a fairer world. These do not necessarily have to be the only focus of a project, but can be tackled holistically and are linked to most topics.

### **GENDER**

We support projects that address structural gender inequalities.

### **MARGINALIZED PERSONS**

This area refers to projects aimed at groups who have been excluded from development initiatives in the past, such as indigenous groups or people with disabilities.

### **INNOVATION**

Innovation is the key to entrepreneurship. Projects that focus on a pilot project or try out new ideas, but also those that pass on previously obtained insights and share their knowledge – including knowledge gained through failure – are deemed innovative.

### **CLIMATE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Increasing the resilience of communities and regions to climate shocks, as well as promoting sustainable resource management are key issues when tackling the current global climate crisis and preserving future quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> Advocacy refers to public influence on policy-making on behalf of a collective interest.

# Impact.

*Since the Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation was founded in 2011, we have supported 38 local organizations and a total of 82 projects in nine countries.*

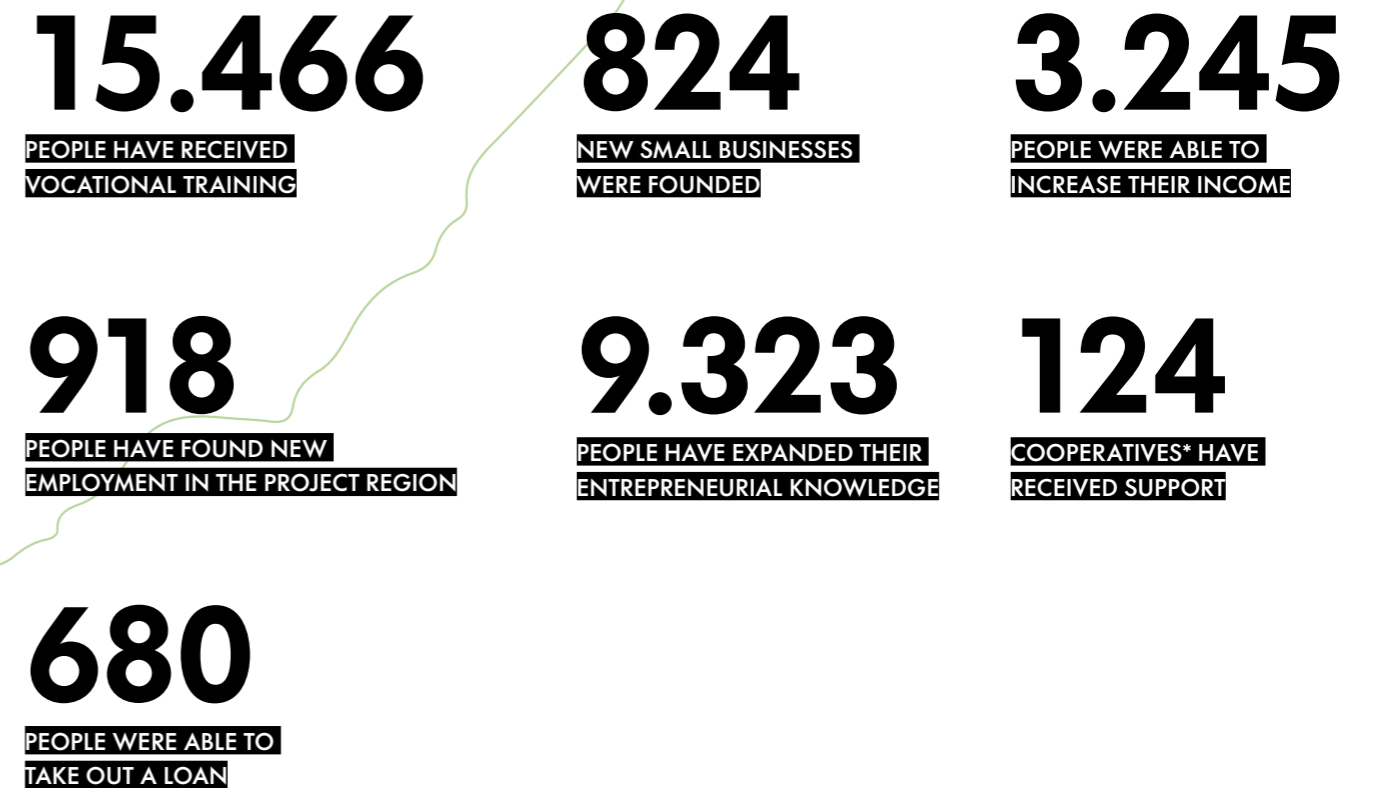


**Picture description:** Clement Munyadekwe is a member of the ceramic cooperative “Inkogoto Pottery Centre”, which was set up by the organization AIMPO in Kigali, Rwanda.

