



# **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

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SCALABRINI CENTRE OF CAPE TOWN

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***OUR MISSION***





TO WELCOME  
TO PROTECT  
TO PROMOTE  
TO INTEGRATE  
PEOPLE ON THE MOVE  
INTO LOCAL COMMUNITIES



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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The year 2022 saw our actions informed and guided by four verbs; to welcome, to promote, to protect, and to integrate. These four verbs make up our recently defined mission statement. Entering the year, the Scalabrini team had no doubts about the *what*, but we needed to define the *how*. This was our focus for 2022.

The question we needed to ask ourselves was how we ensure that the Scalabrini Centre evolves as a resilient organisation amidst the ever-growing challenges and resistance towards the sector in which we work – the migration sector.

We have seen – across the world, and on our doorstep – inflammatory negative discourse around migration and growing support for anti-migration movements. This has been flamed by politicians and political decisions that will have a huge negative impact on people's lives; for example, the cancellation of the Zimbabwean Exemption Permits (ZEPs). People struggle to document themselves due to the malfunction of the Refugee Reception system – people who are asylum seekers and refugees experience the frustration of this system daily while striving to create sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families.

Living in an environment where you are faced with such uncertainty and resistance deeply impacts the well-being of both our clients and our Scalabrini team. This, on top of what the pandemic years left behind; weakened social relationships which give way to and strengthened latent xenophobic attitudes.

This leads us back to the first verb in our mission statement – 'to welcome'. How can we be truly welcoming to all – our clients, colleagues, partner organisations, and stakeholders – in this hostile environment?

As per our Welcoming manifesto, we define the act of welcoming as *'an ongoing act of intentional consideration and co-creation that transcends acceptance and fosters belonging through practicing care, respect, empathy, and acknowledgment while valuing and empowering all voices in the space.'*

We needed to ground this thinking in a methodology aimed at developing and broadening an organisational approach that could lead to the resilience and innovation the current social context requires. As a result, the Scalabrini team embarked on a reflective training journey focused on a trauma-informed approach.

These participatory sessions challenged us as a team to acknowledge not only the trauma that sits within us but also within our families and our cultures. How do we disrupt the cycles of intergenerational trauma and emerge as adaptable and empathetic agents of change? Some key moments that we identified were; becoming aware of our assumptions and blind spots and learning the difference between acceptance and agreement.

Our organisational developmental process is ongoing, but the first phase of the journey has allowed us to understand trauma, its effect on human functioning, and how to approach situations with an understanding of human behaviour; a trauma-informed approach.

I believe we have created a culture of care – a critical characteristic of the work of the Scalabrini Centre and its team. We also remain strongly anchored to our commitment to advocating for the rights of people on the move and to actions needed to contribute to an emotionally just society.

Change is only achieved collectively and collaboratively. Therefore, I extend my gratitude to all our partners, funders, the Scalabrini Centre Board of Trustees, all Scalabrini employees, and most importantly to all people on the move, who share part of their journey with us, as we welcome each other at the Scalabrini Centre.

**Giulia Treves**  
Director of Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town





## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

"He *listened* to the cry of migrants, *spoke* in their name and *defended* their rights".

These words resounded recently on 9 October 2022 in a packed, vibrant and colourful St. Peter's Square in Rome, while John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza at the end of the 19th century, was proclaimed Saint, a model for the Catholic faithful, as Father of the migrants, refugees, seafarers and people on the move.

This was not merely a religious celebration, but an international reminder that no man, whatever his religious belief, social or political background, ethnic or linguistic affiliation, can remain indifferent to the massive movement of people on our planet. And above all, as is the case with Scalabrini, we cannot ignore the gulf of inequality, injustice and abuse that accompanies the causes, journeys and situations in the countries of departure / homelands of those who emigrate in search of a better future.

He *listened*, he *spoke*, he *acted*.

