



Church Alliance for
Social Transformation



Annual
Report
2023



CEO & Chairperson Report

Our CAST vessel has travelled many oceans in 2023, with our compass firmly in hand: our mission to journey with churches towards the peace and justice of God in the world. And what a journey it has been!



We sailed the seas of 2023 with innovation. We developed and ran the pilot of our 'Just Leaders' programme with 12 leaders from around the eThekweni region; we led our very first city pilgrimage, immersing ourselves in our Durban context; we embarked on many new and exciting fundraising initiatives; and we revived and refreshed our 'Ibandla Malivuke' conference, which invited the church to rise up and respond to the social ills ever present around us.

We sailed the seas of 2023 with collaboration. We continue to follow our deep belief in the local church, and continue to journey alongside partners and friends. We saw the birth of Justice Teams from out of our partner churches: teams of leaders who are committed to walking with their churches towards bringing the Shalom of the Kingdom of God into their immediate communities. We are not- and never want to be - on this journey alone, and many of the year's sweetest moments have been the celebrations and trials of the shared journey with churches.

We sailed the seas of 2023 with courage. 'Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end.' [Robin Sharma] In our voyage of change, 2023 was, in many ways, the 'messy middle'. We sailed through uncertain waters, which reminded us that storms are not just trials but also opportunities for growth and sustainability. This year was a difficult one for our CAST staff, but was marked by resilience as we navigated the waters of change, adapting to external shifts and embracing internal evolution. We ended the year with a well-needed break, the eye of the storm in many senses, where we were able to find solace in calm: time to reflect, to appreciate the struggle, and to gather strength for what lies ahead.

The 2023 journey of CAST reflects a story of resilience, adaptability, perseverance and unwavering commitment to our mission. While we look towards the 'gorgeous end' of change, the horizon stretches endlessly, promising adventures, beauty and mysteries of uncharted waters yet to be discovered. Our ship is sturdy and our spirits are steadfast. We do not journey alone. And so the invitation calls out on the seas, 'MASIHAMBISANE' 'let us journey together.'

- Deb Austwick
CEO & Chairperson



*Ibandla
Malivuke*



Imbizos



*Alliance
Building*





Alliance Building

Our work as the Church Alliance for Social Transformation is grounded in the idea of alliance building. What does it look like to have a movement of people travelling together towards the peace and justice of God's Kingdom, inspiring each other towards love and action. In 2023 much of our work of alliance building was focussed on our quarterly imbizos. These times provide a space for all the churches within our alliance to gather and learn together. For last year, these times were focussed on some of the vision and theology that the alliance is built on. We spent time together in Matthew 6, Jeremiah 29, Isaiah 65, Acts 4 and Genesis 1 discussing and "chewing" together around what it looks like when "his Kingdom comes, his will is done on earth as it is in heaven".

Ibandla Malivuke was another significant alliance building moment in 2023. This two-day conference gathered church leaders, NPO leaders, mums, dads, students, community members, business people and the like from across Durban and KZN to spend some time thinking about how our faith interacts with the world around us and the many social issues we witness. Participants described how hope-filling, inspiring and vision-raising they found this time. The learning that was shared from the front with leading theologians and practitioners from around South Africa was deep and rich and left all of us moved in profound ways.

These alliance building moments are important days in our calendar - in many ways they're the forge within which all our work is shaped and formed. Keep an eye out for 2024 dates! We look forward to welcoming you.

Feedback from conference delegates:

- "With conferences like these, the Church shall arise! I hope the word gets out to more community and church leaders so that more can get empowered to make a difference."
- "The highlight [of the conference] was what God wants us as His children to do in terms of being the light in the dark world. To bring hope to hopeless and bring change."
- "[What challenged me is] realising that there is no quick fix to these problems. It needs work, patience, collaboration."
- "[My most valuable new insight is that] God has strategies for us to fight poverty. Our giving becomes more meaningful when we understand God's heart for the poor."
- "[I plan on] rekindling and restructuring outreach to the poor in our church and organisation. I plan to empower the poor rather than give handouts."

Project Support

As we travel with churches towards the peace and justice of God, many churches land on an issue of pain and brokenness within their community where they feel led to bringing Jesus' hope, restoration, healing and life. In KZN, one of the major issues which comes up time and again are psycho-social wounds. The trauma that we have faced in recent years (the lockdown, the floods and the civil unrest) on top of already high levels of pain and trauma from the long-term effects of poverty mean that many in our community are suffering. This was one of the areas that we as CAST were able to provide project support in 2023.

