



safcei

Annual Report 2024

**Faith Communities Activism for
Climate Justice**



Prayer for Universal Peace and Environmental Harmony

May there be peace in heaven,

Peace in the skies,

And peace on earth.

May all the waters know peace,

May all the herbs and plants know peace,

May the great trees of the forest know peace.

May all the forces of the universe know peace.

The immense, transcendent reality is peace.

May all know peace,

Peace and only peace,

And may that peace come unto me.

Om peace, peace, peace.

- **Atharva Veda 19.9.14**



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List of Acronyms

CGCSA	Consumer Goods Council of South Africa
COP29	Conference of the Parties
FAN	Fast Action Network
FLEAT	Faith Leader Environmental Advocacy Training
GAW	Green Action Week
IEP	Integrated Energy Plan
JET	Just Energy Transition
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
OWA	Open Wing Alliance
RACR	Rural Action for Climate Resilience
SCAT	Social Change Assistance Trust
SSNC	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
SWC	Sustaining the Wild Coast
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Letter from our Chair

It is an absolute honour to relay this message of gratitude, encouragement, and faith on behalf of SAFCEI, in the face of fading hope and disconcerting apathy.

Utmost gratitude to God for granting us a prophetic Board of Directors, an indefatigable Executive Director, incredibly industrious staff, and dedicated faith leaders without whom our quest for environmental justice would not be. There is hardly anything I could write to express how grateful we are to our donors and partners who have believed in our cause and stood by and with us through it all.



Informed by science and invested in theological, ethical, and moral compassing, we have made significant strides in solidarity with all life for people and our common home. The FLEAT, Cage-free campaign, nature-based farming, and just energy transition efforts are testaments to our vision of empowering communities to safeguard ecojustice and the earth's living systems. Last year, we expanded our environmental policymaking influence at the UNFCCC COP29 and obtained accreditation to the UNEP!

This coming year, we will courageously continue to foster multifaith cohesion towards ecojustice. As a people of faith, caring for living earth, SAFCEI is committed to being the voice of courage in a region of immense opportunities that have been dimmed by eco-injustice. We will trudge on in faith that a higher power orders our steps into light undimmed.

David Munene



David Munene with SAFCEI's Executive Director, Francesca de Gasparis, Policy Coordinator, Tara Nair Van Ryneveld, and Food and Climate Justice Manager, Gabriel Manyandagze, at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, November 2024.

Letter from our Executive Director

Each year brings new opportunities and challenges for SAFCEI, and 2024 was a year of growth, new team members, and an expanded scope of work. Our advocacy is grounded in informed engagement to strengthen governance and decision-making on energy, food systems, and climate change.



Seeing faith leaders use the tools and information we share, and communities across Southern and Eastern Africa working together to build climate resilience and take practical steps towards greener futures, continues to inspire and motivate us. We are deeply grateful for the learning and support SAFCEI receives from the Earthkeepers network – this is a shared journey.

I would also like to honour the SAFCEI team for their extraordinary commitment this year. With a budget 50% larger than the previous year, our small team of 15 worked beyond capacity to deliver our most ambitious programme to date. Navigating constant change has strengthened our internal resilience, and working on complex, deeply interconnected issues calls for a strong duty of care towards one another. We continue to seek balance between making meaningful impact for those most vulnerable to climate change and sustaining healthy working practices.

As we move forward, we are prioritising team wellbeing, strengthening our data capture and analysis, and better documenting lived realities across Africa. Local solutions remind us of the power of human ingenuity, rooted in faith communities that blend indigenous knowledge with new approaches in the face of climate chaos.

Francesca de Gasparis



Afikile Ndude, Francesca de Gasparis, Olwethu Mbuthuma, Mishkah Moerat, and Gabriel Manyangadze from SAFCEI at the Regional Women's FLEAT II workshop in Johannesburg, July 2024.

In numbers:

Highlights 2024

R17 578 822

in funding

>167 million people

Reached across our platforms and media channels

27

Training sessions held

8

Campaigns: #NuclearFreeSA
#Faiths4SustainableFarming
#MyFoodIsAfrican #CageFreeSA
#VerifiedCageFree #Eggsposure
#GreenActionWeek #SeasonOfCreation

100

Collaborative partners

69

Total number of policy briefs/letters on key eco- and climate justice issues

♀

80% of our staff and 75% of our Board members were women

♀

53% of our FLEAT participants were women.

9

Presentations at regional and international events

15

Events, panel discussions and meetings

17

SAFCEI submissions on energy justice

12

SAFCEI submissions on animal justice

2

SAFCEI submissions on food and climate justice

8

Research reports commissioned

1

Research report published

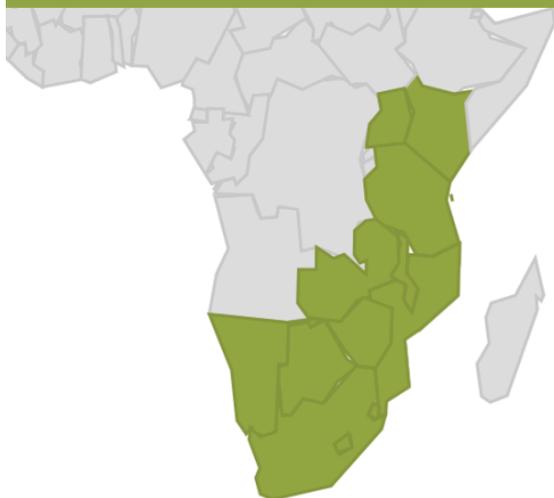
981 Faith Leaders Trained

FLEAT: **261**

Webinars: **367**

Community workshops: **353**

Faith Leaders trained through FLEAT



> 200 000 people reached

12 Countries

76% of the FLEAT trained Faith Leaders took Climate and Eco-Justice Actions

Number of faith leaders per country:

Botswana 2, Eswatini 3, Kenya 5, Lesotho 1, Malawi 1, Mozambique 12, Namibia 14, South Africa 160, Tanzania 3, Uganda 2, Zambia 31, Zimbabwe 3.