## OUR PROJECTS 2023 BY SUBJECT AREA:



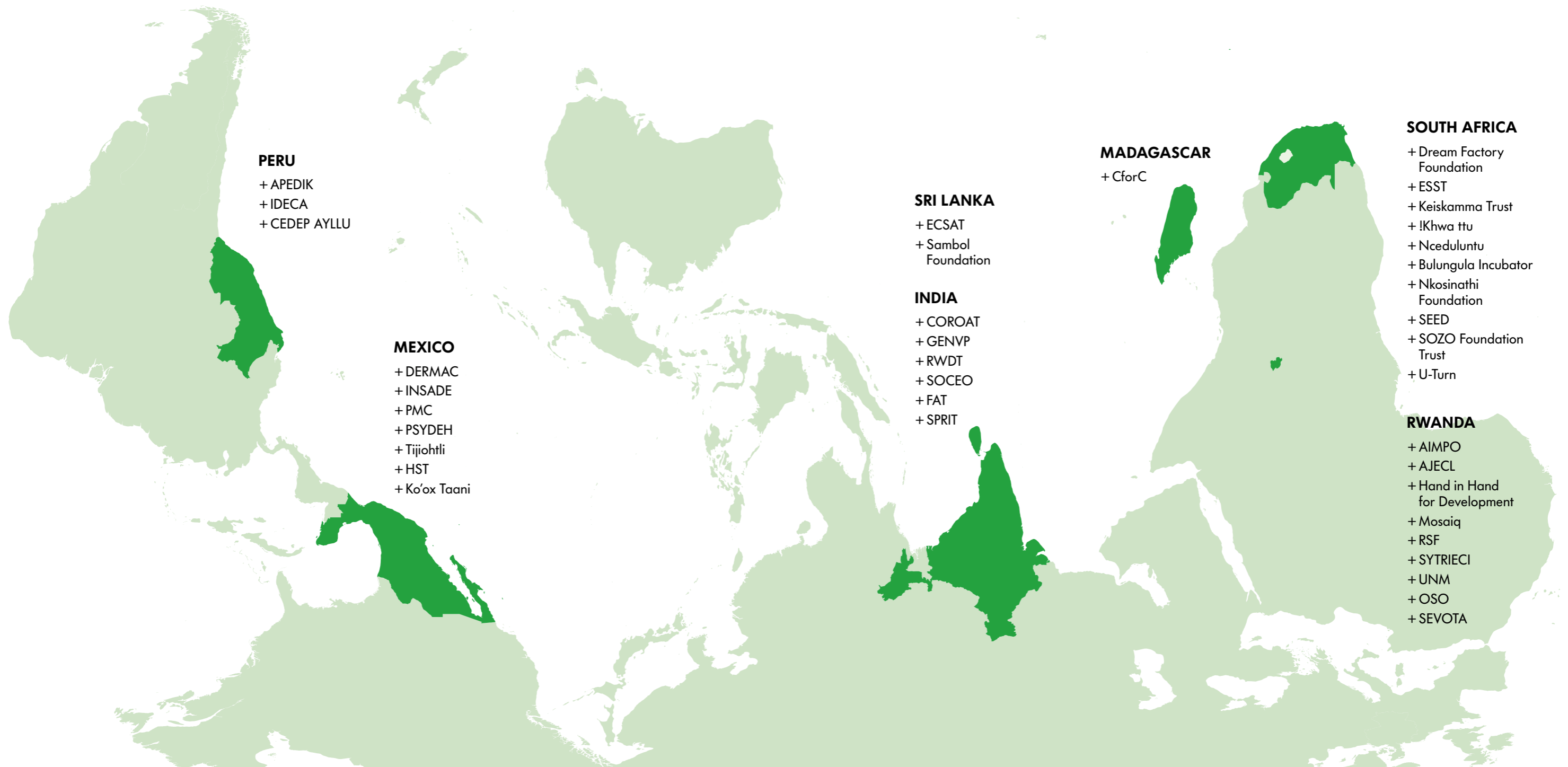
## SO FAR, OUR 38 LOCAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING:



\* A form of enterprise in which individuals unite to collectively pursue their economic, social and cultural interests. In the case of our project partners, this involves, for example, the joint procurement or processing of (raw) materials.

