

H O P E I S



ALIVE

CHARLIZE THERON AFRICA OUTREACH PROJECT 2025 IMPACT REPORT

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The Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP) strengthens the health and safety of young people in Southern Africa to unleash their power and potential.

We are a foundation rooted in the belief that community-based organizations, those most trusted by the communities they serve, are best positioned to drive lasting change. We fund and partner with organizations across Southern Africa working in sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence prevention, and youth development.

What sets us apart is how we work: we lead with trust. We offer flexible, unrestricted core funding, build real relationships, and show up during crises because effective organizations need the freedom to respond to the realities in front of them. We invest not just in programs, but in the organizations themselves: their teams, their systems, and their futures.

Our partners navigate complex environments with limited resources and communities bearing the weight of structural inequity. What they bring — innovation, deep community trust, and genuine care — is what makes this work possible. Our role is to resource that, protect it, and amplify it.

ABOUT THE REPORT



Every year, we take time to look back — not just at numbers and outputs, but at what we're seeing, hearing, and learning from the communities and organizations we support.

The data and reflections gathered here come from three primary sources: in-depth qualitative check-ins and touchpoints with our Program Partners (our grantee partners) and youth across Southern Africa, our 2025 Partner Feedback Survey, and post-summit surveys. Together, they offer a textured, grounded picture of what's changing in communities, what's working in our partnerships, and what we're continuing to learn and adjust.

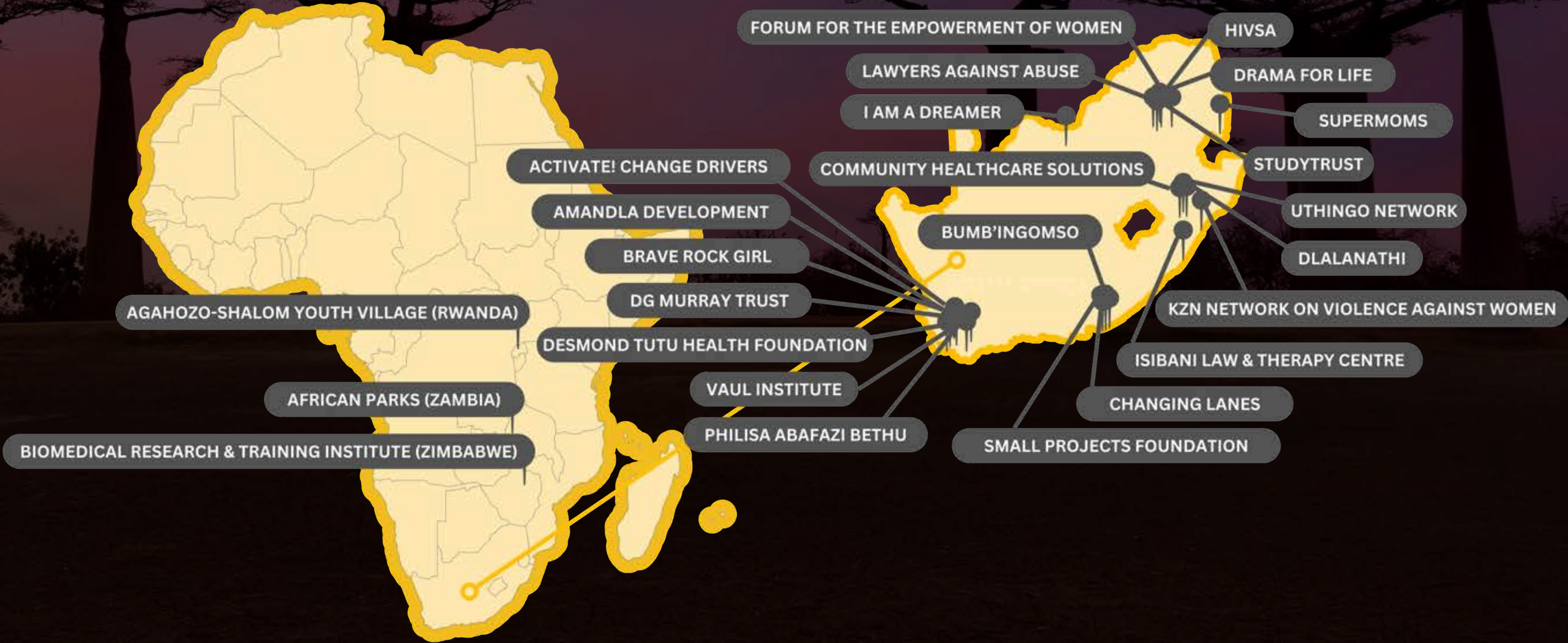
We've organized these insights around the sections of our annual impact report — from themes and shifts that emerged from community- and individual-level data, to the value of CTAOP gatherings, to how our partners experience working with us. Our hope is that this document serves not just as a record of impact, but as a living reflection of our shared commitments: to trust, to equity, to relationships, and to the young people at the center of this work. Where possible, we've let the voices of our partners speak for themselves. Their words convey something our data summaries cannot.