About us

SAFCEI, established in 2005, is a multi-faith environmental justice organisation committed to supporting Southern African faith leaders and their communities in growing awareness about, understanding of, and action on eco-justice, sustainable living and climate change.

We work with people and communities of all faiths and none. Our network includes African traditional healers, members of Baha'i, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Rastafarian and Quaker faiths, various Christian denominations and indigenous faiths, along with many other faith-affiliated communities.

We emphasise the spiritual and ethical imperative to care for living Earth and all the life it sustains, through all of our work. We speak out on issues of eco-justice, encourage ethical action in this regard, and call on those in positions of power and authority to govern ethically on matters concerning our common home.

Vision, Mission and Objectives

Our Vision: People of faith caring for living Earth.

Our Mission: To support and mobilise people of all faiths and none – to increase awareness, understanding, and action on energy, food, climate and eco-justice, and sustainable consumption.

Together, we work for a world where voices for justice are heard, and care for living Earth is integral in decision-making and actions. SAFCEI ignites this shared responsibility, inspiring compassionate action for a just and sustainable future.

Our Objectives:

- Empower and mobilise faith communities for climate and eco-justice advocacy.
- Influence policy and promote ethical governance in climate justice matters.
- Build and strengthen partnerships to drive collective action on climate justice.



Our Approach

SAFCEI offers a faith-based approach to “Earthkeeping”, recognising that all life is sacred. All faith scriptures refer to our sacred connection to the earth, and the need for reverence for the earth, as well as the “golden rule”: the principle of treating others as we would wish to be treated.

SAFCEI supports faith communities’ eco-justice efforts through solidarity, building and growing networks, and providing training and science- based information.

We do this through a facilitated peer learning platform – Faith Leader Environmental Advocacy Training (FLEAT). We collaborate with civil society networks with shared objectives, as well as the public, through campaigns and in online spaces. Our programme work draws on lived experience, traditional knowledge, and scientific evidence to support local action and advocacy for policy change. With a growing regional network of trained faith leaders, SAFCEI champions values-driven climate action and sustainable living – amplifying local voices and strengthening community resilience.



Regional Women’s FLEAT visit to INMED South Africa Aquaponics farm , Johannesburg, July 2024.

Our Programmes

2024 was a year marked by extreme climate events, intensifying energy injustices, and shifting policy landscapes affecting the quality of life for all beings, our livelihoods and rights.

Faith communities are uniquely positioned to amplify the voices of those most affected by resource extraction, industrial agriculture, energy injustice, and climate change and lead the call for a just energy transition and ecological justice across Southern Africa. SAFCEI runs three programmes: Animal Justice; Energy and Climate Justice; and Food and Climate Justice through which we challenge unjust systems, defend public interest in key legal interventions, mobilise for people-centred energy governance, advance humane food systems, and strengthen the movement for animal welfare.

SAFCEI's holistic approach integrates advocacy, capacity building, campaigning, and resource mobilisation. We aim to drive systemic change, empower grassroots communities and hold governments and corporations accountable. SAFCEI works collaboratively where possible, and interacts through a range of varied forums and platforms to advance faith-based perspectives and actions.

Our work continues to align current climate science and contributes actively to efforts aimed at limiting global warming and enhancing regional climate resilience, while ensuring that governance processes are transparent, participatory, and grounded in justice.



Graphic harvest by Claire Rousell from the Equitable Energy Futures workshop, Johannesburg, 30 July 2024.

Energy and Climate Justice

Regional energy governance and action continue to be heavily focused on extractive and fossil fuel industries, while false solutions to the climate crisis (such as gas and oil, nuclear power) continue to gain traction as so-called “just transition” energy sources. They will not reduce our energy crises, and are exacerbating environmental vulnerabilities and human conflicts. This is happening even as renewable energy in Southern Africa is a safe and affordable alternative that curbs emissions and mitigates climate change.

We advocate for a truly just energy transition that fosters transparency and accountability in energy supply, generation and access. People of faith play a vital role in raising our democratic right to hold governments accountable and in encouraging and empowering their communities to understand climate change and take ethical action to foster a healthier relationship with nature.

Faith voices called for fair pricing and transparent governance in submissions on Eskom’s 6th Multi-Year Price Determination to the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA). Faith perspectives were further embedded in climate policy through active engagement in national climate policy processes such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) faith leader consultations in February and August 2025 via the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC).

We joined a regional nuclear energy solidarity tour in July in Kenya to help support communities opposing proposed new nuclear energy plans. In Kenya, we connected with civil society groups challenging new nuclear ambitions and, in South Africa, we convened anti-nuclear community workshops and civil society strategy sessions.

Through our new Equitable Energy Futures project, we brought together faith leaders from South Africa, Namibia, and Mozambique for a new workshop series in July. These built a regional network of faith-based climate advocates committed to exposing false energy solutions and advancing a just energy transition. to stop the expansion of nuclear, gas and fossil fuel

Justice prevailed when the Minister of Electricity and Energy announced he would withdraw the gazette for new nuclear energy and publicly conceded SAFCEI and Earthlife Africa Johannesburg’s court application against plans to procure 2500 MW of nuclear energy in August. The Minister’s concession acknowledged the lack of transparency and meaningful public participation, marking a significant victory for the power of collective action to seek accountable governance.

However, there was mixed news about nuclear governance. The National Nuclear Regulator (NNR) granted approval of the 20-year licence extension for the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant Unit 1 in July, despite serious “defense-in-depth” risks and lack of monitoring data. SAFCEI launched a legal appeal in September and hosted a series of community awareness workshops. As a result, faith leaders delivered informed and impactful submissions during public hearings in the Western and Northern Cape, bringing forward community concerns around safety, radioactive waste and environmental harm.

As the opening letter from our Board Chair shows, SAFCEI continued to strengthen its international advocacy and policy influence in international fora such as the 29th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP29). In the lead up to COP29, SAFCEI facilitated targeted engagements to strengthen the participation of faith communities in such policy dialogues. A pre-COP webinar on 7 November, co-hosted with the PCC, provided a platform for faith leaders to input into South Africa's NDC. Further to this, SAFCEI hosted a post-COP 29 reflection webinar in November to unpack some of the key outcomes and commitments. During COP29, SAFCEI hosted two official side events.