# Our project countries.

*Many of the world maps we are familiar with, especially the widespread “Mercator Projection”, usually focus attention on the Global North. In addition, the depictions of the continents do not accurately reflect their real size. This representation is a modified “Behrmann Projection”, which attempts to depict our three-dimensional world two-dimensionally and accurately in terms of surface area proportions.*



# Our project partners.

*The projects we support, regardless of their location, all share one goal: to sustainably improve the living conditions of local people. Here you can find an overview of all project funding from 2023 at a glance.*

*Our projects are numerous and highly diverse. To showcase the outstanding work of our partner organizations, we have selected a few exemplary projects to present on the following pages.*

	PROJECT PARTNERS	FUNDING AMOUNT 2023
<b>LATIN AMERICA</b>		<b>368,817.92 €</b>
Mexico	DERMAC – Cocoa value creation and entrepreneurship promotion	54,413.63 €
237,328.98 €	INSADE – Entrepreneurial independence for women on probation	25,729.97 €
	PMC – New generations in coffee and honey production	27,707.08 €
	PSYDEH – Network and Establishment of Cooperatives for Indigenous Women	19,446.82 €
	Tijiohtli – Support of indigenous young people	53,571.55 €
	HST – Pumpkin seed and chili production to strengthen Mayan communities	24,564.37 €
	Ko'ox Taani – Poverty reduction for women and their families in Yucatán	31,895.56 €
Peru	APEDIK – Financial independence for women	39,272.42 €
131,488.94 €	CEDEP AYLLU – Strengthening indigenous farmers' entrepreneurship	50,948.76 €
	IDECA – An Andean pharmacy for and by indigenous communities	41,267.76 €

	PROJECT PARTNERS	FUNDING AMOUNT 2023	
<b>ASIA</b>		<b>230,687.96 €</b>	
India	COROAT – Improving the living conditions of trans people	47,151.06 €	
187,300.50 €	GENVP – Candle making for economic participation	35,192.13 €	
	SOCEO – Promotion of women in Darjeeling	10,764.00 €	
	RWDT – Entrepreneurship with coconut fibre products	26,790.60 €	
	FAT – Overcoming the gender gap through technical skills development	43,235.55 €	
	SPRIT – Inclusion of marginalized communities through food innovations	24,167.16 €	
	Sri Lanka	ECSAT – Training for people with disabilities	9,529.46 €
43,387.46 €	Sambol Foundation – A safe place for women	33,858.00 €	
<b>AFRICA</b>		<b>601,747.52 €</b>	
Rwanda	AIMPO – Training centre for and production of ceramics	75,745.65 €	
338,873.74 €	AJECL – Support for cooperatives	53,132.53 €	
	HIHD – Initiative for autonomy	14,769.14 €	
	Mosaiq – Vertical mushroom cultivation in Rwanda	25,209.32 €	
	RSF – Women's loan programme	37,829.31 €	
	SYTRIECI – Improved living conditions for street vendors	24,380.75 €	
	UNM – Agricultural entrepreneurship	47,435.84 €	
	OSO – Promotion of girls as entrepreneurial leaders	41,156.66 €	
	SEVOTA – Empowerment of young people for economic participation	19,214.54 €	
	South Africa	Dream Factory Foundation – Digital Education Programme	32,176.44 €
	262,873.78 €	ESST – Financial empowerment of youth and women	30,137.24 €
Keiskamma Trust – Keiskamma Art Project		31,475.60 €	
!Khwa ttu – Sustainable agriculture protects traditional ways of life		26,876.27 €	
Nceduluntu – Project Incubator		12,845.27 €	
Nkosinathi Foundation – Sewing for mothers of blind children		24,860.86 €	
SEED – Future prospects in green agriculture		20,403.75 €	
SOZO – A start-up centre for young people		40,519.13 €	
	U-Turn – Rehabilitation of homeless people through gardening	43,579.22 €	



**Region:** Yucatán, Mexico

**Project:** Financial inclusion, strengthening the resilience and market participation of women to overcome poverty

**Focus areas:** Access to finance & Education

**Funding period:** 2023–2026

**Funding amount:** 148,515 €

# KO`OX TAANI.

*The Mexican organization Ko'ox Taani champions self-managed social processes to enhance the quality of life for families living in extreme poverty within the indigenous regions of Yucatán. Among its various initiatives, it promotes the formation of savings groups.*

**The project, supported by Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation, aims to alleviate extreme poverty for 110 women and their families in eastern Yucatán. In addition to supporting savings groups, income-generating activities are encouraged, particularly those connected to local or regional value chains.**

The first phase of the three-year program establishes the aforementioned savings groups. The women involved typically meet every two weeks. In the first year, they and their families also receive practical and financial assistance to establish vegetable and fruit gardens, bolstering their food security.

From the second year, the groups are educated in business-related subjects and supported through socio-educational processes aimed at enhancing self-esteem, empowerment, participation, and leadership qualities. This includes expanding their knowledge on women's rights, nutrition, and agroecology in the context of climate change. They are also encouraged to plan income-generating projects that align with their personal interests and take into account the compatibility of family life, childcare, and employment.

In the third year, the women receive seed funding to start small businesses or undertake independent work activities. Since its inception eight years ago, Ko'ox Taani's approach has demonstrated a high success rate. We are delighted to support the continuation and expansion of the project until mid-2026.

