



HLANGANISA
COMMUNITY FUND
FOR SOCIAL AND GENDER JUSTICE

2nd Edition
2025

Hlanganisa Post

GLOBAL CHANGEMAKERS:

Hlanganisa's
Voice at the
Berlin Gathering

SOLIDARITY AT THE BARAZA:

Movements as the
Engine of Change

NATIONAL DIALOGUE:

National Dialogue
for Who? By Who?



HLANGANISA
COMMUNITY FUND
FOR SOCIAL AND GENDER JUSTICE



Bongiwe Ndondo

FROM DIALOGUE TO DISRUPTION

Reimagining Power in a Time of Transition

This quarter, we've witnessed a powerful convergence of political, environmental, and social shifts—here in South Africa, across the continent, and globally. From national strategy dialogues to international climate forums and feminist economic platforms, it is evident that the world is navigating a critical crossroads, the world is in search of new direction.

Whether in Cape Town, Seville, Berlin, or Accra, our message remains consistent. People, particularly women and communities on the margins, must be at the centre of any meaningful transformation.

- > We do not convene for the sake of consensus but to co-create clarity.
- > We do not participate in global forums to be seen but to reshape discourse with grounded truths.
- > We do not speak of justice in abstraction but as a demand for lived change.

This edition of the **Hlanganisa Post** captures how we, together with our partners and movements, are shaping the story of our time.

From community agency to feminist economics, from climate justice to resourcing resistance this is our collective narrative. Let us continue to walk beside those who dare to dream of different futures and build them every day, against all odds!

In solidarity,

Bongiwe Ndondo
CEO, Hlanganisa Community Fund

MEET OUR BOARD:

Strategic Leadership for a Transformative Era

We proudly welcome new board members:



Dr. Palesa Makhale-Mahlangu
Clinical Psychologist and Trauma Expert



Kgomotso Molewa
Governance and Compliance Strategist

Joining returning members:



Lebogang Ramafoko



Adv. Jeff Mongwe



Bongiwe Ndondo



Edmond Shoko

Their collective wisdom and dedication to justice
will shape Hlanganisa's strategic direction.