Together, these efforts are advancing a just energy transition and building momentum toward a people-centred, equitable, and climate-resilient energy future.



Faith leaders from the Equitable Energy Futures workshop at the Evening Panel discussion on Nuclear Power with visiting award winning expert and environmental activist Vladimir Slivyak (Ecodefense), July 2024.

Energy Justice - Myrtle Jack, South Africa

Myrtle Jack's work in Mitchells Plain, South Africa, is a powerful example of grassroots leadership and community resilience in the face of energy injustice. Myrtle is not only raising awareness about the dangers of nuclear energy, especially the aging Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant, but also empowering her community with practical tools for sustainable living and energy alternatives.

In 2024 Myrtle attended SAFCEI's Enhancing Environmental Advocacy Capacity workshop where she learnt even more about nuclear energy and climate change, and thereafter Myrtle educated her community through four workshops in Mitchell's Plain with around 50 attendees at each.

Myrtle says: "As a community leader and counsellor in Mitchells Plain, I am reaching out to our people to see how I can assist them. I let them know about SAFCEI, ...let them learn more and ...engage with SAFCEI."

"Regarding nuclear energy, I alert them that the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant is not safe for us. I alert them to the danger that faces them, and that it has the potential to ruin our lives if we don't look out and stand up for ourselves. I tell them that if we stand up for ourselves as a collective, we have power. Because nothing can be done without our voices. I also let them know and teach them about a lot of things that are good for their lives, like how to save energy as well. You can cook your food for 10 minutes halfway and let the food cook further by itself in a wonderbag, which is energy efficient."

"The biggest challenge for me personally is to engage on electricity from a cost perspective. **The price is so high, really, you can hardly afford it.** We attended a workshop to capacitate community members to present at the Nersa hearings the impact the proposed tariff increases will have on consumers. We discussed the highly inflated electricity costs and the high cost of living . In our experience the government doesn't think about the poor or the seniors. If people's electricity or water is cut off, it is just cut off without a consideration of the condition of people living in the affected house."



Nuclear-Free SA Vigil outside parliament, Cape Town, 30 August 2024.

Food and Climate Justice

The world food system is increasingly vulnerable because of its high dependency on monopolistic multinational seed companies. The war in Ukraine triggered spiralling fertiliser prices around the world which impacted the supply of wheat and confectionery in African countries.

The broader issue of food systems has been a subject of intense debate in Southern Africa and throughout the continent during 2024. Globally, industrialised food production generates up to a third of greenhouse gas emissions. Industrial farming dumps toxic chemicals into our water systems – rivers, lakes, dams, underground water, seas and oceans. These chemicals also decimate pollinator insects and wreak havoc on biodiversity. We also placed a spotlight on issues such as malnutrition and exposure to diseases through food in the region.



Seed meditation, Regional Women's FLEAT workshop, Johannesburg, July 2024.

With the centrality of food it has become important for SAFCEI to continue to collaborate at an international level through the DisAg group which has membership from the United States, Canada, Europe and Africa. In Africa, SAFCEI opposes industrial farming and promotes the adoption of agroecology as a sustainable and equitable alternative with the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), the Zambian Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB) and the Just Transition Food Systems in South Africa.

Independent research shows the decades-long push by corporations and some international funders to “feed” Africa through this kind of farming has proven to be

ineffective and false.. As India has found, using GMOs, pesticides and fertilisers will not bring a Green Revolution in Africa. The space for civic engagement on food and climate justice continues to shrink but SAFCEI and faith leaders in the region keep pushing for fair and sustainable food systems while holding companies and powerful stakeholders to account.

In 2024, SAFCEI's Food and Climate Justice programme concentrated on addressing the detrimental effects of industrial farming by active advocacy against the industrial food system and encouraging and enabling individuals to grow their own food using safe and sustainable methods.

SAFCEI promoted sustainable consumption, indigenous foods, and agroecology as climate adaptation methodologies. This was done through activities like seed swaps and visits to faith communities with sustainable farms, that already practice living in harmony with nature and the earth. Our aim was to highlight their indigenous wisdom on seeds and proper care of the land, and to promote appropriate technology that comprehensively supports the needs of smallholder farmers to build community resilience.

In its advocacy work SAFCEI passionately has sought to engage with the Gates Foundation to pay reparation damages to smallholder farmers that were negatively impacted by the Green Revolution initiatives. The Gates Foundation responded to the letter even before it was widely shared trying to stop its distribution for endorsement by like minded organisations.

Additionally, we opposed inhumane live animal exports and demanded reparations from international philanthropic organisations that promote industrial farming in Africa.

Food Justice - Karen Mwenda, Zambia

Reverend Karen Mwenda, a clergy of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) from the rural Luapula Province, shares that her engagement with SAFCEI's Food and Climate Justice programme has profoundly influenced her approach to agriculture and community development. The programme taught participants about organic farming and pushed their minds back to indigenous food and plants. They gained knowledge in agroecology, organic farming, and indigenous food preservation.

Karen Mwenda says: "Planting avocado trees is a triple win. It is good for the environment as it retains the soil, but it is also nutritious and makes business sense." She has personally planted 15 avocado and 15 orange trees, along with lemon, papaya, and other crops, demonstrating her commitment to agroecology and sustainable farming.

As a church leader, she is a role model for her community and encourages others to adopt similar practices, aiming to shift mindsets away from GMOs and chemical fertilisers towards sustainable, organic and traditional farming methods. He says, "The change in the community is gradual. Through advocacy and by doing it practically people are now getting

the knowledge that I'm sharing with them and they apply it and utilise it themselves. **Mostly when you are doing something from the bottom of your heart, your message has power.** Going back to the old models, old things, old food is difficult or challenging, but in some ways, we are getting there because people have seen that they are able to get harvest and sales from whatever we are teaching them. I've put it upon myself that I personally stand as an example for environmental justice, food security and food justice."