Women from various savings groups have shared their aspirations with us for what they would like to purchase with their savings:



“I want to buy a kitchen for my family; we currently borrow cooking utensils.”  
– Brígida Diadely Pech Uan



“With my savings, I aim to provide a better future for my children.”  
– Libia Rosalba Poot Uan



“My desire is for my daughters to have a good home where they can grow up happily.”  
– Yendi Yeseli Poot Pech



“I wish to save to start a small business so my family can have a happy life.”  
– Fátima del Rosario Ek Ucan



“I love makeup. I would like to buy a cell phone to watch tutorials so I can improve my makeup skills for others.”  
– Grendi Georgina Uan Balam



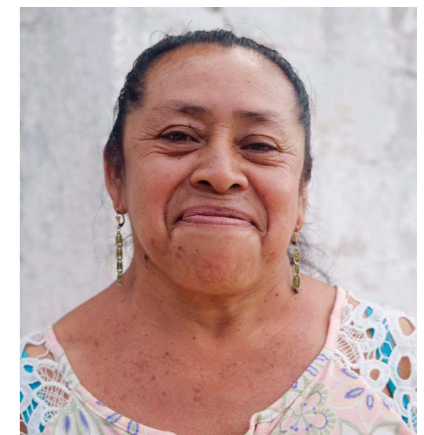
“I plan to buy some slats for the roof of my house to give my family a better life.”  
– Dalia Judith Euan Tuz



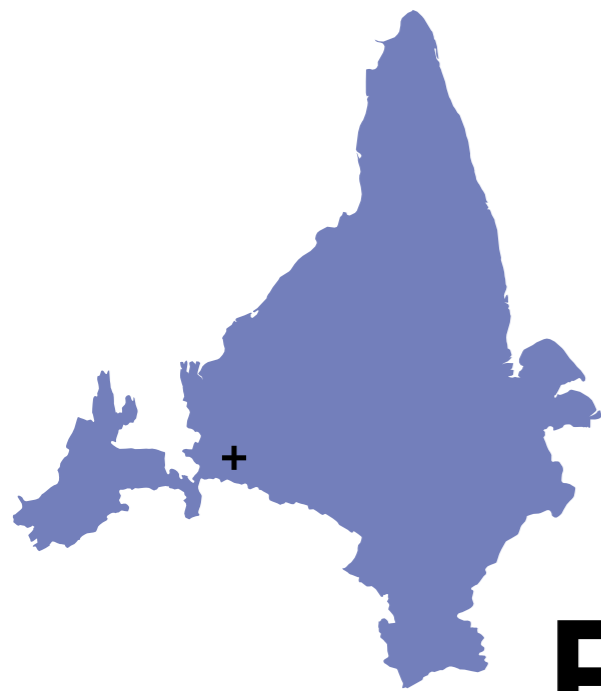
“I want to spruce up our house and hope that my son can achieve all his dreams.”  
– María Concepción Naa Canul



“I want to save enough money to be able to install flooring in my house.”  
– Nancy Poot Pech



“I would like to buy doors for my house. And if I save enough, build a house for my four children.”  
– Rosa María Uan Ek



# FAT.

**Region:** Bihar, India

**Project:** Promoting technical knowledge and entrepreneurship among marginalized young women from Bihar

**Focus areas:** Education & Advocacy

**Funding period:** 2023–2026

**Funding amount:** 135,011 €

*Feminist Approach to Technology.  
Further Education for Girls in Technological Fields.*



Picture description: Participants of a FAT workshop working on their computers.

**I**n India, girls face numerous societal challenges, particularly concerning equality and opportunity. One of the most significant barriers for girls in India is access to education. Although the right to free education for children between 6 and 14 years of age is enshrined in Indian law, dropout rates for girls remain high. Girls are often pulled out of school at a young age to help with household chores or are married off early, severely limiting their educational prospects. This is where the organisation “Feminist Approach to Technology” comes in, offering girls the opportunity for further education in technological fields.

Girls frequently experience gender-based discrimination, be it within their families, communities, or workplaces. Traditional gender roles and patriarchal structures mean that girls and women have less decision-making freedom and autonomy over their lives and futures, something which manifests itself in forced marriages, domestic violence, and a lack of access to healthcare.

“Feminist Approach to Technology” (FAT) has developed a solution that promotes girls' rights on multiple levels. True to its name, FAT utilizes education in technological fields to empower girls and provide them with tools to address societal injustices. The founder of FAT, Gayatri Buragohain, faced discrimination herself for many years as a woman and single mother in the IT sector. She established the organization to incorporate feminist principles and approaches into the development and use of technology. In recent years, FAT has successfully established several centres in the Indian states of Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Bihar. The organization aspires to be completely woman-led, with the majority of its team already consisting of women who were initially project participants.