Sinoxolo is an amazing resource for churches who are looking to provide safe "green spaces" for people suffering the impacts of psychological distress. It is a course that we offer that in turn leads to practical support groups that churches can run. At the beginning of 2023, we ran the Sinoxolo Facilitators Training for the third time and it was fantastic to see the response from churches and NGOs who are looking to respond to this issue. We were able to train around 40 people in a "train-the-trainers" course which was a beautiful time of learning and healing.



Feedback from participants:

- "Acceptance and trust in our community has been very challenging. This course has assisted with that."
- "There are underlying issues that I was unaware that I could associate with trauma: this course was an eye-opener."
- "[The best thing about this course was] healing my mind and my heart."
- "[I valued] the Bible-based teaching and just allowing the Holy Spirit to move."
- "[I appreciated] the constant reminder that God sees, He knows, He walks alongside us and in Him lies our hope."
- "[I learnt] how to work/facilitate such programmes with people suffering from loss, grief, and trauma and not to judge them."

Leadership

As we work towards our vision of seeing the peace and justice of God at play in the world, we believe that working alongside leaders from all walks of life is central to this. We believe that 'church' is more than just the building or the gathering and includes the full body of Christ. We would therefore love to see leaders from within this body leading others towards the peace and justice of God in whichever sphere they find themselves; Church, business, family life, school and so on. One of our key areas of work therefore involves leadership support and development around 'just leadership'.

Theology

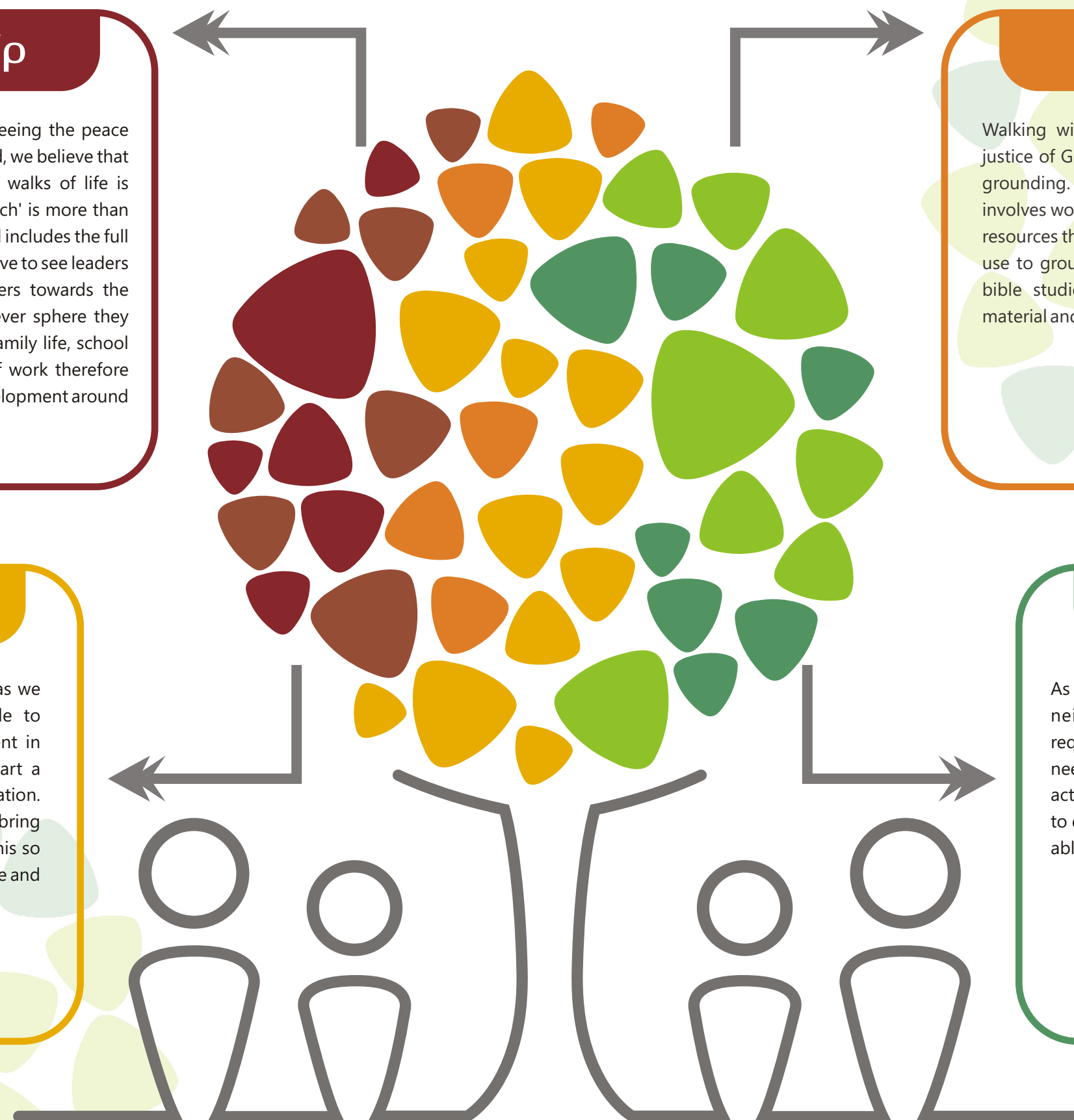
Walking with churches towards the peace and justice of God in the world requires a theological grounding. In light of this, much of our time involves work with partner theologians to develop resources that the churches we work alongside can use to ground their work and thinking including bible studies, sermon material, Sunday school material and so on.