Hlanganisa Taking the **Global Stage**

New York
USA



Seville
Spain



Accra
Ghana



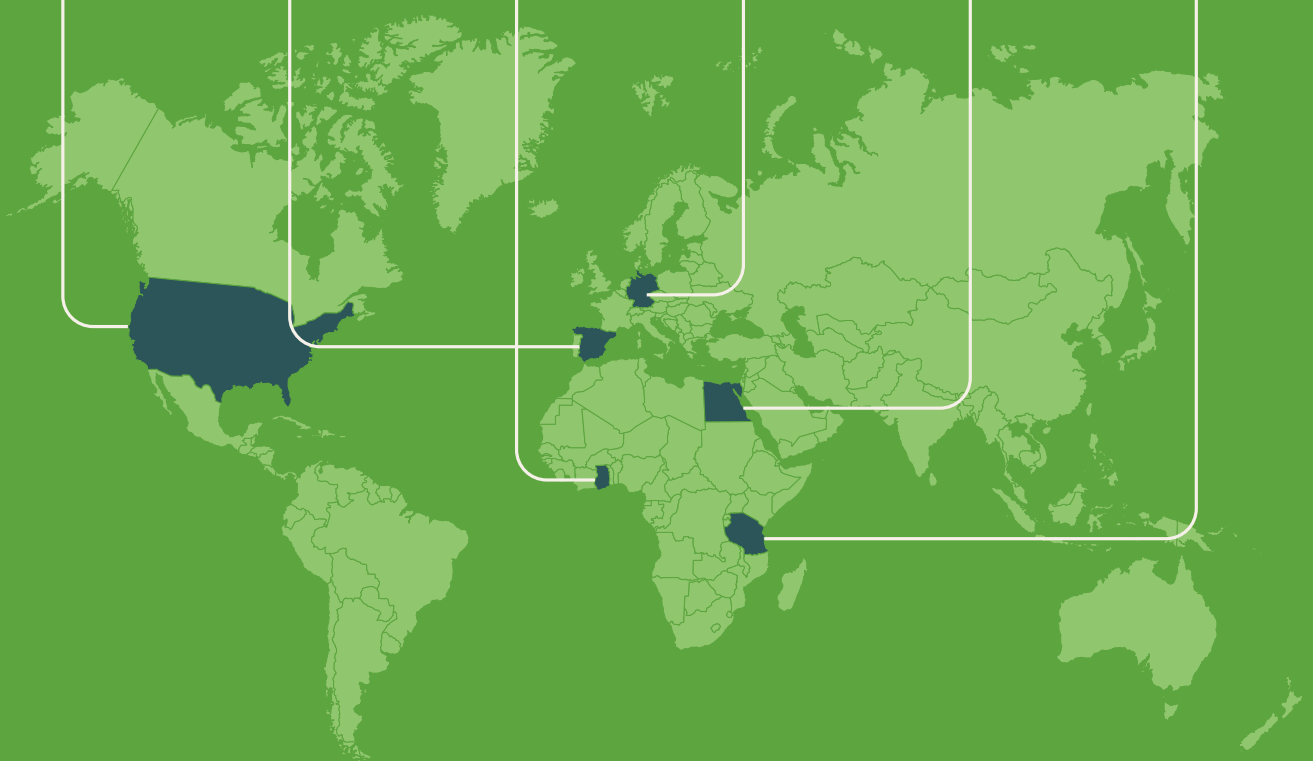
Berlin
Germany



Cairo
Egypt



Arusha
Tanzania



Hlanganisa Post

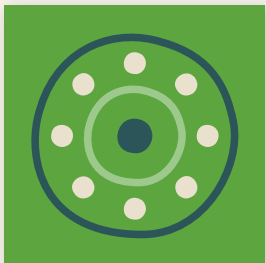
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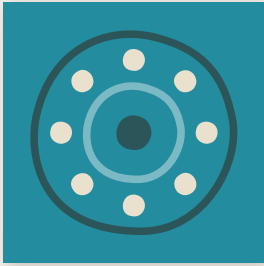
For decades, Africa Day has symbolized the spirit of Pan-Africanism — the belief in the unity of African peoples, both on the continent and in the diaspora.



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Shining a spotlight on our partners offers a strong reminder of the impact local organisations can have when given the tools and support to lead change.

UNITING FOR IMPACT:

Charting Civil Society's Future in the National Dialogue

In April 2025, the Hlanganisa Community Fund brought together **over 60 organisations and social justice leaders for a two-day National Dialogue Strategy Planning Meeting**. It came at a critical moment. With the president's recent announcement of a National Dialogue process and R700 million allocated to fund it the convening was not just a reaction to government plans, but a deliberate intervention:



To ask, whose dialogue is this, and who is being left out?



The political climate is unstable. Public trust is low. The space for civic engagement has shrunk under the weight of corruption, inequality, and systemic exclusion. Institutions meant to serve the people are weakened, and those most affected working-class communities, youth, rural organisers, and grassroots movements are often excluded from national conversations.

Civil society is not a stakeholder to be consulted at the eleventh hour it is a co-creator of democracy. The Hlanganisa convening made clear that civil society must not only participate in the dialogue but lead it. We are in direct contact with communities. We carry their struggles, their aspirations, and their solutions. We must organise from the ground up and build power that can influence outcomes not just respond to them.

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A central theme from the convening was the need for unified advocacy platforms spaces where organisations working in different sectors can align around common priorities. Only by working together can we create the political weight necessary to hold institutions accountable. Equally important is investing in community-led policy alternatives where people define the issues and propose practical, rights-based solutions rooted in their lived realities. And we must move beyond short-term advocacy to establish long-term accountability frameworks, to ensure that commitments made at the national level translate into real change in people's lives.



On the second day, the gathering turned a critical eye to the official dialogue process. Who is making the decisions? Who benefits? Many raised the contradiction of spending R700 million on a national dialogue while over R16 billion in student debt remains unresolved and communities still lack basic infrastructure. If we are serious about justice, these priorities must be challenged.