The project supported by Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation is based in Bihar, India's poorest state, which is predominantly rural. Most girls from marginalized families there lack basic technical knowledge and do not own mobile phones. Since 2016, FAT has been working in Bihar, conducting two of their programs: The Young Women Leadership Program (YWLP) focuses on feminist leadership qualities and technology-oriented education for girls and young women. The first phase of the program takes place in project Tech Centres, where girls learn basic computer, phone, and internet skills and are introduced to feminist issues for the first time. In the second phase of YWLP, girls are trained in camera work, design, and editing techniques to independently develop campaigns addressing issues in their communities.

The second program, Girls in STEM Program (GiSTEMP), aims to incorporate STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)

into the educational and career choices of girls. The curriculum combines feminist leadership qualities with practical STEM training. While FAT is community-based and predominantly led by young women, the organization is taking things a step further: they have launched a new initiative, supported by the Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation since 2023, to help former participants of the two previous programs in establishing and leading their own centres, thus carrying forward the organization's vision. This enables them to take their first steps as social entrepreneurs, generate their own income, and operate independently from their families. The Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation covers the costs for setting up the new centres and scholarships for 15 alumni.



Picture description: Kalpna Chawala, head of the Tech Community Centre in Patna, conducting a training session on women and computers for project participants.



# ESST.

**Region:** Amathole District, South Africa

**Project:** Vusokoti: Youth and women empowerment through income-generating activities

**Focus areas:** Education & Access to finance

**Funding period:** 2022–2024

**Funding amount:** 96,027 €

*Empowering the Role of Women and Youth through Financial Stability.*



Picture description: Nelisiwe Ndaba is the project manager of the Vusokoti project by ESST in South Africa.

**S**outh Africa has long been grappling with a persistent poverty crisis, compounded by growing youth unemployment, which has led people to rely increasingly on loans for survival. ESST, a committed non-profit organization with over 35 years of experience, is dedicated itself to helping those most affected by the crisis. In August 2023, Joseph and Sofie, two interns from the Foundation, interviewed Nelisiwe Ndaba, the project leader of ESST's Vusokoti project.

**Neli, can you provide us with insights into South Africa's current debt crisis and the challenges consumers are facing?**

The debt crisis is intensifying, notably among young people. If you attend school and have a job here, it's expected that you provide for your entire family. However, upon completing school, many find themselves without money or savings, compelling them to take out loans which they must repay with interest, often within five years. As such, many young South Africans rack up debt for reasons related to status and familial obligations, putting them under significant financial strain as they cannot shoulder these burdens alone.

**Was it this situation that led ESST to initiate the Vusokoti program?**

One reason we launched the Vusokoti program, particularly in rural areas, is due to the financial challenges many families face there. Parents cannot afford their children's education post-school, let alone university fees. Therefore, it's essential that young people learn about saving and receive financial training to better understand how to earn money, save, and maintain their small businesses while trying to complete their education.

**Can you tell us more about the Vusokoti program and how it aims to engage your target group?**

Alongside youth empowerment, the program focuses on women from disadvantaged backgrounds. We aim to reach women living in villages who are generally not expected to pursue their own development. Typically, their role is to stay at home, manage the household, care for the children, and wait for their partner to return from work. This does not instill a sense of pride and independence as their autonomy is taken away. Hence, our program not only imparts entrepreneurial skills but also addresses social issues that people confront on a daily basis. We discuss gender-based violence, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and other health-related topics. These issues are part of their daily lives and may prevent them from participating in events, even if they want to. Our program is about fortifying the spirit as well as empowering individuals and their sense of self.

**How does the Vusokoti program impact the wider community beyond the participants?**

When participants return home, they want to share their experiences, and families are typically interested in the events and their outcomes. We distribute educational materials in our workshops that participants can take home. Family members often become curious, browse through our materials, and read them, indirectly becoming influenced by the project.

**Have there been any challenges that you've faced during the program?**

Our biggest challenge is the issue of deprivation. People are disadvantaged, especially those women who cannot attend our seminars and thus miss out on information. The patriarchal system has taught them that they should not seek empowerment. This dilemma persists: as a woman, you are not expected to be educated or acquire knowledge. So this is one of our greatest challenges when it comes to the seminars.

**What is your vision for the future, and what role does the Vusokoti program play in realizing this vision?**

I look forward to the day when women can simply stand up and start something without anything being withheld from them and without being judged for it. When they are just given the opportunity to lead. This vision is promoted through the empowerment events in our program. The day more women are capable of leading programs is the day I would say we are truly making progress.