These verbs encompass the process which underlies the work and dedication of the many people who still carry on Scalabrini's moral and spiritual legacy around the world. Individuals, communities, and organisations inspired by his vision, seek daily to offer welcome spaces of protection, opportunities for human promotion and real integration for migrants, especially the most vulnerable.

Among these organisations, we are proud to count on the African continent the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town (SCCT), the Child and Youth Care Centre Lawrence House, and the Institute for Human Mobility in Africa (SIHMA). In this report you will find how SCCT - through its many activities, projects and interaction with stakeholders - supports concrete actions of advocacy, empowerment, and capacity building that make migrants, protagonists and contributors to the receiving society.

All thanks to the contribution of collaborators, donors, staff members and volunteers who, with passion and commitment, strive to *listen*, *speak* and *act*. Each organisation of our network, with its specificity and competence, contributes to making Scalabrini's effort to ensure that human mobility is not a forced and painful choice, but a free process that, regulated with wisdom and justice by human laws, leads to the full realisation of man and the promotion of the common good.

**Fr Filippo Ferraro, CS**  
**Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town Chairperson**





## FROM LAWRENCE HOUSE AND UNITE

2022 was the year that Lawrence House and UNITE joined forces. As Scalabrini's two youth-focused initiatives, it made sense for us to align and amplify the services provided to the young people of both Lawrence House and UNITE.

UNITE is an outreach programme working primarily with South African youth, exploring themes that support awareness, acceptance, understanding, and integration. Lawrence House is a child and youth care centre providing care and protection services predominantly to young people who have migrated to South Africa.

Although the integration made sense, it was not easy - change is never easy. This merge could have gone in many directions, but we had to embrace it and move forward, together. Lawrence House welcomed UNITE through its doors, not knowing the outcome, but trusting the process. Instantly, UNITE's fresh and inspiring energy rippled through all of Lawrence Houses' team members and young people alike! This year has been the start of a wonderful partnership with so much growth and great things ahead.

Joining forces has meant that young people from different and diverse backgrounds - South African and Non-South African - have access to a safe space where they can interact, listen, learn, better understand and grow, together. They are challenged and in turn challenge each other to listen and learn with an open, welcoming heart and mind to collectively find solutions that benefit all. Identity, integration, diversity, and xenophobia are a few of the topics spoken about in the space. These conversations can be uncomfortable and heated when young people challenge one another about existing beliefs and preconceived ideas, but that is what the space is for. The space is there so that these challenges can be met with a willingness to listen and learn so that when confronted with diversity out in the world the response can be of acceptance through understanding instead of judgement through fear.

All Lawrence House teenagers have fully integrated into all spheres of the UNITE programme. All sessions are designed specifically for young people to talk about their different views and come up with amicable solutions that will allow harmonious co-existence and acceptance and create a country where everyone will have an open and welcoming mind that will help them accept change and stop the fear of the unknown.

The UNITE space promotes authenticity and encourages each person to express their views without filter and fear. We firmly believe that; to influence young people positively and see real change in their lives, it is important that they feel seen, heard, and welcomed. As adults, facilitators, and caregivers, we are there to guide them on their journey, of finding themselves and their voice, and to protect them as they grow into who they are meant to be.

2022 was the start of something great and we cannot wait to see what comes next - and what incredible, wonderful, important things the young people of today do when they are leading us tomorrow.



**Jade Henderson, Lawrence House**  
**Mtheza Wontyi, UNITE**









The Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town (SCCT) offers specialised services to migrants, refugees and South Africans. SCCT's services focus on four key areas: paralegal advice, advocacy and research, development and integration and well-being and welfare. SCCT's mandate is to advocate for human rights and achieves this through a holistic approach that considers all basic needs. This is attained through the work within these core services:



## **1. PARALEGAL AND ADVOCACY/RESEARCH**

### ***Protecting, promoting and advancing the rights and freedoms of migrants and refugees***

The Advocacy Team works on two mutually informing levels. Firstly, paralegal advice and practical assistance are provided to individual clients on a walk-in basis. Pertinent issues here include: access to documentation and the Department of Home Affairs' immigration and asylum systems; access to public services such as education and healthcare; access to justice for victims of xenophobic violence, hate crimes, and other protection-related issues; assistance to unaccompanied and separated foreign minors; and advice and assistance with cases of detention and deportation. Secondly, the Advocacy Team works to drive deeper systemic change in South African society and in the immigration and asylum systems. The work is informed by and responsive to direct engagement with individuals and the particular problems that they experience. This work includes: commenting on draft legislation, policies and implementation, to government and international bodies; raising awareness through online communications, newsprint, and documentary making, among other things; providing trainings to government officials, civil society, citizens, and members of refugee and migrant communities; conducting and publishing research; engaging in strategic litigation; and finding durable solutions to specific issues, like the cessation of refugee status.



## **2. WELL-BEING AND PROTECTION**

### ***Accessing services for migrants and refugees in need***

The programme offers assistance to any migrant and refugee in need. Through a process of consultation, the team is able to assist individuals to access basic services such as medical care, schooling, shelter, SASSA grants and assistance with advice/application for voluntary repatriation. Services include home visits to the homes of our most vulnerable clients. The desk also manages a limited assistance programme which offers direct support to emergency and special cases. SCCT believes that an individual's sense of well-being is essential to achieving personal financial sustainability. Welfare clients must demonstrate a willingness to work alongside the Welfare team, by supporting change in their own life circumstances.



### 3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION



#### ***A multi-national network of women***

Broadly speaking, the Women's Platform is a network where women can facilitate connections, share knowledge and resources, and access opportunities. Specifically, the Platform offers a variety of practical peer-led trainings. The network is cultivated through two areas of focus; personal development and financial sustainability.



#### ***Providing a gateway to employment***

Employment Access supports people who are migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with the legally ability to look for work in South Africa. The programme provides a combination of skills training, professional development and resources needed for success in the job market.



#### ***Promoting the Global Education Movement for Refugees***

UpLearn provides academic support for 150 bursary students of on-line competency based Bachelor degrees conferred by the Southern New Hampshire University.



#### ***Provoking critical thinking and activism in Youth.***

Working with high school students, UNITE is a leadership and peer mentorship initiative that aims to build social cohesion and transformation in South African society. UNITE explores ideas of identity, integration and diversity with youth living in South Africa.



#### ***Caring and protecting the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children and youth.***

Lawrence House is a child and youth care centre registered with the Department of Social Development. The residential facility caters to the particular care and protection needs of vulnerable children and youth who are of refugee and migrant backgrounds. Lawrence House offers these children a therapeutic environment where their holistic development is promoted through the dedicated work of a multi-disciplinary care team.





### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

This data was collected through a survey, conducted by Scalabrini, at the centre, over the course of a week

