



COPESSA Annual Report 2024 FY

Community-Based Prevention & Empowerment Strategies – South Africa
NPO (041-733 NPO) | PBO (930 012 177) | Company Registration No: 2000/025755/08

Executive summary

2024FY was a year of resilience, collaboration, and growth for our organization. Despite ongoing financial challenges, we continued to advance our mission of creating safer, healthier, and more empowered communities for children, youth, and families.

The year saw the creation of the COPESSA One-Session and six-session Dialogue, an innovative engagement model designed to bring men, women, and youth together in meaningful conversations about gender-based violence (GBV), gender norms, mental health, and positive masculinity, thanks to the GBVF Response Fund financial support. This dialogue format has proven to be a powerful tool for raising awareness, encouraging accountability, and promoting behavioural change.

Throughout the year, our work continued to promote dialogue facilitation, psychosocial support, and GBV prevention, fostering unity and healing within the communities we serve. This work was supported by Gauteng Department of Social development and GBVF Response Fund. As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of our achievements and grateful for the partnerships that made them possible. We remain committed to strengthening our advocacy, expanding our reach, and deepening our impact in the coming year.

Our After-School Care Programme successfully reached 454 children throughout the year, providing them with a safe, structured environment for learning, recreation, and psychosocial development. This accomplishment underscores our commitment to child protection and holistic growth. The programme provides safe spaces for children to develop academically and socially after school. Through strengthened partnerships with local schools and donors such as the local Pick n Pay we were able to sustain daily meals and activities.

In March, we joined other community-based organizations in a march to the Department of Social Development (DSD) to raise awareness around funding challenges that continue to affect NGOs across the sector. This action demonstrated our dedication to advocacy and sustainability in the non-profit environment, emphasizing the vital role that community organizations play in social

development.

We further strengthened our partnerships and community ties through a collaboration with the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Community Policing Forum (CPF), and Grace Bible Church to host a Youth Day event. This initiative provided a vibrant platform for young people to engage in mentorship, dialogue, and awareness activities focused on social issues, safety, and community building.

COPESSA is indebted to all the funders that support our work, the Board of Directors that provide leadership and guidance and to the staff and volunteers who work tirelessly under sometimes very difficult and demanding circumstances. Not least of all, we are truly thankful to the community who continue to trust and engage with us and takes risks to be vulnerable with us in a quest for safe and caring communities for women and children.

Message from the Chief Executive Director – Dr Nobs Mwanda

The 2025 financial year has been one of both resilience and reflection for COPESSA. Despite significant financial uncertainty and operational turbulence, our team and partners demonstrated extraordinary commitment to sustaining our work in the prevention of violence against women and children.

While we faced serious funding challenges, the unwavering support of our donors, community partners, and staff ensured that our core programmes continued – counselling survivors of Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Child abuse and Neglect, supporting and feeding children through our after-school care programme, empowering women through the sewing and gardening projects, and advancing gender-transformative change through Project Ilima.

Vision

To be leaders in community-driven and supported prevention of VAC and GBV in Africa by 2030.

Mission – Raison d’Être

We prevent violence by:

- Mobilising communities
- Creating supportive environments...
- Promoting social and behavioural change
- Offering psychosocial support
- Conducting and promoting participatory community research

Our Theory of Change

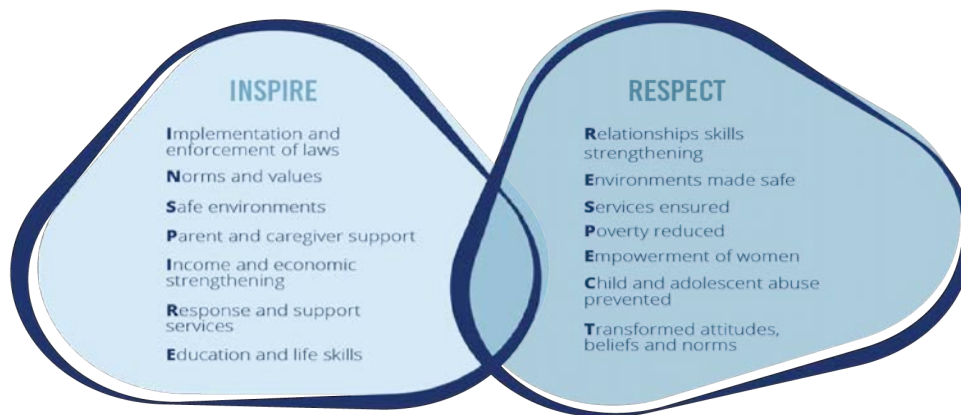
We believe that reducing VAC and GBV requires awareness, attitude shifts and social norm changes.

