



Stellenbosch
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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe



A shared vision for a sustainable Africa

Aligning Agenda 2063
with the Sustainable
Development Goals

Jaarverslag vir Volhoubare Ontwikkeling
INgxelo yoNyaka yoPhuhliso oluZinzileyo
Sustainable Development Annual Report
2023/2024

A shared vision for a sustainable Africa

Aligning Agenda 2063 with the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2023/2024 Sustainable Development Annual Report, compiled by Stellenbosch University's **SDG/2063 Impact Hub**, highlights the alignment between the African Union's **Agenda 2063** and the United Nations' **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The Agendas focus on advancing Africa's vision for a prosperous, peaceful, and integrated continent for *The Africa we Want*. Nearly 90% of their goals align, emphasising People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership and Peace.

2023 saw the conclusion of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. The next phase, the "Decade of Acceleration" (2024–2033), aims to fast-track Africa's development, with education identified as a key driver for equipping future generations and addressing societal challenges. With this in mind, the report celebrates SU's contributions to sustainability in South Africa and Africa, through education, research, community engagement, our operations, and environmental stewardship.

About the SDG/2063 Impact Hub

Established in 2021, the SDG/2063 Impact Hub is housed in the Centre for Collaboration in Africa at SU International. The key objectives of the Hub are to promote and advocate for the visible uptake of the two Agendas at SU, communicate our contributions to the goals and introduce sustainability literacy, all while further leveraging our international partnerships for progress.

✉ susdev@sun.ac.za

🌐 <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>

Our reports:



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Sustainable Development Annual Report
2023/2024



Contents

Foreword: Sustainable Development Annual Report	3
Stellenbosch University's Commitment to Sustainability	3
Stellenbosch University: A research-intensive institution	4
Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024	5
A shared vision for a sustainable Africa	7
Mapping our report's content	8
Two agendas, one framework	9
Aspiration 1	10
Operational Sustainability	36
Aspiration 2	38
Aspiration 3	46
Aspirations 4 & 5	54
Aspiration 6	58
Aspiration 7	64
Last word	69
Contributors and a vote of thanks	69

Foreword: Sustainable Development Annual Report



Reflecting on Stellenbosch University's sustainability journey, especially during my tenure as Rector and Vice-Chancellor, I am heartened by the resilience and dedication of our diverse community—students, faculty, and partners alike. Together, we uphold the university's Vision 2040, striving for inclusivity, a deepened research focus, and societal contribution. This vision propels our efforts towards a systemically sustainable institution, one that aligns deeply with our African identity and global responsibilities.

Our alignment with the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 for a peaceful and prosperous Africa and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) echoes our commitment to a thriving, resilient Africa. As we integrate these frameworks into our

operations, we focus on essential areas, such as promoting responsible land use, advancing water security, and strengthening regional health systems. SU's sustainable agriculture efforts, particularly through our Faculty of AgriSciences, directly support Africa's food security, while our water initiatives prioritise accessibility and quality across the continent.

Our SDG/2063 Impact Hub, housed in the Centre for Collaboration in Africa, exemplifies our focus on interdisciplinary innovation and collaboration. It extends our commitment to fostering impactful partnerships, especially through networks such as the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA). Through this platform, we continue to build capacity and share knowledge to address challenges

that require collaborative solutions, from climate adaptation to inclusive healthcare systems.

As we move forward, I am deeply inspired by our collective commitment to advancing impactful research, responsible resource management, and community engagement. Stellenbosch University is well-positioned to support Africa's vision for sustainable development, and I am confident that our journey will yield a resilient, equitable future.

Prof Wim de Villiers
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

Stellenbosch University's Commitment to Sustainability



Stellenbosch University remains steadfast in its dedication to advancing sustainable development in Africa and globally. Aligned with the AU's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda, SU's vision as a leading research-intensive African university is underpinned by our active role in fostering collaborative research, impactful teaching, purposeful partnerships, and a strong commitment to community and environmental stewardship.

Through initiatives such as our participation in the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, we emphasise sustainable development, addressing health, climate, and economic inequality challenges. SU's commitment is evident in our research, which generates knowledge and contributes to practical, life-improving solutions, from renewable energy innovations

to social initiatives aimed at reducing inequality. Furthermore, SU's active role in the SASUF (South Africa Sweden University Forum) Research and Innovation Week exemplifies our dedication to global partnerships, strengthening our research capabilities while tackling pressing global sustainability challenges.

We approach these challenges through interdisciplinary initiatives and research centres like the Centre for Sustainability Transitions, which explores solutions to complex socio-environmental issues impacting African communities. Our programmes integrate sustainability principles across disciplines, equipping students with the skills and knowledge to become leaders in creating sustainable, equitable solutions for real-world issues. In fostering purposeful partnerships, we drive innovation in areas such as renewable

energy and healthcare, ensuring that our research benefits local and global communities.