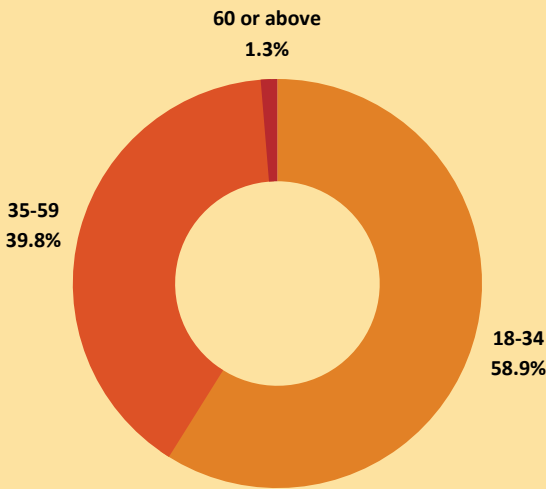


**69%** Democratic Republic of Congo

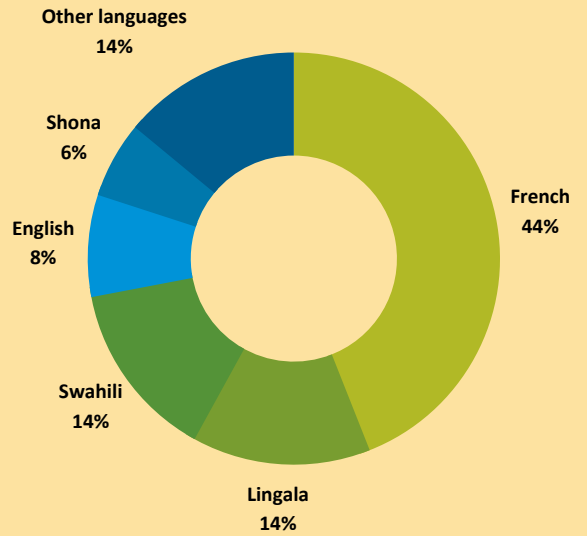
**31%**

Zimbabwe	Zambia
Rwanda	Kenya
South Africa	Nigeria
Congo (Brazzaville)	Cameroon
Burundi	Malawi
Somalia	Tanzania
Angola	Mozambique

### AGE



### FIRST LANGUAGE



### GENDER

**54%** female

**43%** male

### LENGTH OF STAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

**43%** more than 10 years

**21%** 5 to 10 years







# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

**9227**

Clients assisted through our advocacy services.

**1773**

Clients were consulted through our welfare services. 3954 direct payments were made to clients in need.

**1268**

Clients accessed our employment help desk. In addition, 868 new CVs were created and 80 clients were employed or received an increased income.



# 345

Women were registered with your women's platform. 222 women successfully completed sector skills training and 230 women graduated from personal development.

# 217

Young people make up our UNITE programme. There are 56 leadership members. Over the course of the year, the young people attended 97 club sessions.

# 137

Students graduated from UpLearn. 400+ applications were received to join the UpLearn programme.







# **BECOMING TRAUMA-INFORMED**

*South Africa is a nation often described as living in a state of collective trauma, where the scars of the past and the complexities of the present create a complex web of challenges. Understanding that trauma has the power to strip away individuals' power and sense of safety, the Scalabrini Centre has embarked on a mission to break this cycle with the guidance of Minkateko Wicht and Mike Abrams from Hands On\*. Our journey toward becoming trauma-informed began by recognising that human connection is the key to being welcoming and restoring dignity. The team has journeyed from initial hesitations and silos to building authentic connections, resilience, and a commitment to creating a space where every person is valued and seen.*

## **A traumatised society**

“In South Africa, we live in a traumatised society”, explains Minkateko Wicht. The echoes of historical injustices and the complexities of a society marked by racial, economic, and cultural disparities have woven a complex fabric that South Africans navigate daily. At the root of many of the issues in South Africa is the same thing – trauma.

Trauma, at its essence, takes away people’s power and sense of safety. Minkateko explains that for us to begin healing as a country, we need to take the perspective that “everybody is affected by trauma. It is embedded in our systems and communities, and it requires everybody to address it.” Because of how embedded trauma is in our systems, people on the move who come to South Africa in search of safety are met with processes that make people feel unsafe – the processes have been dehumanised and people have become numbers.

Becoming aware of how embedded trauma is in our society, how could the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town begin working towards disrupting the cycle?

## **“How do we create a space where people feel dignified? That is through human connection.”**

Recognising that the system often erodes people's dignity, the Scalabrini Centre embarked on a mission: to transform itself into a place where people could regain their sense of dignity and feel genuinely welcomed. This journey began by looking inward and deciding to become trauma-informed.

At first, the team was hesitant toward the process, and there were silos that existed, separating each programme. “When you are stressed and overwhelmed, you do tend to close off and not reach out to others,” says Minkateko when reflecting on the early days of the workshops.