COPESSA Model

Our work is grounded largely on the Socio-ecological Model of change and theories of Social Norms, Gender and Power.

We use the World Health Organization (WHO) endorsed INSPIRE and RESPECT frameworks in designing strategies to curb the VAC and GBV social ills.

INSPIRE and RESPECT FRAMEWOR



Guiding Principles

All COPESSA programmes are premised on:

- **SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 & 17:** End Poverty; Achieve Gender equality; Promote sustained inclusive & sustainable economic growth; Reduce inequality within the country; Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Promote peaceful and inclusive societies; Strengthen partnerships for sustainable development
- **South African Constitution:** Particularly Articles 9, 10, 11, and 28.
- **The National Strategic Plan on GBVF.**
- Ongoing community-led research.

Highlights of 2025



Launch of Project Ilima

“Ilima” is a Nguni word that describes solidarity, working together, and the community ethos. Project Ilima is communication-for-social-change intervention that builds on COPESSA’s two-decade foundation of community mobilisation, income-generation, and research. It primarily engages men and community leaders as allies in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children (VAC), through dialogues. It tackles critical issues such as GBV, gender inequalities, rigid gender norms, men’s mental and hegemonic and toxic masculinities. Through challenging these harmful norms and behaviours we hope to contribute positively to creating a safer and more equitable society for all.

This project is funded by the GBVF Response Fund and uses bespoke dialogue facilitation guides that are developed with the assistance of the consultant PhD Fellow and are informed by the research COPESSA has done over the years, COPESSA’s lived experience and a baseline study led by a PhD fellow. We also work in partnership with Father A Nation organisation, who have experience in conducting men’s dialogues in difficult to access spaces such as taverns and shebeens, and with faith leaders.



Programme Highlights

COPESSA gave assistance to 3 863 individuals in the 2024 financial year (FY), through our dialogues, community outreach, and psycho-social support services, a 3.6% decrease from the previous year (4 008).

This was attributed to the loss of the May month where COPESSA, like many organisations in Gauteng, COPESSA experienced delayed funding from Gauteng Department of Social Development, which funds our volunteers that drive outreach. Importantly, 43.4% of those that COPESSA assisted were men, which is a huge achievement, as it is common knowledge that men struggle with seeking care when they need it, especially mental health care and that perpetrators are mostly men.

Four hundred and fifty-four (11.8%) of these individuals were involved in dialogues and workshops, with men contributing 53.1% towards the total dialogants. The latter is in keeping with COPESSA's intentionality to engage men as allies. Also, as we know that while awareness-raising is good and necessary, it is not sufficient to change attitudes and behaviour. This is why COPESSA has embarked on dialogues as this helps to change learned behaviour.



Workshop on Human Rights run in partnership with UNISA

Our social workers provided psycho-social support to 399 individuals, a 2.2% drop from the previous year. Again, notably almost 40% of those who sought this support were males, resulting in an increase of 2.3% from the previous year. Of great concern, 61,7% (246) of those who sought psycho-social support were youth, with a female to male ratio of 1.2, highlighting both the post-Covid-19 mental health landscape change and the increasing self-awareness among youth.

In the 2024FY, 420 children attended our after-school care support that is run by the volunteers. This 20% increase from the previous year attests to the increased popularity of this programme. As we all know, there are very few to none after-school care support services in most townships, and Protea Glen is no exception. Children do not only get support with their homework but also get a nutritious snack that is graciously

provided by our local Pick n Pay.