A landscape photograph showing several tall baobab trees in silhouette against a vibrant sunset sky with shades of purple, pink, and orange. The trees are scattered across a flat, grassy plain.

GRANTMAKING

Change at the community level and change at the individual level are not separate stories. When communities become safer and more open, young people grow. When young people grow, they shift their communities right back. What follows is that story, seen from both directions at once.

2025 PARTNERS



2025 IN NUMBERS

771,501

YOUTH SERVED BY
CTAOP-SUPPORTED
PROGRAMS

\$1,336,000

IN GRANTS

25

COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS
SUPPORTED

2025 PROGRAMMATIC THEMES

1

Agency is Taking Root — In
Young People and Their
Communities

2

Care is Being Normalized —
From Households to Health
Systems

3

Girls and Young Women are
Moving From Surviving to
Shaping

4

Shifts are Happening Among
Boys and Young Men

5

Local Structures Hold — Even
When Systems Don't

6

Safe Spaces Are Building the
Relational Fabric of Change

1. Agency is Taking Root – In Young People and Their Communities

Across our partner portfolio, young people are no longer just beneficiaries of programs. They are running them, leading community dialogues, and becoming the first point of contact when something goes wrong. Communities are increasingly recognizing youth as credible problem-solvers, and that recognition is changing intergenerational power dynamics in lasting ways.

Activate's Gen G Champions are known by name to their local Police Station Commander and now hold seats on civil society boards, including Deputy Chair of the eThekweni sector.

At **dlalanathi**, out-of-school youth trained as menstrual health facilitators reached 1,923 young people. For many, it was the first time anyone had ever had that conversation with them.

African Parks trained 76 peer educators across 5 chiefdoms in rural Zambia, who now lead HIV testing, vaccinations, and health promotion independently.



“ THIS IS THE ONLY YOUTH GROUP OR YOUTH-FOCUSED ACTIVITY IN THE VILLAGE AND HAS COMPLETELY SHAPED AND CHANGED OUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE. AFRICAN PARKS MWELUSHI YOUTH GROUP ”

2. Care is Being Normalized— From Households to Health Systems

Communities are increasingly treating emotional health as essential, not a crisis response. Schools are seeking psychosocial support proactively, caregivers are embedding coping skills into daily life, and referral pathways are becoming more trusted and navigable, especially in rural and under-resourced areas.