As facilitators, Minkateko and Mike spend time “building relationships, building trust, and building the learning container for people, so that they feel safe enough to go into the hard things.” Although the workshops are not looking at personal trauma, there is space for it if people want to share. These experiential, participatory, and creative workshops guided the Scalabrini team to the heart of important matters while holding a supportive space for their journeys.

By the end of the year, the Scalabrini Team were coming together in “such a connected way.” Minkateko noted that one of the most significant shifts that they observed as facilitators was the building of authentic human connection within the teams. This transformation not only improved the organisation’s internal dynamics, but also paved the way for Scalabrini to become a space where people who come to the centre could once again feel dignified, welcomed and valued.



## **A resilient organisation**

In the journey to becoming a trauma-informed organisation, becoming a resilient organisation too is key. Minkateko describes a resilient organisation as one that “has an understanding of the complexity of the context and has the internal flexibility to respond to the changes in the context.” It prioritizes the strength of human connections, cultivating a culture of belonging and safety. Continuous reflection becomes a practice, ensuring that the organization remains responsive and adaptive. *What are we doing? How are we meeting the needs of the people we are serving or working with, how are we adapting?*

## **An ongoing journey**

The path to becoming trauma-informed is an ongoing journey with no finish line. “There is never a point where you can tick the box and say that you are done,” says Minkateko. “It is about continuously being reflective and critical – in a positive way, about the organisational culture and what it is promoting. How are we building the connection and belonging?”

Since the training started within the team, staff members have left, and new people have joined the team. The challenge lies in ensuring that these transformative shifts persist. Trauma-informed practices must be interwoven into the organizational culture. “As people come and go, we hope that it is embedded enough, and that the system doesn’t just go back to normal.”

## **Initiatives for continuous growth**

In the journey toward cultivating a trauma-informed culture, initiatives such as Men's Cafe, Healing Circles, and Team Take Care have emerged. These initiatives reflect the commitment of the Scalabrini team to take proactive steps, creating spaces within the organisation that further enhance the principles of trauma-informed care. By championing these groups, we continue to nurture connection, resilience, and continuous growth, reinforcing our dedication to becoming a truly trauma-informed organization, where every person is valued, and human connections flourish.

*\*Minkateko Wicht is an Occupational Therapist and Mike Abrams is a Popular Educator from Hands On. Hands On is a collective of community workers specialising in integrating personal and organizational development with a focus on managing social trauma and stress in individuals and organizational systems. \**



# ALL ROADS LED TO UNIVERSITY

*From Bashombana's first day at university in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to attaining his qualification at UpLearn in 2022, the road to completing his degree was a long and onerous one. Bashombana's pursuit of a university education was filled with barriers, but he refused to give it up. Making use of the support structures within the UpLearn team, and his own grit and determination, Bashombana can finally say that he is a university graduate.*

## A dream derailed

Bashombana completed his high school career in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and was set on his journey toward becoming a doctor. Sadly, in his first year of studying medicine, Bashombana was forced to press pause on his dreams as the political instability in DRC forced him to leave home in search of safety. This led him to South Africa, where he was hoping to be able to continue his studies.

He needed an income to pay for his university fees, but once in South Africa, Bashombana struggled to find employment. Eventually, he found a job as a security guard, but the job was not well paid. He then sought out the help of various bursaries and scholarship schemes for funding. Unfortunately, these attempts were rejected – in South Africa, public tertiary funding opportunities are only available to South Africans and private funding is not easy to come by.

This forced Bashombana to make the difficult decision to stop pursuing his education. “It was impossible for me to start thinking first of being at the university before having money for rent and food.” He had to move forward with life in a different way. “I decided to live my life. I had a family. I got married and had my first child.”

Although Bashombana's journey took a different route, he never stopped thinking about studying. “I told myself that if it would require that I sit in the same class as my daughter, I would still try to have a university degree”.

## A decision made for family

In a short space of time, Bashombana worked his way up from the security guard of a factory to the factory shop manager. This gave him the confidence to approach the company he was working for to fund his studies, and they agreed. Bashombana could finally press play on his dreams again and registered to study Logistics and Management through UNISA.