The National Dialogue cannot be another elite-led process detached from the realities of ordinary people. It must be bold, inclusive, and transparent. Civil society must insist on being at the centre not as guests, but as partners in rebuilding the social contract. We have done this work before, and we will continue to do it because we know that democracy is not built in boardrooms, but in communities



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NATIONAL DIALOGUE:

National Dialogue for Who? By Who?

South Africa stands at a crossroads again. The latest iteration of a “National Dialogue” has been announced with much fanfare, reinforced by lofty rhetoric of reconciliation, unity, and solutions. The government, together with an “eminent group” of leaders, has promised to engage South Africans in charting a path forward. But we must ask the hard questions: **Dialogue for whom? At what cost? And does this model still serve us?**



THE MYTH OF DIALOGUE AS A CURE-ALL

Let us begin by stating the obvious: the country is not short of dialogue. We have dialogued ourselves into circles for decades. We’ve had truth commissions, reconciliation campaigns, consultative forums, presidential summits, and multiple commissions of inquiry. And yet, for millions of South Africans, nothing has changed. **Poverty deepens. Corruption spreads. Crime worsens. Unemployment crushes dreams.**

We are witnessing escalating criminality not just on the streets but inside government chambers. ANC-aligned leaders, year after year, make headlines for looting public funds, failing public institutions, and sabotaging essential services. Against this backdrop, how can we justify dedicating millions of rand to elite talk shops disguised as “dialogues,” while ordinary people sleep hungry, jobless, and hopeless?

Poverty deepens.
Corruption spreads.
Crime worsens.
Unemployment
crushes dreams.





WHO SPEAKS FOR WHOM?

The question of representation is central. The so-called "eminent persons group" who selected them? On what democratic mandate do they operate? Many of these individuals are political insiders, former officials, or academics far removed from the lived realities of informal settlements, unemployed youth, or community activists. Once again, grassroots voices the true frontline of South Africa's struggle are left out of the room, or invited only for optics.

This is not accountability. This is performance.

This is not
accountability.
This is
performance.



BUDGET SCRUTINY

Transparency is sorely lacking. Out of the R700 million allocated How much is spent on catering, luxury venues, travel, and honoraria for "facilitators"? Can we truly justify this spending in a nation where schools still have pit toilets and clinics run without medication? Every rand funneled into elite-led dialogue is a rand diverted from urgent needs like housing, education, and food security. The government's priorities are not just misaligned they are morally bankrupt.

A working group that lacks transparency, real grassroots participation, and measurable outcomes is no longer a tool of democracy. It becomes a smokescreen a buffer between the powerful and the people. It soothes guilt, creates headlines, and buys time, but it does not deliver justice. It's time we demand a new standard for national engagement: one rooted in participatory democracy, not elite consensus. That means community assemblies, worker forums, youth councils, and public budget hearings spaces where ordinary South Africans speak for themselves, not through intermediaries. That is dialogue with dignity.

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ENOUGH OF THE THEATRE

We do not need another sanitized dialogue where elites speak politely while our communities bleed. We need justice. We need redistribution. We need accountability. Dialogue must be more than talk. It must be a tool for power to be returned to the people. Until then, we must ask: **National Dialogue for who?**

National Dialogue
for who?

GLOBAL CHANGEMAKERS:

Hlanganisa's Voice at the Berlin Gathering

When systems around the world are buckling under the weight of authoritarianism, inequality, and democratic decay, it is grassroots voices like Hlanganisa's that remind us where the real work of transformation begins with **communities, stories, and memory.**

In May, Hlanganisa its mark on the global stage when Board Chair Lebogang Ramafoko joined leaders, practitioners, and activists from around the world to explore the theme **"Systems Transformation in an Age of Polarisation."**



Her contribution, titled **"Learning Journey Pedagogy from the Grassroots,"** highlighted the value of community-driven knowledge in confronting historical injustice and building alternative futures. Drawing on Hlanganisa's work in Soweto, she illustrated how storytelling and memory can serve as tools of political education connecting the struggles of apartheid resistance with contemporary activism.

This approach is not simply educational. It is a deliberate method of shifting power placing knowledge production in the hands of those most affected by exclusion, inequality, and violence. It challenges dominant narratives that frame change as something delivered to communities and instead positions grassroots actors as the architects of transformation.