We unfortunately had to terminate a popular music learning programme that was run by *Structuring Society Through Music and Arts (SSM)*- a locally founded orchestra that makes it easy for children to take up this art as they see themselves in the music teachers that come from their neighbourhood, - due to a loss of the funding support we were receiving from *LIFSA (Local Initiatives Fund South Africa - An initiative of: Gouvernement Princier De Monaco, in partnership with Alliance Francaise, with Support of ILLiS and Embassy of Switzerland to South Africa)*. We are looking to revive this programme, as it was a critical part of our skills development and mental stimulation for the children in our community. Truly, the after-school care programme is a safe physical and emotional space in our community where children learn, play, and relax. We are thankful to all the young community volunteers, who in all likelihood never got this opportunity, and funders that make this possible.



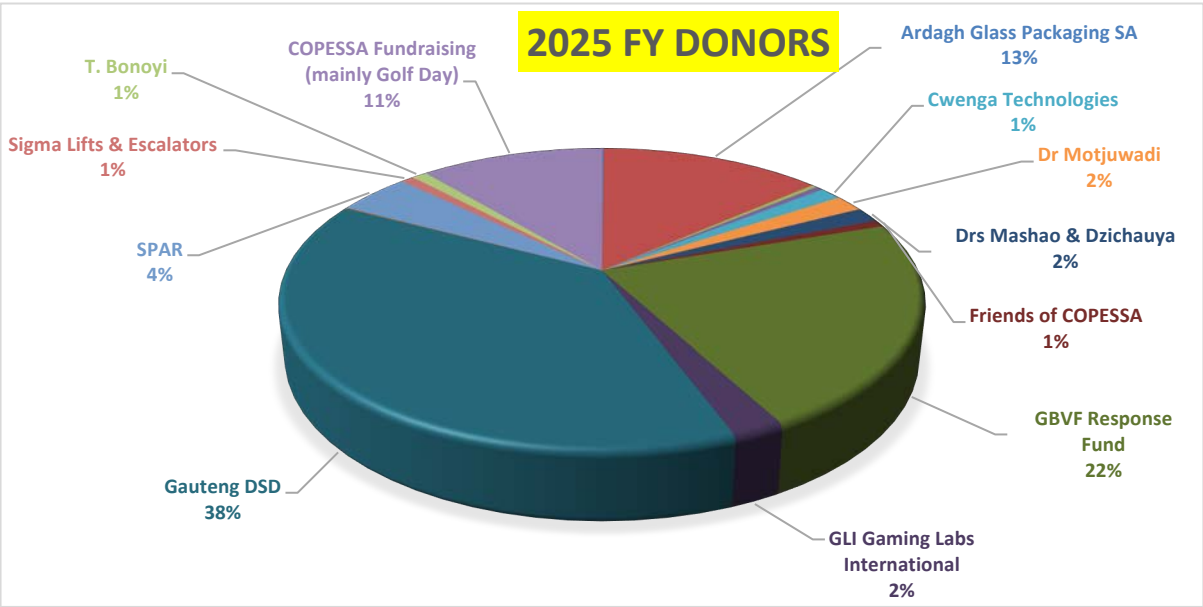
School-talk on bullying, by the volunteers

COPESSA recruited and empowered at least 30 women through our sewing programme, which is aimed at address one of the major root causes of GBV, the financial dependence of women on their partners. This GBV-prevention programme not only teaches women sewing skills, but also equip them with GBV prevention skills, but also financial literacy and business skills. Although we lost our major partner, MakeGood, due to capacity constraints on their side, thus setting us back with the development of the award-winning social innovation, the “*Homeless Home Jacket*” initiative, we continue to look for new design collaborators. We strongly believe that the “*Homeless Home Jacket*” initiative will not only help the women to generate much needed funds but will also address the two intersecting epidemics in South Africa, namely: GBV and homelessness.