She adds: "We have started some small organic gardens in the community and are doing animal swaps with goats. When you have three extra goats you give those to one household. When they give birth, you give three of them to another household, just like that. We swap so that we try to eliminate the level of poverty in the communities and work together as one in the community. In my sermons I ensure that I touch on environmental justice and advocacy or on food security and the foods we are eating. That's how I've managed to apply the learnings in my context."



Left: Karen Mwenda, Zambia, harvesting in the community garden where they were planting soya and cassava and advocating for indigenous trees by planting an avocado tree.



Above: Traditional and indigenous foods displayed at the FLEAT South Africa II follow-up workshop on agroecology, October 2024.

Animal Justice

SAFCEI recognises the inherent value of all living beings, and continues to advocate for a just system that prioritises the rights and welfare of farmed and wild animals.

This includes the welfare of egg-laying hens, whose existence is among the most cruel and confined of all farmed animals. Our #CageFreeSA campaign calls for ending the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens by 2030.

SAFCEI is a part of a global campaign, the Open Wing Alliance (OWA), aiming to end the use of cages for egg-laying hens.

Cage-free systems improve the lives of hens significantly and cause less harm to them, the environment, and those who eat eggs.

Through corporate outreach, we ask companies to pledge to go cage-free by 2030 for all products containing eggs. Leadership from companies who care about sustainability, animal welfare, and healthy food for all, will turn the tide in South Africa and ultimately end battery cages in the region.

Through outreach, we secured a major cage-free commitment from The President Hotel located in Sea Point, Cape Town. We also saw cage-free commitments by smaller restaurants like Kleinsky's Delicatessen and Peregrine Farm Stall.

Our engagements with Pick n Pay and other corporate retailers has gained significant visibility, prompting a formal response from the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA), who expressed a concern about our advocacy. We have disputed their claims that our efforts are coercive, through appropriate legal channels and will continue the dialogue through an open letter campaign. The level of response, both critical and supportive demonstrates our campaign is resonating and our work is being taken seriously by key industry stakeholders.

Our strategic advocacy in engaging stakeholders achieved a breakthrough when the Department of Agriculture, Land and Rural Development showed eagerness to engage in cage system reform.

In 2024, our Cage-Free Community Indabas, engaging the Earthkeepers' Fast Action Network (FAN) and the public, focused on collaborative action and strategic engagement for animal justice.

We made a submission to the Competition Commission on their inquiry to the egg and poultry industry. Our comments on this submission sought to address the issues pertaining to traceability, transparency and honesty in the industry's value chain.

When 19,000 cattle suffered aboard a Kuwait ship headed to Iraq in Cape Town harbour, we organised a multi-faith dialogue on Live Animal Exports examining religious perspectives on animal treatment, demonstrating how faith communities can drive ethical transformation. Panellists were from Islam, Christianity, Baha'i and African traditional faith communities.



Cage-Free Community Indaba participants at Bertha House, Mowbray, Cape Town, 28 February 2024.

Cage-Free Community Indaba

On Saturday, 24 February 2024, SAFCEI in collaboration with Treeshake, hosted a successful Cage-Free Community Indaba at Bertha House, Mowbray in Cape Town. This brought together members of SAFCEI's Earthkeepers' Fast Action Network's (FAN) and members of the public with an interest and experience in the cage-free movement, alongside informative guest speakers.

The discussions were centered around our need for a holistic approach towards animal justice and collaborating in calling corporations to be transparent and holding them to account. Cage-free policies are important in fostering change in the production system and the Indaba highlighted the importance of advocacy, social activism and strategic engagement to intensify the cage-free movement.

One of our Earthkeepers, Cele Esau, a leader for Social Justice at the Cape Town Unitarians enhanced our event with spiritual guidance..

Leading social activist Zackie Achmat and Michaela Tafani, Programme Lead for Corporate Accountability Programme at Animal Law Reform South Africa (ALRSA), spoke about our collective responsibility to advocate for better conditions for the vulnerable like caged hens.

ALRSA is a fellow member of the Open Wing Alliance (OWA) and its report 'LAYING DOWN THE FACTS: Animal Welfare Standards of the Companies Providing your Favourite Foods,' ranks companies according to their cage-free policy and adequate reporting.

Rural Action for Climate Resilience project

Southern Africa is a climate change hotspot. Rural South Africa, particularly rural women, are among the most vulnerable to climate impacts. Poor service delivery and gender based violence worsen the climate impacts they experience.

The RACR project, a partnership between the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT), SAFCEI and Heinrich Böll Stiftung, has run since 2021. The project works with rural community-based organisations and faith leaders in the Eastern, Northern and Western Cape, Free State and Limpopo.



Permaculturalist John Nzira (Ukuvuna Urban Garden) pictured during a RACR field visit in Port St Johns in February 2024 doing follow up monitoring on the progress in community gardens following permaculture training.

The project builds local capacity to respond to climate impacts and enhance resilience in South Africa. A range of climate change grants, learning festivals and educational content to enhance participants' understanding of localised, gendered impacts of climate change, and engagement with climate policy and planning support this.

In 2024, 36 organisations were active in the project, of which 75% were women-led and 64% actively involved youth. Through the Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change program and new organisations from Limpopo and the Free State joining, the number of women-led organisations increased by 15% and the active youth participation by 22% compared to 2023.

Alternative Mining Indaba

In February 2024, the RACR project supported four RACR participants from mining-affected communities in the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape, to attend the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI). Their communities are in areas where mining is either already underway or is being proposed. They learned from other mining affected communities at the Indaba, which prepared them for their own advocacy work.

The RACR participants shared that they now understand the link between mining, energy and climate change and see how mining particularly affects women and youth. The participants got a feel for the importance of Pan-African and global solidarity, they expanded their networks to increase advocacy and saw some solutions to address or prevent mining related problems. Uegene Mapotolo from the Western Cape shared: "AMI was an eye-opener on climate change, the environment being destroyed and the huge social impact that mining has on the lives of the people living in the community - and all in the name of profit."