Hlanganisa's presence in Berlin signals more than just representation it is an assertion that African, feminist, and community-led approaches must be central to any serious conversation about systemic change. It is a call to move beyond tokenism and toward meaningful inclusion of local knowledge in global policy and advocacy platforms.



Transformation cannot be engineered in isolation from those most impacted by systemic injustice. It requires a commitment to participatory models, sustained investment in community infrastructure, and recognition that global change begins with local action.



AFRICA DAY 2025:

A Legacy of Liberation and Unity

Africa Day marks the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The OAU, now succeeded by the African Union, was born out of the collective vision of leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Haile Selassie, Julius Nyerere, and others who dared to imagine an Africa **free from colonial domination and bound together by shared destiny**.



For decades, Africa Day has symbolized the spirit of Pan-Africanism — the belief in the unity of African peoples, both on the continent and in the diaspora. It is a day to honor the struggles that brought political independence, but also to interrogate how far we've come in realizing the economic, social, and psychological liberation that true freedom demands.

Yet, according to recent statistics, only **22% of South Africans** are aware of why Africa Day is commemorated. This disconnect underscores a critical challenge: how do we preserve historical memory and pass it forward in meaningful ways?

Only 22% of South Africans
are aware of why Africa
Day is commemorated.

FINANCING A JUST FUTURE:

Feminist Voices from the Frontlines of Climate and Economic Crisis

At the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), held recently in Seville, Spain, a powerful call echoed through the ornate halls of diplomacy and development discourse no more business as usual. Among the voices leading this demand for change was Hlanganisa Community Fund, a bold feminist fund rooted in the lived realities of grassroots communities in Southern Africa.



Our advocacy position was that if financing for development is to be just and effective, it must centre the voices of those most affected by inequality, climate catastrophe, and economic marginalization.

FfD4 convened stakeholders from around the globe to examine how the international financial architecture can evolve to meet the pressing challenges of our time. Yet, all too often, these spaces are dominated by technical language and elite-driven priorities far removed from the everyday struggles of communities, especially in the Global South, who are living through the harsh realities of climate change and economic injustice.





There is an urgent need to rethink development through the lenses of social justice, gender equity, and climate accountability. For women on the frontlines of climate breakdown, economic injustice is not an abstract issue it is a daily reality. Droughts, floods, and extractive industries devastate homes and livelihoods, while international financial flows continue to ignore or even aggravate these vulnerabilities.

Feminist movements, especially those led by communities in the Global South, have long argued that climate justice and gender justice are inseparable. Climate financing mechanisms must do more than generate carbon markets they must prioritize reparative justice, support community-based solutions, and put power and resources directly in the hands of women who are leading the charge for change.

At FfD4, Hlanganisa pushed for a redistribution of power in financing systems: away from large multilateral banks and towards locally rooted feminist funds and community-led initiatives. This is not simply about inclusion it's about transformation. The current global financing model reinforces systems of extraction and patriarchy; feminist alternatives envision economies that are regenerative, redistributive, and accountable. One of the key messages brought forward was the inadequacy of climate financing commitments to truly address the gendered impact of climate change. Funding must be flexible, long-term, and accessible to grassroots actors not mired in bureaucratic barriers or conditionalities that perpetuate inequality. Women's voices are not peripheral they are essential to crafting solutions that are sustainable and just.

FfD4 presented a critical moment: will global leaders continue to tinker at the margins of a broken system, or will they embrace transformative approaches that challenge deep-rooted hierarchies? Hlanganisa's engagement in Seville was a firm stand for the latter. It signalled that communities are not waiting for permission to lead, they are already building alternatives grounded in care, solidarity, and resistance.

In the face of intersecting crises, the path forward must be bold. Feminist funding, climate justice, and grassroots power are not optional they are the blueprint for a just and liveable future.

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SOLIDARITY AT THE BARAZA:

Movements as the Engine of Change

In April, Hlanganisa joined over 150 movement leaders from across the continent at the 3rd African Social Movements Baraza in Accra, Ghana. The gathering focused on strengthening movement resourcing, defending civic space, and deepening Pan-African solidarity.