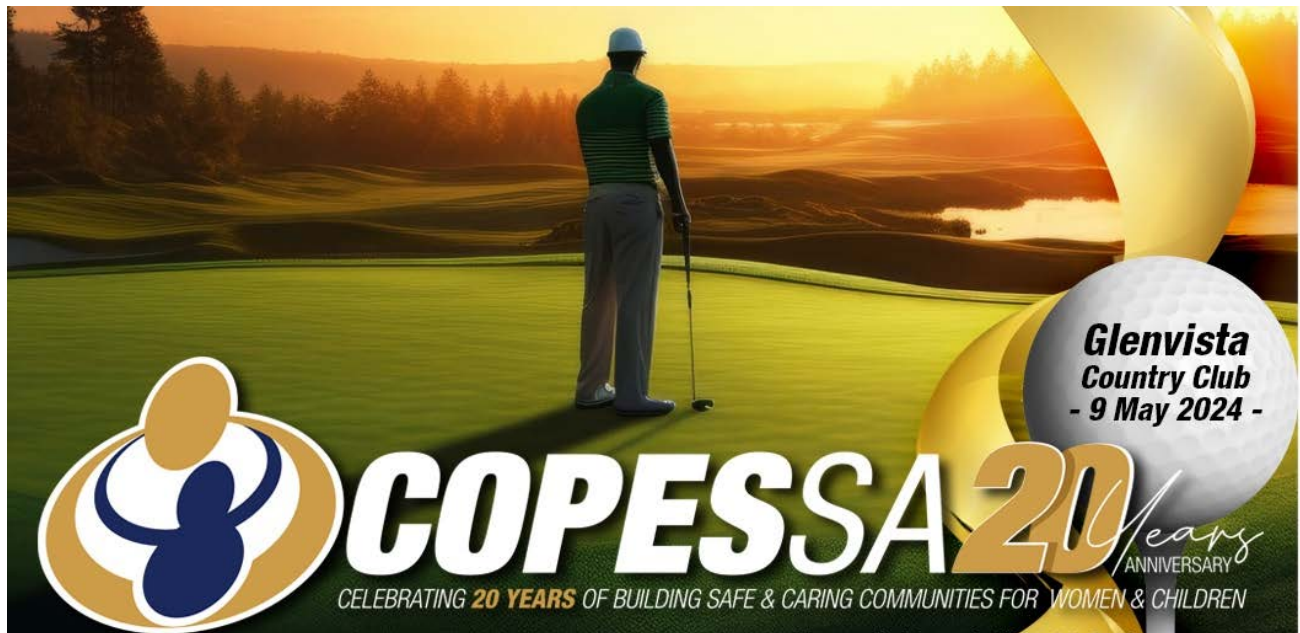
Financial Report

During the 2025 financial year, COPESSA experienced a modest but meaningful 5% increase in total funds received — rising from **R2,125,407 in 2024 to R2,233,807**. This growth was largely driven by **Ardagh Glass Packaging** (previously known as Consol), which **trebled its annual contribution to R300,000**, as well as a **24% increase in proceeds from the Fundraising Golf Day** and the addition of **three new donors**. Despite these encouraging gains, the organisation faced a significant setback following the loss of funding from **LIFSA**, which directly impacted the **After-School Care Programme** — resulting in the suspension of the daily feeding scheme and the discontinuation of the **music lessons previously provided by SSM Music & Arts**.

The following Pie Charts pictorially represents the funding and the proportion of their contribution:








Fundraising Golf Day




Our fundraising golf day did not disappoint as usual. This event is always an opportunity to connect with our corporate and ordinary citizenry who continue to rally behind our Mission in a more relaxed atmosphere. Although attendance at this year's Golf Day was modest, it was financially successful thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and supporters. The Women of Worth Sewing Group benefitted through the production of branded golf shirts, sponsored by Aris Brokers to the value of R25 000, promoting income generation and local empowerment.


2024FY Golf Day Sponsors


-  Lancet Laboratories – R50 000
-  Gaming Lab International – R50 000
-  Africa Risk and Insurance Services (Pty) Ltd R30 000 + R25 000 towards the Women sewing group to manufacture Golf T-shirts for the day
-  Projects Concern (Pty) Ltd – R30 000
-  Thesele Group (Pty) Ltd - R12 000

Partnerships and Staff development

 COPESSA's CEO was invited to two prestigious events:

- The 2nd GBV Prevention in Southern Africa Symposium hosted by CSVR and the Embassy of the Netherlands (22–23 August 2024).
- The Private Sector Symposium against GBV and Harassment in the Workplace (27 August 2024), co-convened by the Presidency, GBVF Response Fund, UN Women, JSE, UNFPA, and ILO.