Bernadine Strauss, from the Northern Cape, said: "We need more women's voices and women in decision making...The Pan African Youth and Feminist platform was personally empowering and will assist me and my community. We as youth should learn from history to change it. We will teach children in our programmes about the laws so that they understand them. And I am taking with me that community trusts are there to develop the community and not for other people."

Monica Tyalimpi, from the Eastern Cape, said: "I learnt so much about the risks mining poses to land, water and the environment and about the dangers of mines that are not closed when mining stops. Going forward I will educate communities on legislation, policies and laws that protect the Human and the Nature."

Tembakazi Mthembu, also from the Eastern Cape, says he now understands the issue of mining licensing, the monitoring of operations, the necessity of having a health impact analysis as people are getting sick, the water is polluted and agriculture is impacted. He says: "The mine (has) has a clear objective to plough back to the community for their contract period for example by building or maintaining roads and schools in the

community.” He says: “Security and psychological support for human rights activists is also crucial as they are exposed to the threat of assassination in their communities.”

Co-creation of Educational Content on Climate Change

In the RACR project, the co-creation of popular educational materials is prioritised. Through the April 2024 RACR Learning Festival we created a poster with participants, which unpacked climate change and looked at its root causes and impacts in the shape of a baobab tree. The final poster was translated into Afrikaans, isiXhosa, Sepedi and Sesotho and used during the RACR Learning Festival in October 2024.



The A0 Baobab poster that was co-created with participants in the RACR project as an educational tool for deepening understandings of climate change, October 2024, RACR learning festival.

Policy Engagement

The RACR project amplifies rural voices in climate policy spaces, using webinars and workshops to build engagement with government policy and planning. In 2024, these engagements were mostly attended by women (76%).

We had training sessions on government budget advocacy, and local and provincial government representatives shared insights on their climate change work in government.

In 2024, the RACR project made two submissions that brought rural and gender perspectives into the centre. The first, in January 2024, was to the National Council of Provinces on the climate change bill. It received 35 endorsements from civil society organisations. The second was a civil society submission to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) responding to South Africa’s draft framework on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC.

Our Platforms

Our platforms like FLEAT (Faith Leader Environmental Advocacy Training), build the relationships and solidarity networks needed to support our mission. We work primarily with faith leaders and people of faith who are leaders in their communities, but also with civil society organisations and citizens to support them in actively bringing about an equitable, sustainable world.

FLEAT

FLEAT is at the heart of SAFCEI's theory of change: by empowering faith communities with knowledge, tools, networks it promotes a just and people-powered movement for environmental and social transformation. FLEAT participants support local faith-led advocacy, create awareness, deepen knowledge and activate a sense of environmental responsibility in their communities. FLEAT also empowers them to make policy submissions and hold governments accountable to a sustainable future for all.

In 2024, we held eight in-person FLEAT workshops: from Zimbabwe (second cohort) in March and October, Tanzania in April, South Africa in May, Malawi in June, Zambia in September, and a first in-person Regional Women's FLEAT (second cohort) in September. Of the 261 faith leaders who participated, 53% were women.

There was a special focus in 2024 on agroecology, climate justice and indigenous food, the cage-free campaign, energy justice and the just energy transition. Three out of four faith leaders and green champions who completed FLEAT training initiated training activities in their own contexts or led local climate and eco-justice actions. Some were also actively involved in campaigns and engaged the government on policy issues. They reached over 200 000 people in various faith congregations and interfaith events.

FLEAT themes included the resilience of indigenous foods, the spiritual and cultural significance of seeds, and the urgency of just climate action. Activities like the wild food walk, the eco-village tour, and the food jam offered hands-on engagement with sustainable practices. The film *Temperature Rising* and reflective discussions allowed for grassroots climate activism and policy critique. Participants gained a greater appreciation for the interconnectedness of ecological stewardship, food sovereignty and faith-based advocacy. They recognized both the challenges and the transformative potential of mobilizing local, organic, and traditional food knowledge in the face of climate change.

The growing network of green champions strengthens regional solidarity and offers hope for a future of resilient, just and sustainable communities in Southern Africa safeguarding the Earth for future generations.

Below are some voices from the FLEAT trainings:

The FLEAT South Africa II cohort declared: *"We, the multi-faith leaders in the Agroecology space, comprised of members of faith communities from across South Africa, believe that caring for the community of life on Earth is our shared responsibility. We note that food is*

sacred and must be Pure. In the richness of our faiths, and great variety of beliefs and practices, we share a mandate to care for our common sacred home, which sustains and nourishes the whole community of life."

Zahadi Ngovi Kika, a faith leader from Tanzania shared: "After receiving training from SAFCEI I was able to start a tree nursery project known as 'My Environment, My Life' - a demo plot to learn the importance of environmental care. With 15 committed people, half of them youth, we distributed 7000 trees and planted 237 trees in schools, sea beaches as well as wild and rural areas."



FLEAT South Africa II, Indigenous Food Festival at the Sustainability Institute, Stellenbosch, May 2024.

Regional Women - Ulfat Hussein Masibo, Kenya

Ulfat Hussein Masibo is a Muslim faith actor, feminist, and women's rights advocate based in Mombasa, Kenya. She is the Director of the Africa Muslim Women Action Network, which focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly within the Muslim community. Ulfat, a trained lawyer, is now a trainer on environmental justice, blending her legal background with advocacy work. Ulfat mentors other women in her region and also contributes to local government discussions on environmental policies.

Ulfat joined FLEAT (Faith Leaders Environmental Advocacy Training) in 2022. Advocating for women's rights within the Muslim community is not easy, she says, as feminism is often misunderstood and seen as incompatible with Islam. Her engagement with SAFCEI significantly boosted her expertise. Through FLEAT, she engaged in environmental justice and advocacy activities in East Africa with faith leaders. She values the networks she has built through the SAFCEI training platforms, particularly with Muslim women from other

countries like Uganda and Tanzania. She envisions a future where faith leaders actively engage in deeper gender and climate justice conversations, particularly addressing patriarchal structures within religious communities.