Project Support

As churches move through the praxis cycle as we journey with them, they very often decide to respond to various injustices that are present in their community. For example, they may start a project to respond to hunger or quality education. Our offer is then to walk alongside them (and bring practical support and guidance) as they do this so that we can move closer and closer to the peace and justice of God within these projects.

Local Advocacy

As we move towards peace and justice within neighbourhoods, very often transformation requires more than just projects; we find that we need to influence and include those with power to act more justly. Here we support local church groups to develop advocacy strategies and coalitions to be able to do this.



The Journey with Churches

At the centre of all we do towards our vision is our work with churches - or "the Journey" as we call it. Here we walk alongside churches who are interested in local mission, community transformation or seeing the peace and justice of God in the world around them. We use a learning, reflection and action process known as the "praxis cycle" in this work. Journeying with churches is not a quick fix but a long-term relationship.





Leadership

At CAST, we work with leaders across all sectors, but primarily those within the Church who are looking to bring God's peace and justice into the world around them. One of the key developments within this sphere of work in 2023 was our launch and pilot of the Just Leadership Programme. Twelve learners from across the metro were able to join us for this 6-month programme which is aimed at developing leaders who are passionate about leading people, churches and communities towards Jesus' peace, justice and wholeness.

The programme empowers people to be "just leaders" - leaders who are fully equipped to understand what justice in their local areas looks like. This means they are able to analyse, develop theology for and respond to the contexts they find themselves in in eThekweni, KZN and South Africa - and then lead people to do the same.

The Just Leadership Programme isn't a standard leadership course and it isn't a standard community development course. The material we use for the course has been developed by a range of South African practitioners and theologians who have been journeying with the church in this work of social transformation for over 20 years. As a whole, this course helps people move from a faith that is purely spiritual, to a faith that is deeply worked out in the world around them; following our incarnational Jesus into the world in which we find ourselves.

Learners from our first course used words like "eye-opening" and "transformational" to describe the impact of the course on their lives. One learner summed it up by saying "with the information I got I believe I can be the change we need to see in the community. I am no longer afraid. I know what to do." We are really looking forward to running this course again in 2024. Please consider joining us - or consider supporting a student who needs financial assistance. More information and registration via our website.

Feedback from participants:

- "I believe with all the wealth of information that we received, I AM going to be the solution and the change that I want to see in the community. I believe that God has trained us with Just Leaders to have the courage and wisdom to know how to respond to the things I feared to tackle in society." - Linda Hlongwane
- "I felt, according to your teachings, like I am in a revival."
- "It makes you look at the injustice in our community in a different way. It gives you hope to want to help."

Theology

We recently heard a phrase from the Gibbs Business School that really struck us: "know-be-do". This stuck with us because it sums up so much of our theory of how change happens: for renewed and truly transformational action (or "do-ing") we need to first start with the work of knowing and then allow this move from just head knowledge to heart knowledge so that we start to "be" the change (we need to "be" different as a result of our knowing). This is why much of our work with churches starts with theology. Because as people of Jesus, as we discuss and chew on scripture together, we are changed and inspired afresh. We know new things which allows us to be new ways which in turn allows for fresh imagination about how we could act (do) to bring life, restoration and hope. This is our rationale for starting much of our work with churches with the work of "prophetic imagination" and sitting together in scripture, dreaming together of its implications for our world

Contextual Bible Studies, a methodology developed by the Ujamaa Centre at UKZN is a powerful way of studying the Bible in community to gain fresh insights into the contexts we encounter. The method of Contextual Bible Study uses the 'See-Judge-Act' framework. This method invites participants to study and understand their local contexts (see); then to analyse these contexts through dialogue with the biblical text (judge); and lastly to respond in accordance with what God is saying through this (act).