In his first semester at UNISA, the company that he was working for went into liquidation and shut its doors. He was retrenched and forced to halt his studies, again. “From there, I told myself I am not going to speak about school anymore. I had a family to look after, so I had to look for any work that I could find.” And that was what Bash did. He went on to work in various industries, finding mostly contract work, for the next little while.



**I told myself that if it would require that I sit in the same class as my daughter, I would still try to have a university degree**



## **The fourth attempt**

In 2018, a friend of Bashombana's contacted him about an opportunity to study through Scalabrini's UpLearn Programme – UpLearn supports students through academic coaching and leadership development on a competency-based degree with Southern New Hampshire University's (SNHU) Global Education Movement. Would this be the time that it worked out? Again, without wasting any time, Bashombana applied to UpLearn and was accepted. By this stage, Bashombana was driving for Uber. This allowed him some flexibility to study while being able to support his family, but it was not without its challenges.

Bashombana's family had grown to four – with his wife struggling to find employment, he was the sole breadwinner. Uber drivers earn their income on the road – being at the UpLearn lab to use the computers meant losing out on driving time and the money that could have been earned then. Bashombana persisted and “by the skin of my teeth”, he passed his first two years (Associate of Arts degree).

The second half of his degree turned out to be the most challenging.

## **A time of grief and grit**

It was the year 2020 and for Bashombana like many people, the lockdown meant no income. With the stress of no money coming in, Bashombana struggled to concentrate on his studies. Tragically during this time, Bashombana's brother passed away, and together with his pregnant wife, they lost their baby eight months into their pregnancy. Bashombana and his family were living with a mixture of grief and stress, but he was not going to give up! Instead he tapped into the support structures available to him.

Bashombana credits the support that he received from UpLearn for getting him through. “At this time, we were offered laptops which made it easier to work from home. We also received data that allowed us to submit our projects remotely. Most importantly, the follow-ups from the coaches made sure we remained on track. I must especially mention Christine Kalala, who was my coach then. At the time, I told her I was giving up as everything was not going well. Her advice kept me grounded until I finished the programme.” The UpLearn Team was a pillar of strength for Bashombana during this difficult time. The Welfare Team also stepped in by providing him with food assistance.

## **A university graduate**

Bashombana now holds a bachelor's degree in management with a concentration in Operations and Logistics. He remains a familiar face within UpLearn, as he volunteers his time to help coach the current cohort of UpLearn students. “I think that is what motivates me to always come here, despite the financial challenges that I might have, to give back to this programme. I now have this degree that will increase my chances of being employed somewhere, but the programme itself also teaches you other things, like how to respect people. Even if I don't get a job with it, it changed me as a man”.

## ***SPEAKING IN THE GAP***

*An exploratory project on bridging the personal and the political through creative advocacy work  
This report reflects on the research process and findings of a short study designed to explore how the personal, lived experiences of marginalised communities can be creatively expressed with the aim of informing, shaping, and catalysing political and high-level advocacy work.*

The storytelling research project was run over one week with eight women from the Women's Platform. The participants were all clients at the Scalabrini Centre and all asylum-seeker and refugee women living in Cape Town. The premise of the research was based on a request from the women's platform for an opportunity for storytelling outside of the more formal processes of sharing experiences and challenges within the Scalabrini Centre space. The research was, therefore, designed to create a space where stories could be told in different ways, and based on questions such as what stories should/can be told, how, why, and to whom? One of the facilitators described how the focus on storytelling exposed the many deeply personal stories that the women wanted to share, and that even though many were unsure how to tell them, what was consistent was their need to tell them.