Ulfat says: “The FLEAT trainings are very good. Most of the women are faith actors from the rural areas. They were given a voice and more capacity so that when they go back they can empower others. I belong to other global networks (and)now, through the FLEAT trainings, I'm able to engage further and I have become a very active member. I am now even on the task force for environmental work and talk about environmental justice and environmental law easily. I participate in the county forum, where I am advocating for laws and the functionality of the department of environment of our county. I input into shaping policies, ensure that they are having an action plan and hold the government to account. **The SAFCEI engagement is building my space and the people under me and also the people around me.**”

Ulfat also received funding through Green Action Week in 2024. Through the funding she started an inter-faith youth collaboration on food security. Faith communities can play (a role) in addressing food insecurity together and we agreed to sit down with the county government to address this challenge.



*Above Left to Right: Ulfat Mabiso (Regional Women’s FLEAT, Kenya) and Africa Muslim Women Action Network women at the Faith and Food Security discussion during Green Action Week, October 2024
Below: Green Action Week brought interfaith communities together to promote advocacy on climate change and food systems in Kenya.*



Green Action Week Small Grants

Green Action Week (GAW) is a global campaign raising awareness about the need for sustainable consumption for one week in October every year. In 2024, the GAW theme was “Sharing Community”.

In 2024, SAFCEI supported 11 faith leaders (6 women and 5 men) to carry out Green Action Week activities in nine communities across six countries (Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The leaders represented four different faiths, African Traditional Religion, Bahai, Christians, and Muslims, and the campaigns reached a total of 4945 participants.

Workshops and activities, included planting indigenous and sustainable food, awareness raising for faith leaders on climate change, tree planting and the protection of forests, and ecumenical climate change advocacy engagements for youth.

Green Action Week - Saifullah Alick, Malawi

Saifullah Alick is a faith leader from central Malawi, who implemented a successful Green Action Week project in 2024, through tenacity and foresight. Through his interfaith community project, he educated over 1100 participants and planted 6000 nursery-grown tree seedlings to promote climate-smart agriculture and natural regeneration.



6000 nursery-grown seedlings in Malawi ready to be planted during Green action Week.

Saifullah says: **“What I think about each and every day is conservation, agriculture and food security. Environmental conservation is in me and I take it out of me to inspire**

others.” He continues: “We all feel the effects of nature degradation so we have learned the need of working together regardless of religion and the funding has made it possible for us to actually have a collective project.”

To help farmers adapt to climate change, the project promoted natural regeneration and encouraged farmers to protect existing shrubs and trees on their fields and set up demonstration sites to showcase climate-smart agriculture techniques, such as moisture retention methods and winter cropping. Saifullah shared: “We need to repeat those demonstrations we had this year, so that we increase the adoption rate. Agricultural messages are not a one-time issue. Advocacy for affordable irrigation solutions, such as gravity-fed or solar-powered pumps, is another important focus to reduce dependency on erratic rainfall and ensure consistent food production.”

Saifullah involved local authorities in the initiative and fostered a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for the trees. He says: “I can really feel that people’s mindsets have started to shift through the education we provided and the planting of 6,000 trees. Now it is about larger scale implementation... If all the 1,100 households that we engaged plant 100 to 200 trees per season, that would make a real difference in people's lives.”

Saifullah is also an expert in beekeeping and trains people on how to set up beehives. He wants to expand his work by including projects on beekeeping and sustainable irrigation.

Eco-Justice Small Grants

Some of our members need additional support in the form of direct funding so we began to provide small grants in 2018 for faith leaders to initiate and implement environmental justice work. Applications are evaluated to determine whether they align with our mission – especially climate and eco-justice actions, and building community resilience. Faith and Eco-Justice Small Grants were awarded to support projects of seven faith leaders and communities in South Africa and Mozambique in 2024. Projects included locally-led Food and Climate Justice, and Energy and Climate Justice initiatives.



Left: Eco-Bishops Conference, Cape Town, October 2024. Right: Central Karoo Farm Communities Association workshop on agroecology and climate justice, Beaufort West, November 2024.

Communications

SAFCEI maintained a strong and growing online presence in 2024, using digital platforms as tools to advance our mission. Through our website, e-newsletter, Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and WhatsApp, we consistently share knowledge and resources to empower active citizens and faith communities. These platforms played a key role in mobilising support, promoting our campaigns, and encouraging meaningful engagement with our advocacy work throughout the year.

	Facebook 2023: 3900 2024: 4194		Instagram 2023: 1210 2024: 1525		X (Twitter) 2023: 3423 2024: 3477
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In 2024, SAFCEI's work continued to gain significant media attention, with a total of 448 features across various platforms. This included 260 online articles, 91 print media features, 82 radio interviews, and 19 television appearances – collectively reaching an estimated audience of over 167 million people. Our advocacy on Animal, Energy, Food and Climate Justice remained central to this coverage.

We actively contributed to the public discourse by issuing 18 press releases, publishing 4 opinion pieces, and providing 10 media comments. While energy justice continued to lead in media attention, we also saw a notable increase in coverage for our Cage-Free Campaign, reflecting growing public interest in animal welfare.

Our social media presence has shown impressive growth, with increased traction from both organic and boosted posts. We shared 2097 posts, reaching a total of over 584 000 people. There has been a significant increase of 996 new followers across all platforms.



Left: Francesca de Gasparis, SAFCEI's Executive Director live television interview, on the 7th Anniversary of the landmark nuclear deal court case victory, April, 2024. Right: Rev Glynis Goyns, Media training at the FLEAT Zambia workshop, May, 2024.

Earthkeepers' Fast Action Network

Much of the success of our #CageFreeSA campaign is thanks to our Earthkeepers' FAN network, which mobilised digital activists to encourage retailers to go cage-free.

FAN members met in person, at community indabas and acted online by sharing cage-free content on social media, signing petitions, leaving comments and reviews on social media platforms, taking part in webinars and fun quizzes on social media, distributing stickers and pamphlets and more.

Get involved by signing up at <https://rb.gy/z7oa22>, and follow the hashtag #CageFreeSA on all of SAFCEI's social media accounts (@safcei).



Pamphlets about the #VerifiedCageFree ([Cage-Free South Africa](#)) Campaign, used for corporate engagement with small to medium scale businesses..