In 2023, we ran 6 full day gatherings where we drew on the CBS methodology. We also used this thinking to help shape much of the content and process of Ibandla Malivuke. We then had the joy of spending three days with Professor Sthembiso Zwane from the Ujamaa Centre where we had a chance to dive deep and really learn so many more valuable insights.

If you would like to use any of our resources or have us come and facilitate a session with your team, please do reach out. It is always a joy and privilege to work with others on this.



Summarised Income Statement for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023			2022	
R'000	Designated Funds	General Funds	Total	Total	Growth
Income	1 024	3 248	4 272	5 187	-915
Expenses	1 963	2 235	4 198	4 360	-162
Personnel Costs			2 204	1 785	419
Programme Costs			1 397	1 740	-343
Other Operating Costs			597	835	-238
Net (Deficit) / Surplus	-939	1 013	74	827	-753
Accumulated Income beginning of year	2 830	2 806	5 636	4 809	
Accumulated Income end of year	1 891	3 819	5 710	5 636	74

Funds			
R000's	2023	2022	
Church Leadership	12	16	
Godefroy	1 830	2051	
Baptist Global Response		257	
Relief (food parcels and Farming God's Way)	49	506	
	1 891	2 830	
General Funds	3 819	2 806	
Total Funds	5 710	5 636	
Cash and Investments	5 461	5 347	

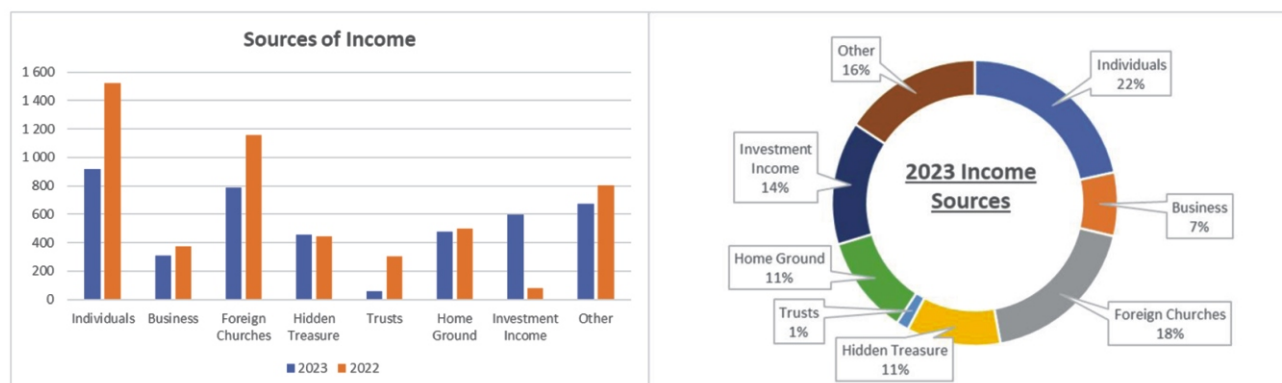
Summarised Financial Report for the Year Ended December 2023

Overall CAST remains adequately funded for current operations.

Income for the year 2023 declined over the prior year predominantly because of the abnormal income in 2022 resulting from the KZN floods. As reflected above, almost all sources of income reflect a decline. The notable exception being investment income due to the favourable investment returns across the financial markets in 2023.

Despite reduced income, good management of expenses allowed us to keep supporting our beneficiaries at levels higher than before the floods.

We continue without a senior manager at CAST. The increased personnel costs reflect both the general salary increase for the year and consulting costs to assist on high level projects and strategy formulation.



2023 MAJOR DONORS

The Trustees, Board, Staff and Clients of CAST wish to thank all our volunteers, donors and partners for every gift of time, resources and finances in 2022.



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The Church Alliance for Social Transformation (CAST) is a registered NPO (085-077 NPO) operating in 14 communities in KZN with the mission to mobilize and align local churches to reach out with practical compassion to empower, transform and redeem communities.

Board of Trustees: John Benn, Peter Clark, Patricia Sibanyoni

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