Throughout the convening, one message stood out: movements are not aid recipients. They are powerful drivers of systemic change. From land rights to gender justice, movements are shaping the future of the continent through grassroots action. At Hlanganisa, we share this vision. We believe in justice-driven funding built on trust, mutual respect, and long-term partnership.

We are clear in our position. Movements are a critical lever of change. Our approach goes beyond financial support. We walk alongside movements, providing flexible funding, technical support, and space to lead on their own terms.

Dare we say it: Hlanganisa is one of the very few funders intentionally channelling resources to movements in Southern Africa, especially those often overlooked by mainstream philanthropy. We are proud to stand with them, not just as funders, but as partners in the work of building more just and inclusive societies.



The Baraza was a reminder that real change is people-powered. Movements are not part of the change process. They drive it. And at Hlanganisa, we remain committed to supporting that drive with courage and conviction.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AHEAD OF COP30:

Elevating African Climate Leadership

As part of our ongoing advocacy in the lead-up to COP30, our Executive Director, Bongiwe Ndondo, represented us at the F20 Climate Solutions Forum held in Cape Town on May 27, 2025. The forum brought together climate leaders, funders, and civil society actors committed to accelerating just transitions. Ndondo was a featured speaker in a pivotal session titled **“Philanthropy for Climate in South Africa: A Gateway to Transforming Climate Action on the Continent.”**

Framing Africa not as a site of crisis but of climate innovation, Ndondo highlighted the disconnect between global funding flows and frontline climate realities. Despite contributing less than 4% to global emissions, Africa remains one of the hardest-hit regions by climate impacts. She emphasized that only 3% of global climate finance reaches Sub-Saharan Africa and a fraction of that trickles down to grassroots actors.

In preparation for COP30, Ndondo is advancing a bold vision. Funding models that are:

- Trust-based and long-term
- Women-led and gender-conscious
- Grounded in agroecological and indigenous knowledge systems



She illustrated this with a concrete example from Limpopo, where a women-led cooperative has implemented a water-harvesting system that significantly mitigated the effects of prolonged drought. Despite the initiative's impact, it remains underfunded highlighting the urgent need for systemic shifts in how climate finance is distributed.

Ndondo challenged philanthropic institutions to go beyond rhetoric and channel significant, sustained investments into adaptation and resilience particularly in the Global South. **“Are climate solutions truly reaching the communities most impacted?”** she asked, calling on the sector to fund not just projects, but power and leadership from the ground up.

This intervention is one of several strategic engagements we are undertaking to ensure that the road to COP30 centres African voices not as passive recipients, but as architects of justice-centred climate solutions.



WOMEN'S MONTH:

"Justice For? and for How Long?"

As August draws near, South Africa braces for the familiar rhythm of **Women's Month**: hashtags bloom, banners rise, speeches echo with resolve. "Justice for survivors!" they chant.



By Prudence Siweya

Yet, as the slogans fade into another news cycle, the violence rages on unchecked and unremorseful. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, over 10,000 rape cases were reported. That's more than 100 women and children raped every day. These numbers don't just climb; they scream. And still, the response is tepid, predictable, performative.

OVER
10,000
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REPORTED IN 2025

MORE THAN
100
WOMEN & CHILDREN
ARE RAPED
EVERY DAY

So we ask again: Justice for whom and for how long?

Every year, women are paraded as symbols of strength while the systems meant to protect them continue to fail. Police stations are hostile. Rape kits sit untouched. Courtrooms retraumatize. Shelters are underfunded. Political leaders make promises, then disappear. It's not a justice system it's a holding pattern. And women are tired of being held in it.

Justice isn't a speech. It's not a campaign or a press conference.
**It's a rape kit tested on time. It's a restraining order that's enforced.
It's a child protected before harm, not after. It's shelter, support,
prosecution, protection and yes, transformation.**

We've heard the names of the fallen Uyinene, Karabo, Anene, Tshegofatso, countless others and lit candles in their memory. But remembrance without reform is an insult. We've cried out for justice before. Justice for Khwezi. Justice for Cwecwe. Names that should have changed everything but didn't. And now, even the face of justice itself is under question. When a senior judge like President Selby Mbenenge meant to uphold the law is accused of sexual harassment, where do women turn? When the very people trusted to protect us become the threat, what hope is left? We are not safe in our homes, our schools, our taxis and now, not even in the courts. Where is justice supposed to live, if not there? Women's Month cannot be a period of temporary outrage before the country returns to silence. It must be a mirror and a mandate.