Support

SAFCEI receives funding and support from a number of organisations that share our values, mission and programmatic focus.

We collaborate with an extensive network of local, regional and international partner organisations both within the faith sector and civil society to fulfil our purpose and offer direct support to our members and affiliated groups.



Seeds, seedlings and craft on sale at the Amadiba Food Festival in August 2024.

Sustaining the Wild Coast

Sustaining the Wild Coast (SWC) is a project partner of SAFCEI that is focused on supporting communities along the Wild Coast.

SWC promotes agroecology, supports community-owned ecotourism ventures and mentorship of young people as land custodians. It advocates on behalf of the Amadiba community in its struggle to protect its land, ocean and biodiversity from destruction, as well as the right of this community to self-determination.

In 2014, the SWC Youth Leadership Team continued to be involved in promoting grassroots activities in the Amadiba area according to SWC's focus areas of agroecology, ecotourism, education for land custodianship and advocacy.

Key Achievements in 2024

Young farmers in Amadiba have received training and business startup support in crop and poultry farming, nursery management and beekeeping from The Siyazisiza Trust working in collaboration with the SWC team. Community gardens have been established in six villages.

The Youth Leadership Team played a critical role in facilitating the building of spring protection infrastructure to improve access to water in five villages in Amadiba.

Under the banner of our IMBO of Mpondo Women group, and in partnership with The Siyazisiza Trust and Daughters for Earth, Mpondo culture was celebrated through two big food festivals, and through six smaller village events that focused on seed-sharing events and cooking traditional dishes with modern twists. Our events reminded young people that traditional food is healthy, delicious and such an important part of Mpondo culture.

The Leadership Team led Amadiba Youth in participating in the annual Great Southern Bioblitz and City Nature Challenge and led hiking events and beach cleanups. These events gave young people opportunities to learn about the Mpondoland Centre of Endemism which is part of their natural heritage, and a global biodiversity hotspot. They also learnt about the importance of ecotourism on the Wild Coast.

The Amadiba Community Network team led the completion of a solar powered building, funded by The Honnold Foundation. This serves as an office and is the first youth-owned and managed space in the Amadiba area. It is also a community WiFi hotspot where printing and photocopying services are available. The provision of these services saves people a 4-hour round trip to the nearest town of Mbizana.

Members of the Youth Leadership Team worked as translators for visiting researchers and reporters, enabling the stories and knowledge of elders in the communities to be amplified and shared with national and international audiences.

The Leadership Team represented SWC at gatherings during the year, growing their knowledge of important environmental issues and contributing their knowledge and positive energy to these events.

Amadiba leaders, Sinegugu Zululu and Nonhle Mbuthuma, were awarded the Goldman Prize for Africa which gave them an international platform from which to tell the story of Mpondo resistance to mining both on land and offshore.

The film, Wild Coast Warriors drew sellout audiences at the Encounters Film Festival and won several international awards.



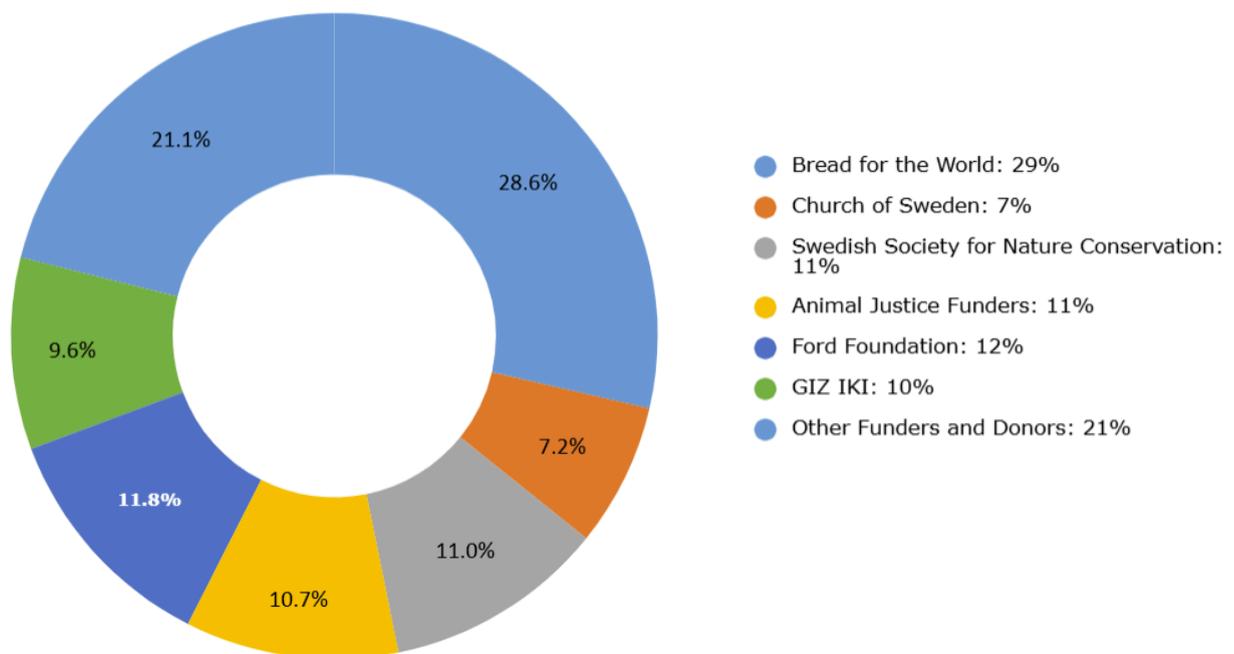
Nonhle Mbuthuma-Forsland, co-recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize, giving her keynote address at SAFCEI's Annual General Meeting, Cape Town, August 2024.