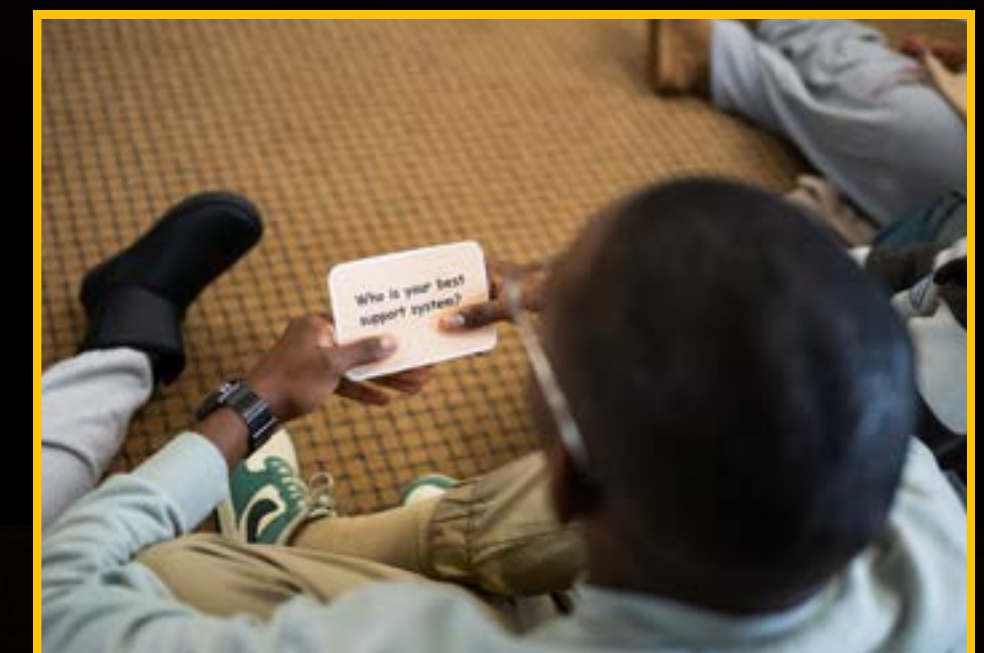
Community HealthCare Solutions expanded its youth curriculum to include vision boards, trauma-centered reflection, and meditation, reinforcing that self-care is not a luxury.

The **KZN Network on Violence Against Women's** Rapid Response Teams strengthened GBV referral pathways across six communities, reaching over 15,000 youth, with schools now actively requesting their programming.

The **Desmond Tutu Health Foundation** trained 500 healthcare workers across 23 facilities to provide affirming care for LGBTQI+ patients, with plans to reach 100 or more facilities by 2028.

OUR PROGRAM AND THE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IS NOW VERY SENSITIVE TO TRAUMA. THE ENTIRE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION — WE ARE VERY TRAUMATIZED. EVEN WORSE WHERE WE ARE.

ZINHLE, COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS



3. From Surviving to Shaping Their Own Lives

Across our partner portfolio, girls and young women are gaining knowledge, voice, and access that many have never had before. The changes are showing up in classrooms, clinics, and communities, in girls who speak up where they once stayed silent, and in systems being redesigned around what young women actually need.

At **Brave Rock Girl** in Manenberg, girls arrive shy and hesitant and leave having applied to university independently, completed resilience programs, and found their voice in spaces that once felt closed to them.

In Zimbabwe, **Biomedical Research and Training Institute** redesigned access entirely after university students told them clearly that clinic experiences felt unsafe and stigmatizing. Their CODE locker pilot will offer anonymous, 24-hour access to SRH resources launching in 2026.

At **Bumb'INGOMSO**, a 10-year-old girl at a cluster competition argued that kindness could end poverty and crime, while peers challenged patriarchy and spoke openly about body acceptance and self-worth.

“WHEN THEY CAME, IT'S AS IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE A MOUTH OR TONGUE. NOW THE MOUTHS NEVER WANT TO STOP TALKING. THEY'VE LEARNED THAT THEIR VOICE MATTERS.”

LEE-ANNE, BRAVE ROCK GIRL



4. Shifts are Happening Among Boys and Young Men

Boys and young men are showing real attitudinal change: less defensiveness, more curiosity, and a growing willingness to examine their own assumptions about gender, consent, and relationships. These are early shifts, but they are foundational. The boys changing their minds today are the partners, fathers, and community leaders of tomorrow.

At the **Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village** in Rwanda, male student engagement in gender equity programming rose from 33% to 93%, and the belief that equity is a girl's issue dropped from 67% to 7%.

Isibani Law & Therapy Centre added a dedicated psychosocial worker to create a structured space for boys to explore consent and emotional regulation, and parents report noticeable changes at home.

At **SuperMoms**, sport becomes the entry point and first structured space for conversations about puberty, consent, and masculinity that many boys have never had anywhere else.

“THEY'VE [THE BOYS] MOVED FROM RESISTANCE TO ASKING, 'WHAT CAN I DO TO PUSH GENDER EQUITY FORWARD?’