The focus on storytelling also created the space in which the group – the women and the facilitators – could grapple together with questions of representation, of sharing, of caring and of community. It also meant that the research project could be clearly positioned as being for the clients rather than about them. This approach was also made possible against the background of the larger nurturing context of the Scalabrini Centre and The Women's Platform. Having had links to the Centre, knowing it as a "safe space", and knowing or at least feeling the ethics of care embedded in all the ways the Scalabrini Centre works, meant that the clients could trust the process and space – even if they did not yet trust one another or the facilitators. In this space, stories could then be told while enabling "a sense of pride at every step" – expressed through the assertion: "I'm telling my story and I'm telling it again" (a participant in the storytelling workshop).

”

**Placing individual migrant's stories  
at the heart of advocacy messages  
makes them relevant to many audiences.**









# 841,714

Social media impressions across four platforms, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn

# 41 676

Website users viewing over 90 000 pages and spending an average 3 minutes and 18 seconds on pages.

# 5 984

Unique downloads.

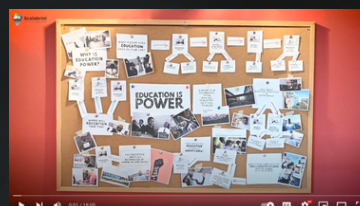
# 23

Media appearances



# 2

Documentaries released





# WATCH OUR DOCUMENTARIES



Education is Power, celebrates the power of education to unite people from different nationalities and backgrounds. Exploring the nexus between migration and education, the film follows four people with different perspectives on education in South Africa today.

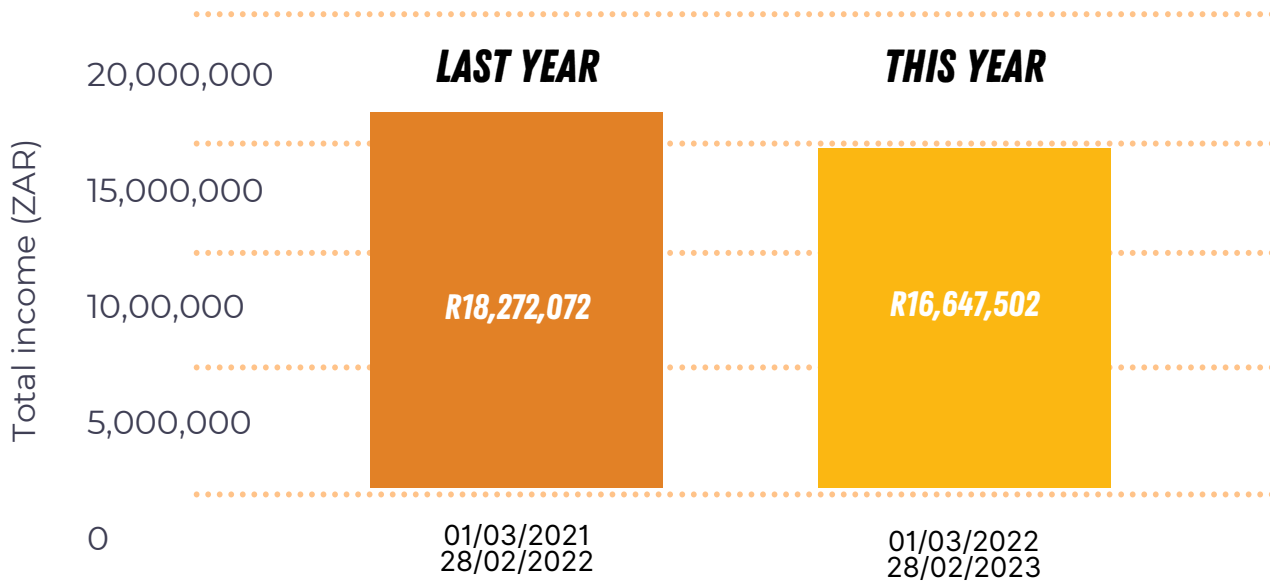
[Watch Education is Power, here](#)