 Two interns completed a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) course through the University of Cape Town, funded by the GBVF Response Fund, building COPESSA's internal capacity. This enhances our Organisation evidence-based approach to the management of GBV and VAC.

 We welcomed a new Child and Family Social Worker, bringing eight years of professional experience and two years' service at Johannesburg Child Welfare (Jan 2022 – July 2024). Her expertise has already strengthened our case management and counselling services.



COPESSA Staff and a workshop facilitator from Unisa

Looking Ahead – 2025 and beyond

COPESSA will continue to invest in community mobilisation, supportive services, behavioural change, and participatory research to address VAC and GBV.

- Strengthen financial sustainability through diversified funding and partnership strategies.
- Consolidate Project Ilima as a flagship model for social norm transformation.
- Restore full staffing and operational stability once GDSD commitments are honoured.
- Pursue renewable energy solutions to address electricity cost burdens.
- Relaunch the *Homeless Home Jacket* project with new local partners.

Challenges

1. Financial Instability

Our cash flow remains precarious, primarily due to uncertainty from the Gauteng Department of Social Development (GDSD).

The delay in finalising Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and disbursements severely impacted our operations. As of May 2025, COPESSA had received no official communication or funds, resulting in:

- Delayed payments to interns and volunteers (no work in June).
- Loss of three staff members including the C&F Social Worker and two volunteers.
- Resignation of one of our community-based Director, Ms. Simphiwe Njaka

2. Utilities and Infrastructure

Eskom rejected COPESSA's appeal for partial debt prescription on the outstanding R582,241.50 bill, despite Thinktivity's intervention. Thankfully, we received a 30% discount for this debt that is payable over 48 months.

3. Project Delays

Due to unpaid stipends and volunteer attrition, Project Ilima implementation fell behind schedule but recovery efforts were intensified during Women's Month.

4. Partnership Changes

The withdrawal of MakeGood from the *Homeless Home Jacket* collaboration (due to capacity issues)

and the departure of creative lead Carlos have created a temporary gap in production and innovation.

Acknowledgements

COPESSA expresses its deep appreciation to all funders, partners, staff, interns, and volunteers whose steadfast support has sustained our mission during a particularly challenging year.

We remain deeply grateful to our beneficiaries — the communities, children, and families whose courage and resilience inspire us to persist.

Partner With Us

You can support our award-winning work at COPESSA by:

- Providing in-kind help (volunteerism, capacity-building, HR or technical support).
- Contributing financial or CSI funding.
- Joining the MySchool / MyVillage programme.

In return, COPESSA offers:

- Psycho-social support and GBV/VAC awareness workshops for your employees.
- Section 18A tax exemption certificates and BBBEE partnership benefits.

In return, COPESSA offers:

- Psycho-social support for your employees and their families.
- GBV/VAC awareness workshops and webinars.
- Section 18A tax exemption certificates.

Contact details

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Board of Directors and Management

Chairperson – Dr Nickelwa Tengimfene

Deputy Chairperson – Ms Yvonne Motsisi

Treasurer – Mr Bafana Nkosi

Secretary – Ms Anita Mwanda

Additional – Ms Thobeka Bonoyi

Mr Njabulo Mchunu

CEO – Dr Nobs Mwanda

Manager – Mr Mothobi Moreboli

Staff and Volunteers:

Social Worker Victim Empowerment Programme – Ms Nasie Lechela

Social Worker Child and Family – Ms Scebisile Mkhwanazi

Social Auxiliary Worker – Mr Hendrick Mothibedi

Monitoring & Evaluation Leads – Ms Sinawo Mgijima and Ms Rebone Mzamane

Volunteers – Ms S. Manyama; Mr K. Selawe; Mr T. Mgibe; Ms M. Maboe; Ms P. Matjila; Ms. S. Khunoane; Ms P. Ngwenya

Consultant

Ms Kopano Monaisa (now a PhD fellow)

Bank details

COPESSA

Nedbank

Current Account # 1284039501

Universal Branch Code 198765 | Swift code nedszajj