**Region:** Yucatán, Mexico

**Project:** Pumpkin seed and chili production to strengthen Mayan communities

**Focus areas:** Education & Value chains

**Funding period:** 2023–2026

**Funding amount:** 149,058 €

# HST.

*Mayan indigenous families in the Mexican state of Yucatán often face limited opportunities to market their products at fair prices. The organization El Hombre Sobre la Tierra (HST) assists 53 families in the Mahas community in Yucatán to develop a sustainable value chain for native pumpkin seeds. The processing steps are described in the following.*



In the fields, the pumpkins are harvested by hand using machetes.



They are opened there and then their seeds are extracted, a process involving several people, especially during a bountiful harvest.



The pumpkin seeds are then spread out to dry on straw mats under the open sky, typically taking about two days before they can be further processed.



Next, participants painstakingly peel the seeds by hand—a process that can take an average of 8 hours per kilogram – until the planned peeling machine is ready.



Afterward, the seeds are roasted in large pans over the fire. Once cooled...



... they are prepared for weighing and then packaged in bags.



Once weighed and vacuum-sealed in the respective bags, the seeds are labeled and marked. Currently, the seeds come in four flavors: natural, salted, with chili and lime, and caramelized.



# Climate change.

*For many of our project partners, the current changes in climate pose a significant challenge to their work. Here we look at how some of them are meeting the challenges.*



**Picture description:** *The first pepper harvest of 2024, following the reconstruction of the “Hand in Hand” greenhouse that was devastated by floods, with the assistance of the Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation.*

**The current climatic changes are causing an alarming increase in extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and droughts, significantly impacting the work of many of our project partners.**

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the incidence of floods has increased by 134 percent globally since 2000, and that of droughts by 29 percent. While some regions suffer from severe water scarcity (e.g. Peru), others are afflicted by heavy rains and resulting floods (e.g. Rwanda). Concurrently, the Earth's natural freshwater reserves, such as lakes, glaciers, and groundwater, are diminishing due to rising temperatures and increased human water consumption.

“Extreme weather events” refer to weather phenomena like thunderstorms, hurricanes, droughts, or heavy rains that deviate from the norm in terms of frequency and intensity at a specific geographic location. While it's not always possible to link individual extreme weather events directly to climate change, research is increasingly substantiating their connection.

In Rwanda, the rainy season now frequently leads to flooding. A particularly severe downpour occurred on the night of May 2nd to 3rd, 2023, in the northwest of Rwanda and the west of Uganda, flooding the greenhouse of our project partners from “Hand in Hand for Development” (HIHD). These floods caused significant loss of plants and crop yields and extensively damaged the region's infrastructure. More than 130 people lost their lives, and about 5,000 homes were destroyed. Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation is supporting HIHD with emergency funding for the reconstruction of the greenhouse and damage remediation.

This flooding is just one example of the many extreme weather events that underscore the urgency of addressing the effects of climate change. In 2023, the region recorded hundreds of weather-related disasters, many of which can be attributed to escalating changes in climate.

Rwanda is considered a pioneer in climate protection among the countries of the Global South but faces a dual challenge: in the east of the country, average temperatures are rising, leading to increasingly prolonged droughts that reduce agricultural production. In contrast, the west and north are experiencing increased heavy rainfall leading to floods and landslides. In the hilly northwest of Rwanda, many people live in areas where forests are continually cleared to make room for them and for agricultural use, making the soil more prone to erosion and increasing the likelihood of landslides.

Similar to Rwanda, our project country Peru is also suffering from the impacts of climate change. Large fluctuations in temperature, rising sea levels, irregular rainfall, and melting glaciers threaten

people, their habitats, and agriculture. In many regions, water scarcity is so severe that communities rely on water deliveries. Our project partners at IDECA, aiming to establish an indigenous Andean pharmacy near Lake Titicaca in the Andean highlands, are battling the consequences of a lack of rain in the Puno region of southern Peru. Delays in planting and crop failures lead to food shortages and insufficient drinking water for humans and animals. Farmers sometimes have to sell animals they can no longer care for, receiving very low prices.

IDECA, together with nearby communities, has begun to employ ancient indigenous techniques to cope with the local water scarcity.

The people in the high Andes “sow and harvest” water by creating small reservoirs with handmade dams (qochas) that capture water during the rainy season, making it available longer for use during the dry season. This water conservation practice replenishes the groundwater, which in turn protects the soil from erosion and promotes plant growth. Such a method of water resource management offers a sustainable way to adapt to the increasing problem of water scarcity.

“For the past two years, combating the droughts caused by climate change has been our priority. In this regard, this project has focused its efforts on addressing this issue, because without water, neither agriculture nor livestock farming is feasible, let alone a cooperative system for the marketing of medicines,” explains Rolando Pilco Mallea.

The implementation of our partners' projects is often impeded by the challenges of climate change. Strategies for adapting to climate change and resources for reconstruction are crucial in ensuring the ongoing success of their efforts.