Our Financials

Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute NPC Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2024

Registration no. 2006/014388/08

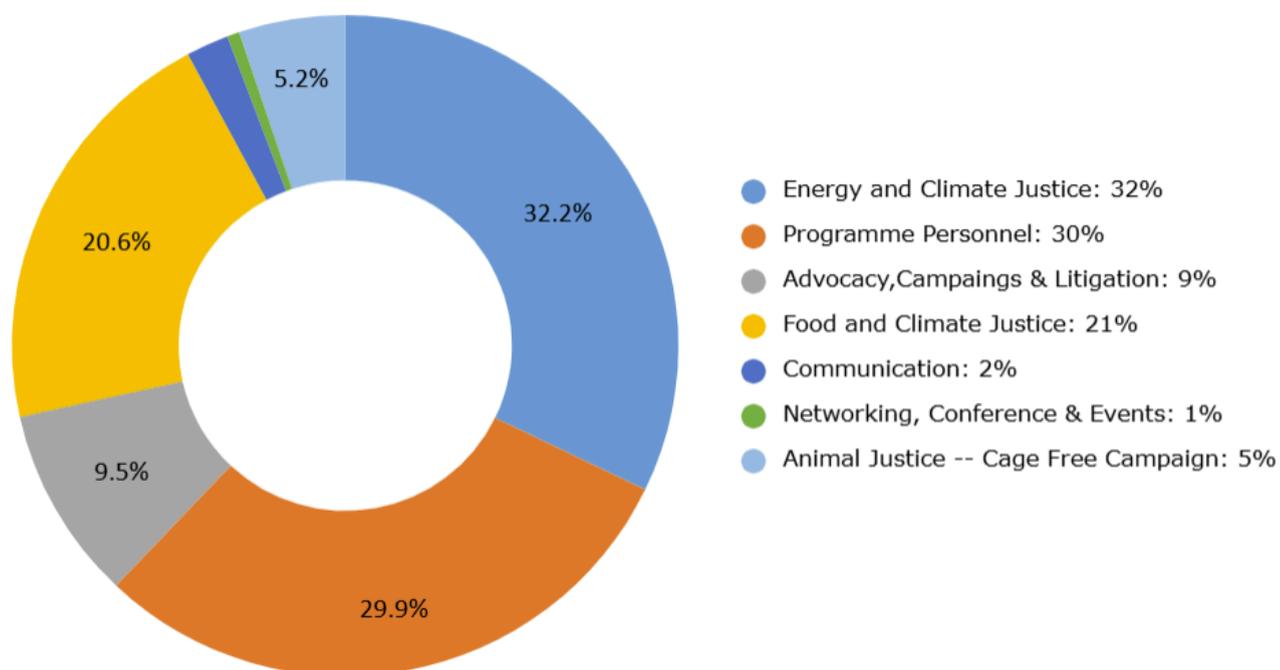
Grants Received in 2024



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 (ZAR)	2023 (ZAR)
Income		
Grants	17,568,568	11,669,703
Other income	500.00	-
Donations	9,755	8,495
Interest income	405,085	312,762
Unrealised income	-	20,981
Total Income	17,983,908	12,011,941

Funds used in 2024



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2024

Expenditure		
Programme costs	12,567,054	7,900,645
General operating costs	3,131,245	2,892,254
Premise and equipment costs	442,556	373,256
Professional services	812,936	337,494
Governance	495,629	144,681
Total Expenditure	17,449,420	11,648,330

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024

	2024 (ZAR)	2023 (ZAR)
Assets		
Non Current Assets	174,303	110,718
Current Assets	4,426,334	8,474,540
Total Assets	4,600,637	8,585,258
Reserves and Liabilities	2024 (ZAR)	2023 (ZAR)
Funds and Reserves	2,819,867	1,548,622
Current Liabilities	1,780,770	7,136,636
Total Reserves and Liabilities	4,600,637	8,685,258

Statement of Changes in Funds

	Sustainability (ZAR)	Accumulated (ZAR)	Equipment fund (ZAR)	Total (ZAR)
Balance at 1 January 2024	--	1,437,904	110,718	1,548,622
Surplus for the year	--	534,493	--	534,493
Transfer to equipment fund for additions	--	-152,133	152,133	--
Depreciation during the year	--	88,550	-88,550	--
Transfer to Sustainability Reserve	736,753	--	--	736,753
Balance at 31 December 2024	736,753	1,908,812	174,302	2,819,868

SAFCEI

Staff

Portia Biggar: Office Administrator and Bookkeeper
Judy-Rose Cyster: Junior Admin Assistant
Nadia Youlou-Youlou: Finance and Operations Manager
Francesca de Gasparis: Executive Director
Tamzyn Pamplin: Communications Manager
Gabriel Manyangadze: Food and Climate Justice Manager
Afikile Ndude: Training Coordinator
Olwethu Mbuthuma: Programmes Administrator
Mmathapelo Mosakedi: Social Media Coordinator
Khayakazi Matanda: Communications Coordinator
Maia Nangle: Campaigns Coordinator
Mishkah Moerat: Campaigns Officer
Zwelisha Shobede: Cage-Free Campaign Coordinator
Tara Nair van Ryneveld: Climate Policy Coordinator



Board

Mr David Munene (Catholic) (Chair), appointed 2024
Imam Salieg Isaacs (Muslim), appointed 2021
Sister Usha Jevan (Brahma Kumaris), appointed 2011
Ms Kirtanya Maharaj (Hindu), appointed 2018
Reverend Deon McDillon (Anglican), appointed 2023
Ms Queen Munyai (Christian), appointed 2022
Ms Kholeka Ngubeni-Henderson (Christian), appointed 2024
Mr Barnard Steyn (Dutch Reform Church), appointed 2024
Ms Francesca de Gasparis, Executive Director (Ex-officio Director)



Members, volunteers and partners

Our members, Advisory Council and volunteers provide us with vital support by offering their time, skills and resources to deepen the scale and impact of our work. We are hugely grateful for their ongoing dedication to our mission.

We are particularly thankful for the support we get from our relationships with our advisors, collaborative partners, funders and donors.

We warmly thank our 2024 donors:

ACT Church of Sweden
Bread for the World
DG Murray Trust
European Commission Climate Change Champions
Irish Embassy
Ford Foundation
Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust
International Climate Initiative
Open Wing Alliance/The Humane League
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation



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