HAFSA, AGAHOZO-SHALOM YOUTH VILLAGE



5. Local Structures Hold – Even When Systems Don't

When public systems face disruption, whether from funding cuts, gang violence, or medication shortages, community-led structures don't just survive. They absorb the shock. The resilience we're seeing isn't accidental. It's the result of years of investment in trust, local relationships, and distributed leadership.

After the PEPFAR withdrawal created a shortage of 300 HIV testers in Buffalo City, **Small Projects Foundation** trained and certified 80 youth ambassadors to fill the gap while absorbing up to 200 former PEPFAR staff to maintain continuity for over 1 million people.



Philisa Abafazi Bethu maintained staff safety and programmatic continuity through 8 weeks of gang violence, ensuring that for young people navigating trauma near home, programs that served them remained a stable touchpoint in their lives.



Amandla Development drove teenage pregnancies from over 70 cases across five schools in one month down to just four across 19 high schools, and even as global health cuts forced a reduction in schools served, their Philippi Collective Network of 60 or more organizations held firm.



6. Safe Spaces Are Building the Relational Fabric of Change

Programs can deliver knowledge, but belonging has to be built. Across partners, youth hubs, walk-in centers, clubs, and community anchors are doing something harder and more important than programming. They are giving young people a place where they are consistently seen, welcomed, and supported. That consistency is what makes transformation possible.

Uthingo Network's walk-in resource center in Pietermaritzburg stays open beyond program hours, providing a low-barrier space where queer youth can study, connect, and simply exist.

In Hanover Park, **Vaul Institute**'s staff member Aatiqa met a group of street-involved girls every Wednesday as a "big sister," and through that consistent presence, girls once described as unreachable began exploring school and entrepreneurship.

Community HealthCare Solutions connected two out-of-school youth to a local beekeeper, and they now earn income through community referrals, a connection that only happened because staff showed up consistently enough to notice who was missing.

THAT'S BEAUTIFUL - IT'S AN ONGOING THING... IT'S A WALK-IN CENTER. WE HAVE A POPCORN MACHINE. THE FACT THAT WE HAVE A SAFE SPACE FOR THEM [QUEER PEOPLE] TO USE AS THEIR OWN... THAT IS VERY POWERFUL.

BRIAN, UTHINGO NETWORK





THE
ELIZABETH TAYLOR
AIDS FOUNDATION

SUKUTHULA! UNMUTE & ACT

Sukuthula! Unmute & Act is a three-year participatory grantmaking initiative launched in 2023 by DGMT, the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, and CTAOP to address gender-based violence in South Africa through coordinated, community-level funding across four districts in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. Now entering its third year, Sukuthula integrates psychosocial support, legal assistance, economic empowerment, and norm-shifting education through deeply participatory, context-specific approaches.

17,934

People reached in Year 2 (↑ from ~12,000 in Year 1)

32

Community-based organizations supported

2

Provinces – Limpopo & Eastern Cape

Community Impact

Across communities, Sukuthula! has expanded **access to GBV services** – improving documentation, deepening community trust, and ensuring more survivors can find support. **Prevention efforts** through school programs and community dialogues are actively shifting harmful gender norms and building broader awareness. These gains are reinforced by **stronger local partnerships** that connect health, justice, and social service providers into coordinated referral systems. Alongside this, **skills development and income-generating programs** are reducing economic vulnerability, cutting one of the key drivers of abuse at its root.

Individual Impact

For individuals, Sukuthula! places survivors at the center – providing psychosocial care, legal guidance, referrals, and hands-on practical support to help people rebuild their lives. **Men and boys** are meaningfully engaged through targeted programs that promote positive masculinity, accountability, and active allyship. **Women** gain greater economic independence through livelihood skills that open up income pathways and reduce reliance on abusive situations. **Young people**, meanwhile, benefit from safe spaces, mentorship, and supportive programs that strengthen their wellbeing and sense of belonging.



YOUTH LEADERS

CTAOP's Youth Leaders Fellowship and Scholarship empower young leaders to create meaningful change while building lasting skills. The Fellowship places young people within community organizations for a year of hands-on experience, mentorship, and wellness support. The Scholarship, nominated through CTAOP-funded organizations, funds recipients' tertiary education and leadership development. The Fellowship launched in 2024 and the Scholarship in 2018; together, they've cultivated a growing network of thoughtful, socially conscious changemakers.