# Cooperatives.

*Cooperatives as a Path to Fair Participation in the Global Economic System.*



**F**air access to resources, good working conditions, and the global economic system are essential goals of our work, aimed at sustainably improving the social, economic, and ecological structures in the Global South. Cooperatives serve as a valuable tool for facilitating the inclusion of disadvantaged individuals into the global economy. Some of our project partners are part of cooperatives, implementing projects within their communities that have a lasting and positive effect on change and economic independence.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that cooperatives create at least 279 million jobs worldwide. At least 12 percent of the global population is employed in some way by one of the approximately three million cooperatives around the globe. A cooperative is an autonomous association of individuals who come together to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Cooperatives exist in all sectors of the economy and are committed to the long-term vision of sustainable economic growth, social development, and ecological responsibility.

Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation has supported 124 cooperatives to date. Many of these cooperatives are involved in agriculture, with smallholder farmers contributing significantly to food security, yet they find themselves in a vulnerable position due to competition with large agricultural corporations on the world market. By selling their produce through cooperatives, producers gain access to the global market, helping to bridge the trade gap between the Global North and the Global South. Cooperatives prioritize people over profits. Unlike state-owned or profit-driven companies, cooperative members have a say in the business and access to infrastructure that would often be unavailable to them. Economic and social gains do not go into the pockets of a few shareholders but are reinvested back into the communities and cooperatives, actively contributing to sustainable development and the reduction of unequal power relations.

Some of the association's project partners are part of such cooperatives. For example, PMC (Mexico) works with two coffee cooperatives, DERMAC (Mexico) is building cocoa cooperatives, and SOCEO (India) supports a cooperative of 300 female farmers in Darjeeling. Cooperatives fulfill five essential functions: first, they strengthen local communities. Democratic structures enhance people's bargaining power and promote social integration within the community. Second, cooperatives often work with fair trade initiatives that promote fairer trading practices, providing members with better prices for their products and fair working conditions. Third, improved access to resources, finances, and training

can improve the living conditions of individuals, contributing to poverty reduction. Furthermore, cooperatives promote democratic participation by actively involving members in the development and design of the cooperative. And fifth, they contribute to environmental protection as they often adopt sustainable and eco-friendly practices, promote ecological production methods, and thus conserve natural resources.

For example, AIMPO (Rwanda) is trying to modernize the traditional ceramics production of the indigenous Batwa people, giving them a sustainable economic perspective through a ceramics cooperative. Additionally, cooperatives contribute to gender equality by providing women with a means of economic independence. They are also relevant for other marginalized groups, creating income-generating prospects and serving as a form of empowerment. For instance, PSYDEH (Mexico) helps women to create a network of regional women-led cooperatives in the handicraft sector.

A challenge that cooperatives continually face is balancing the needs of the partners with economic conditions. Due to democratic structures, decision-making can be complicated. Conversely, cooperatives involved in fair trade contribute to ensuring a fair distribution of profits and improving the living conditions of producers. They are more stable in crises and offer a way to counter unequal power relations in the global economy, driving more equitable social, economic, and ecological change.

# Outlook.

*The work of our partners remains at the forefront of our efforts. Our goal is to support them as best we can while involving as many people as possible in the process.*



**Picture description:** Sigismondo, project leader of HST, along with Doña Elo and Julieta, who are project participants from the community of Mahas. The photo was taken during a project visit in 2023.



Looking ahead is always a glimpse into the unknown, as the past has taught us. Nonetheless, we have set ambitious goals for ourselves, as always, and remain open to whatever may come. In 2024, we aim to finally revise some of our processes. We are excited to try new things and find new partner organizations this year. All of this is enjoyable and allows us to continuously engage with new topics and challenges. We constantly question ourselves and reconsider our goals and motives. As our association grows and matures, it is crucial that our processes and systems evolve accordingly and remain focused and helpful. We want to improve our digital presence, refine our public image, and hope that even more people will learn about our work. Increased visibility of our work also brings greater visibility to all the wonderful organizations that we accompany on part of their journey. Our goal is to continuously develop our content strategy by looking forward and regularly reflecting on whether we are on the right path or need to make adjustments. This is all very exciting, but above all, it is a challenge in which we will grow. We are grateful to everyone who has accompanied us on our path so far and look forward to those who will do so in the future. The year 2024 begins, like most years, with travel. We will visit existing projects in Sri Lanka and get to know new ones before finally revisiting organizations based in Cape Town, South Africa. Afterwards, workshops, performances,

and networking are on the agenda. The second half of the year will hopefully be a bit quieter, allowing us to fully dedicate ourselves to organizational development. We look forward to everything that comes our way and would like to express our gratitude to all those who make this possible, especially the many impressive organizations that continue undeterred, determined, and courageous despite adverse circumstances. See you next year!

