

## Cala University Students Association – CALUSA

### Making Human Rights Real

#### *Achieving successful agrarian reform in the Eastern Cape*

CALUSA was established as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) in 1983 to improve the quality of education for black people. With the ushering in of the new democracy and the government's commitment to address the deficits that existed in the education sector, the need for redress diminished and the organisation changed its focus to that of rural development. CALUSA identified the need to engage citizens in local government, promote sustainable land use and access to land. They run workshops to unpack government policies geared towards agrarian reform and land rights issues; advocate for land rights of the rural poor, train people on organic land use and assist those seeking access to land.

They have also established programmes that promote the involvement of youth in agriculture and encourage them to consider this as a means to a sustainable livelihood. Increased youth participation in farming addresses some of the limited employment prospects in the local area. Training provided by the organisation has also allowed subsistence farmers to successfully implement the methods that have been shared with them to support organic farming in the community.

CALUSA is able to influence national discourse on agricultural and land policies through its advocacy on behalf of rural communities. A delegation was involved in formulating the Declaration of the People's Assembly that was presented to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in Cape Town. Through direct involvement of the community in local government processes, they have also been able to prevent the imposition of unelected community leaders.

A particularly proud achievement was when Delindlala, a commercial farm with its roots in a land reform claim, was acquired by the community with CALUSA's help. This took place in 2001. Since 2008, the farm has consistently achieved second place for the Best project in the Eastern Cape's Department of Rural Development's awards. Aside from being an example of a successful outcome of a land reform project it has also supported the development of sustainable local livelihoods.

The majority of constituents are females (65%) between the ages of 25 – 80. Local communities in the Sakhisizwe and Emalahleni areas of the Eastern Cape benefit and embrace the interventions.



#### **Cala University Students Association**

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