YOUTH LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

One Fellowship, many directions

Fellows drove their own professional growth, pursuing short courses and certifications that aligned with their goals. The range reflects both the diversity of our Partners and CTAOP's commitment to trusting young people to lead their own development.



Leadership Summit

The 2025 CTAOP YLF Summit in South Africa united our YL Fellows in a transformative gathering of leadership development, personal well-being, and peer connection — blending breathwork, art, guided reflection, and skills-based workshops.



THIS PERIOD HAS CHANGED ME BY TEACHING ME EMPATHY, PATIENCE, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY. EVEN NOW, I STILL FEEL STRONGLY COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY WORK, AND I'M MORE MOTIVATED THAN EVER TO CONTINUE MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT WHEREVER I CAN.

YL FELLOW



I HAVE ALSO SEEN, THROUGH DEDICATION AND PATIENCE WITH THE COMMUNITY AND YOUTH, THE POSITIVE IMPACT IT CREATES IN PEOPLE'S LIVES AND HOW MUCH WORK STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE IN REBUILDING SOCIETY TO BE HUMAN AND KINDER AND SAFER AGAIN.

YL FELLOW

YOUTH LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP

Leadership Summit

Beyond academic support, the YLS Summit is where Scholars come together to grow. The fourth gathering, held last December, gave the Scholars space to reconnect, explore purpose, and invest in the leaders they're becoming. [WATCH >](#)

Three projects. Three schools. Youth-led, community-rooted.

This year, CTAOP funded three Changemaker Projects — each designed and led by a Scholar, each implemented within a school setting. Notably, all three Scholars independently chose to root their projects in education, reflecting a shared instinct to invest in the next generation.



Chess Club

Allan

Built a school chess program to increase student engagement and enthusiasm, and was appointed Head of Chess for his circuit.



Career Expo

Lungile

Organised a Career Expo connecting students with professional opportunities and guiding them through their own hopes and futures.



University Applications

Innocenciah

Supported students through the university application process — reducing barriers and expanding access to higher education.

A group of approximately ten people, including men and women of various ages, are sitting in a circle on a patterned carpeted floor. They are dressed in casual summer attire, including t-shirts, shorts, and caps. Some are wearing matching orange and white caps. They appear to be in a relaxed, collaborative setting, possibly a workshop or a community meeting. The room has a warm, indoor lighting, and some shoes are visible on the floor around the group. The overall atmosphere is one of community and shared activity.

CONVENING

The Swidler Summit is CTAOP's signature convening — a multi-day gathering where the leaders at the heart of social change are given the rare gift of being cared for themselves. In 2025, two Regional Summits brought together Program Partners in KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town for intimate, restorative experiences rooted in healing, community, and practical wellness. CTAOP also held dedicated Summits for its Youth Leaders community, gathering Fellows and Scholars separately for leadership development, skills-building, well-being, and peer connection.

HEALING THE HEALERS. RESTORING THE RESTORERS.

In 2025, CTAOP held smaller regional summits in KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town for 27 participants across the two regions, creating space for collective healing and deeper connection.

What the Summit Offers

- **Rest & Renewal** – Time to step back from demanding frontline work and genuinely recharge
- **Practical Tools** – Skills in trauma-informed care, stress management, and mindful practice
- **Peer Connection** – Space to share, learn from one another, and deepen cross-organizational bonds
- **Whole-Person Care** – Sessions addressing emotional, physical, and psychological wellbeing



THE THERAPY THAT CTAOP IS OFFERING IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED ESPECIALLY BY ME. EVENTUALLY I DRAGGED MYSELF INTO IT – IT'S ONE OF THE THINGS I NEEDED THE MOST FOR CLARITY OF MIND. IT'S A UNIQUENESS OF THE PROGRAM: CTAOP FIGURED OUT THAT HUMANS WHO SERVE NEED TO BE SERVED, SO THAT THEY CAN APPLY THEMSELVES BETTER.
ZINHLE, COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

Youth Leaders Summits

Scholars Summit | [WATCH >](#)

Fellows Summit | [WATCH >](#)

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ADVOCACY

In 2025, CTAOP's advocacy and accompaniment work was as wide-ranging as it was meaningful, spanning high-profile media moments, grassroots partner support, thought leadership in philanthropy, and everything in between. The team shared over 50 funding, scholarship, job, and capacity-strengthening opportunities with partners. We also hosted two regional Swidler Summits, led trust-based philanthropy workshops, drafted concept notes, and reviewed grant applications.