Your Foundation Team

**Picture description:** A participant of a savings group initiated by Ko'ox Taani has opened a general store with the money she has saved and the seed money she received from the organization.

# Support.

*In addition to direct support through the sale and purchase of Lemonaid and ChariTea drinks, more and more people are becoming active supporters of the association by donating directly, contacting us, and actively using their networks to benefit the association.*

More and more people are becoming active supporters of the Foundation by donating directly, contacting us via our newsletter and actively using their networks for the benefit of the Foundation.

You can support our work in the following ways:

*Donations:*

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The Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation is recognized as a non-profit organization by the Hamburg-Nord tax office.

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*Support circle:*

Do you want to support the work of the Lemonaid & ChariTea Foundation permanently?

Become active through a support circle!

*For more information:*

[www.lemonaid-charitea-ev.org/en/support](http://www.lemonaid-charitea-ev.org/en/support)



**Picture description:** Phumza Magoswana from the Keiskamma project working on her embroidery.



**Picture description Top:** Project visit to Ko'ox Taani and one of the savings groups initiated by the project. **Bottom:** Grendi Georgina Uan Balam, participant of a savings group initiated by Ko'ox Taani deposit money.

# Abbreviations & Glossary.

# Imprint.

*We use gender-sensitive language in our written texts to reflect our goal of an inclusive and equal society.*

AIMPO	<i>African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization</i>	NPO	<i>Non-Profit-Organisation</i>
AJECL	<i>Association de Jeunes de Saint Charles Lwanga</i>	OSO	<i>Our Sister's Opportunity</i>
APEDIK	<i>Asociacion Para El Desarrollo Integral Kallarischichis</i>	PMC	<i>Programa Mexicano del Carbono A.C.</i>
CEDEP AYLLU	<i>Centro para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Ayllu</i>	PSYDEH	<i>Psicología y Derechos Humanos A.C.</i>
APROCLAS	<i>Asociación de Productores Cristianos Laicos de Santiago de Pupuja</i>	RSF	<i>Rwanda Sustainable Families</i>
CforC	<i>Capacity Building for Communities</i>	SYTRICIE	<i>Syndicat des Travailleurs Domestiques et Indépendants de l'Economie Informelle</i>
COROAT	<i>Community Renovation &amp; Organisation Advancement Trust</i>	RWDT	<i>Rural Women Development Trust</i>
ECSAT	<i>Equality-based Community Support and Training</i>	SEED	<i>Schools Environmental Education and Development</i>
ESST	<i>The Educational Support Services Trust</i>	SEVOTA	<i>Solidarité pour l'Epanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins visant le Travail et l'Auto promotion</i>
FAT	<i>Feminist Approach to Technology</i>	SOCEO	<i>Society, Environment, Opportunity</i>
GENVP	<i>Gramin Evam Nagar Vikas Parishad</i>	SPRIT	<i>Society for Participatory Research and Integrated Training</i>
Global North / Global South	<i>see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_North_and_Global_South</i>	SYTRIECI	<i>Syndicat des Travailleurs Domestiques et Indépendants de l'Economie Informelle</i>
HIHD	<i>Hand in Hand for Development</i>	UNM	<i>Uyisenga Ni Imanzi</i>
HST	<i>El Hombre Sobre la Tierra A.C.</i>		
IDECA	<i>Instituto de Estudios de las Culturas Andinas</i>		
INSADE	<i>Interculturalidad, Salud y Derechos A.C.</i>		
NGO	<i>Non-Governmental-Organisation</i>		

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*Authors:  
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*Copy-editing & proofreading:  
Kerstin Salvador*

*Photography:*

*Jean Bizimana: p. 4, 5, 10  
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FAT: p. 18, 19  
Khutala Nandipha: Cover, p. 20, 30  
Hand in Hand: p. 24  
Adam Dickens: p. 26*

*Cover:*

*A women's cooperative of the organization ESST in South Africa consisting of:*

*Nosipho Zicina, Nokwanda, Msweli, Nompumelelo Velemu, Nodalephi Santi, Noziyanda Max, Nomfundiso Tshapu, Nowasu Phantsi, Lindelwa Cola, Fundiswa Mnyaka, Nosipho Mashaba, Nompucuko Mboniswa, Zoleka Ndeyo, Veliswa Kosi, Nombulelo Booi, Thembeisa Mansi, Siziwe Relefu, Eunice Kwinana, Nolonwabo Qoso, Nontsikelelo Zweni, Sisanda Relefu, Sindiswa Kaya, Nobhelu Mpasito, Mombasa Gwala Gwala, Nosakhe Kosi, Busisiwe Zantsi*

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When conveying our work, the focus should be on finding new narratives by unlearning that good can only come from the Global North.