Feminist movements, such as the Sisterhood Advocates Project by Hlanganisa funded by the Social Employment Fund have long offered community-based, survivor-led solutions. Justice that heals. Interventions that work. Accountability that transforms. These alternatives exist, but they're not fully supported, not listened to, not taken seriously. Because power would rather perform grief than surrender control.

Justice can't come once a year. Women and girls are being hurt every month not just in August. We don't want to be seen or celebrated for one month. We want to be safe all year. We need justice in January. We need protection in April. We need change that lasts, not just talk when it's convenient.

Keep your ribbons. Keep your slogans. We're not inspired by purple anymore. We want systems that work, budgets that prioritize survivors, and leaders who treat GBV like the crisis it is not a PR opportunity.



**Justice for whom and for how long?
We're done asking. We're demanding.**

EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE PHILANTHROPY:

Insights from Arusha, Tanzania

In response to a rapidly evolving funding landscape, Hlanganisa participated in a strategic convening hosted by the African Philanthropy Network (APN) in Arusha, Tanzania. **The training focused on alternative financing models in the context of shrinking donor support, growing aid conditionalities, and the increasing need for autonomy within civil society.**



The convening surfaced critical reflections on the need to reframe resourcing beyond traditional models. Discussions centered on trust-based philanthropy, the untapped potential of diaspora engagement, and fostering cross-sector partnerships particularly with local business ecosystems. These approaches were examined not only as funding alternatives but as essential levers for shifting power, enhancing local ownership, and building long-term sustainability.

Our participation reinforced a key insight: in times of uncertainty, innovation and collaboration must drive the sector's response. Philanthropy must evolve to become more agile, locally rooted, and accountable to the communities it serves.

Hlanganisa returns from Arusha with renewed commitment to advocating for funding models that centre equity, community agency, and systemic change. We see an urgent opportunity to influence policy and philanthropic practice toward approaches that dismantle extractive dynamics and strengthen African-led development.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Ixopo Support and Resource Centre

With support from the Hlanganisa Community Fund's Access to Justice programme (July 2024 – June 2025), **Ixopo Support and Resource Centre** made great strides in strengthening community-based support and access to justice.

Activities included home visits for survivors of domestic violence, school presentations on crime prevention, and public awareness events during key campaigns like 16 Days of Activism and World AIDS Day. The organisation also hosted stakeholder meetings and support group sessions to listen to the needs of the community and strengthen collaboration.

A major highlight of the year was the formation of a support group for eight survivors of domestic violence. The Centre helped six women apply for and receive protection orders, while two others received mediation support. All eight survivors are now living free from abuse and have started referring others to the Centre. In another important case, the team followed up on a human trafficking report raised during a community event leading to the arrest of a suspect and the safe return of a missing child.

The Centre also took steps to support LGBTQIA+ individuals, hosting a session during the 16 Days campaign that encouraged two survivors to come forward and receive help. Thanks to the funding and mentorship, the team not only reached more people but also gained confidence and motivation in their work.



Ixopo Support and Resource Centre's efforts are a strong reminder of the impact local organisations can have when given the tools and support to lead change.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Estcourt Support and Resource Centre (ESRC)

Located in Estcourt town under the Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality, **Estcourt Support and Resource Centre** serves a wide range of rural and township communities across the region. Since becoming an Access to Justice partner in 2023, ESRC has grown significantly in both its operations and impact.