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

In May, Charlize co-authored an op-ed in TIME Magazine alongside ONE's Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli — a powerful piece that brought CTAOP's voice to one of the world's most widely read platforms.

In September, CTAOP partner and Activate! ChangeDrivers CEO Sophelele Chirwa took the stage at the Ford Foundation's Free Futures Summit at UNGA — a full-circle moment witnessing a partner shine on a global stage.

And also in the fall, CTAOP team member Busiswa Dayimani contributed a deeply personal blog post to Proximate Press about violence in South Africa — a reminder that the people doing this work are not just advocates for others, but storytellers and changemakers in their own lives too.



TIME Magazine Op-Ed

READ



Ford Foundation Summit

WATCH



Proximate Press

READ

A group of people, mostly wearing white hoodies, are walking away from the camera through a field of tall grass. In the background, there is a large, dense evergreen tree and a building. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The overall mood is one of growth and community.

CONTINUING TO GROW

Every year, we ask partners we've supported to tell us how we're doing. This section reflects what respondents anonymously shared in 2025. Their words shape how we show up — because trust-based practice doesn't mean less accountable. It means accountability runs toward communities, not just toward funders.

ROOTED IN LEARNING

What we are doing right...

100%

rated the partnership with CTAOP extremely valuable (5/5) for supporting their goals

100%

said CTAOP is fully or largely living its stated values

4.9/5

average across all trust and communication indicators

“ YOU ARE THE ONLY FUNDING INSTITUTION I HAVE INTERACTED WITH THAT OPERATES IN THE WAY THAT YOU DO. IT HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE TO FEEL TRUSTED AND SUPPORTED AS A GRANTEE. WE NEED MORE OF YOU. ”

CTAOP PARTNER

“ BEFORE CTAOP, WE WANTED TO WORK WITH YOUTH – WE DIDN'T HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OR CAPACITY. CTAOP'S CONSISTENT, GRADUALLY INCREASING FUNDING GAVE US A STEADY BASE TO GROW, LEARN, ADAPT, AND BE RESPONSIVE. ”

CTAOP PARTNER

ROOTED IN LEARNING

What we will do better...

Peer learning infrastructure

Partners asked for structured exchange – thematic sessions, shared challenges, knowledge networks. We're designing more intentional peer connection into our programming.

Connecting partners to broader funder networks

Multiple partners asked us to use our funder relationships to make introductions at the next level. This is something we take seriously as we deepen our own ecosystem presence.

Partner visibility and amplification

Several partners named profile-raising – media, speaking engagements, communications capacity – as the next meaningful frontier of support. We're exploring how to build this into accompaniment.

Continuity beyond grant cycles

Strategic Partners named relationship continuity as important even after grants end. We're thinking carefully about what that looks like in practice and plan to explore this with past partners in 2026.

Deeper check-ins for long-term partners

Some multi-year partners noted that check-ins could be more partner-led and allow more space for program depth – not just updates. We're listening.

Virtual mental health access

At least one partner requested mental health support accessible via Zoom or phone for those who can't reach in-person services. Equity of access matters across geography.

ONWARD...

This report is a reflection of the people behind it — our Partners and the communities they serve. The patterns in the data are made of real stories: a girl who stayed in school because she had hygiene supplies. A young man who started questioning what he'd always been told about gender. A community that showed up for each other when the system couldn't. A team that didn't burn out because their wellbeing was critically supported.

What these stories make clear is that even in the most constrained circumstances, something endures: the determination of Partners who keep showing up, the creativity of communities solving problems with what they have, and the quiet courage of individuals whose lives shifted in ways that will ripple forward. That is not just cause for hope — it is a call to act on it. CTAOP remains committed to walking alongside the people and organizations making this possible, and to doing more to resource, protect, and amplify what they've built.



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H  PE IS

ALIVE

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