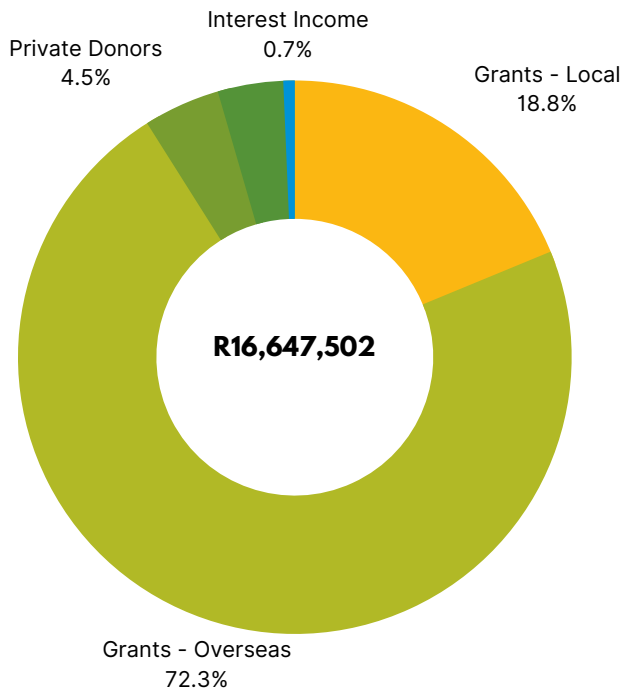
Migration and Citizenship, looks at children born in South Africa to parents who are not originally from South Africa. In 2013, the South African Legislature saw it fit to amend the Citizenship Act to allow children born in South Africa who have remained in the country until they reach the age of 18, to apply for and obtain citizenship. While this is a wonderful step towards integration, there have been challenges and difficulties with the implementation. This affects many young people living in South Africa.

[Watch Migration and Citizenship, here](#)

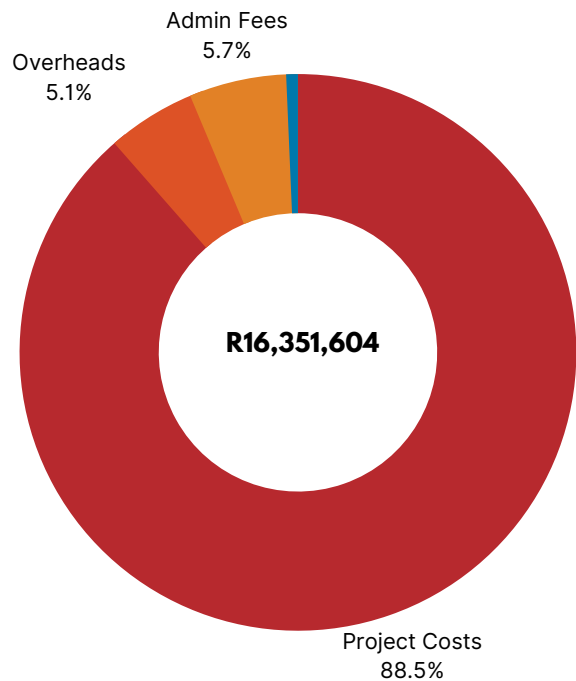
**FUNDING INCOME (PER ANNUM)**



**INCOME**



**EXPENDITURE**



Note: Any potential or existing funders are most welcome to request a full set of our audited financials



# THANK YOU

The work at The Scalabrini Centre would not be possible without the support and dedication of our board of trustees, the donors and volunteers.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2022

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Franco Vignazia	Lindi Lydia Dlamini
Jamala Safari	Alessandro Festorazzi
Dulce Pereira	Gerardo Garcia

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initiatives CFLI; Southern New Hampshire  
University (SNHU); Archdiocese of Cape Town;  
ICRC International Committee Red Cross











## Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town

The centre is registered with the South African Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation (021-079 NPO), as a youth and child care centre (C7569) and as a Public Benefit Organisation with the South African Revenue Services (930075335) and governed by a Trust (IT2746/2006).

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