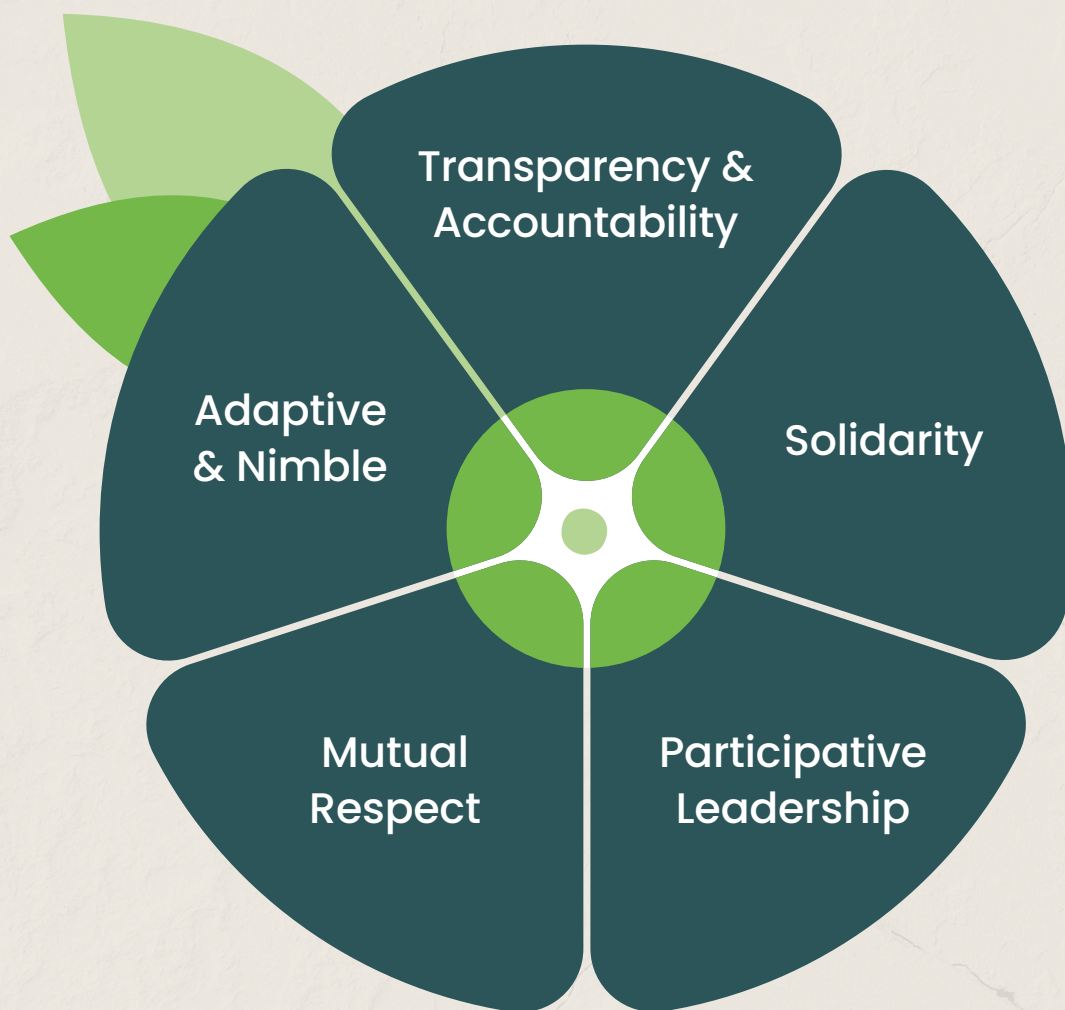
The organisation works to protect and promote human rights, focusing on gender-based violence, rape, domestic abuse, child protection, and labour-related issues. They also play a key role in legal and social referrals, working closely with local stakeholders to support vulnerable community members.

With support from Hlanganisa and the capacity-building sessions, ESRC has made major strides in governance, compliance, and organisational development. They addressed gaps in their DSD compliance, improved their financial systems, and strengthened their leadership structures. Inspired by what they learned, they rebranded with staff T-shirts and a new banner, launched a Facebook page, and expanded partnerships with key organisations like Black Sash, SAHRC, and Kagiso Trust. These changes have not only improved service delivery but also led to additional funding opportunities, including a top-up grant through the GBVF programme.

One of the Centre's proudest moments came when their office manager, Phumelele Mathonsi, represented the organisation at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in New York in March 2025. This global platform gave ESRC the chance to share their experiences and reaffirmed their role as a leader among grassroots organisations. From strengthening internal systems to standing on international stages, ESRC's journey is a powerful example of how commitment, learning, and the right support can transform community organisations for the better.



Values & Principles



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