By leveraging Africa's potential and fostering inclusive development, SU is committed to building resilient, knowledge-based societies across the continent. We envision a sustainable and prosperous Africa, working in solidarity to create a future where every individual can thrive with dignity and opportunity.

Prof Hester C Kloppe
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy, Global and Corporate Affairs, Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University: A research-intensive institution



Advancing our research endeavours:

ZAR 1,3 billion

in research funding

Research Chairs

In cultivating research excellence, SU is home to a thriving research ecosystem, supported by world-class facilities and esteemed scholars:

9

We have nine centres of Excellence, five of which were established by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI)

47

We have 47 research chairs, including 25 funded by the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI), the DSI, and the National Research Foundation (NRF), and 21 endowed or industry-funded chairs.

75%

75% of academic staff have a PhD

509

We have 509 NRF-rated researchers, recognised for their exceptional research contributions, the second most of any institution in South Africa.

21

Of these there are 21 A-rated researchers who are recognised for their work internationally.

324

We have 324 postdoctoral research fellows, contributing to the University's research excellence.

Social Impact:

ZAR 3,5 million

Through our social impact funding of ZAR 3.5 million, we support various community engagement and outreach initiatives that align with SU's mission of enriching and transforming societies.

Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024

The Framework guides our future positioning, directs our strategy and illustrates where and how the University is positioned. In 2018, the centenary year of the University, Council adopted Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024 as the institution's plan for the future.

Vision 2040

SU will be Africa's leading research-intensive university, globally recognised as excellent, inclusive and innovative, where we advance knowledge in service of society.

excellent inclusive innovative

Mission

SU is a research-intensive university where we attract outstanding students, employ talented staff and provide a world-class environment, a place connected to the world, while enriching and transforming local, continental and global communities.

Accelerating strategic implementation

At the Rectorate's strategy summit in August 2021, four key areas extrapolated from the University's strategy, coined 'gamechangers', were identified for accelerated implementation. Seven cross-cutting themes were also identified. Together they will steer SU towards realising its vision and strategy and contribute towards ensuring the Institution's sustainability.

Core strategic themes

- A thriving SU
- A transformative student experience
- Purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks
- Networked and collaborative teaching and learning
- Research for impact
- Employer of choice

Gamechangers

- Transformation
- Academic renewal
 - Programme renewal
 - Hybrid learning (escalation)
- Assessment School-Faculty model to streamline the academic, professional and research offering
- Delivery models and partnerships to unlock Africa and international potential ('University College')

Cross-cutting themes

- Strategy and data analytics
- **Systemic sustainability**
- Internationalisation
- Governance
- Matrix organisation
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Digital transformation



Africa – aiming to be prosperous, integrated, democratic, peaceful, cultured, people-driven, and influential.

A shared vision for a sustainable Africa

Agenda 2063 for *The Africa we Want*

The AU comprises 55 member states with its headquarters in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Founded on the concept of Pan-Africanism, the Union fosters the ideal of collaboration and unity among all peoples of African descent.

Released in 2013, the AU's **Agenda 2063** outlines a **50-year, long-term vision** of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena." This vision is rooted in African values, identity, and a desire for socio-economic and political integration, fair democratic governance, and peace and security for all.

2030 Agenda to *Leave No One Behind*

The **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development is a global framework adopted by 193 United Nations Member States in 2015. It aims to address urgent global challenges and promote prosperity while protecting the planet. The agenda includes 17 SDGs with specific targets to achieve by 2030, balancing social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

SDGs	Agenda 2063
17 Goals, 169 Targets, 244 Indicators	20 Goals, 174 Targets, 257 Indicators
5 Dimensions	7 Aspirations, 39 Priorities

This report

This report will use the **alignment** in the next section to illustrate how the two Agendas support each other. We hope to highlight how SU has embraced sustainability in its research, teaching, environmental stewardship, the development of Africa's citizens for our global community, and contributing to our local communities.

In December 2023, the AU and UN held a **seminar** "Towards an 'Integrated Africa': Achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063 for the Continent that We Want" to explore synergies between the AU and UN Agendas. The agendas align with a similarity in goals of almost 90%, putting People, Planet, Prosperity and Peace at their core. Only three Goals are not directly aligned as seen in the visual representation.

The AU's Goal 8 (a United Africa—Federal or Confederate), and Goal 16: African Cultural Renaissance are not directly aligned with a specific SDG. SDG 12, on Responsible Consumption and Production, is not aligned with any AU Goals. While it is crucial for Africa's development, economic development, infrastructure, political unity, and social progress are prioritised over global environmental concerns like overproduction and consumption.

2023: Progress for the Goals

The **2023 Africa Sustainable Development** report was released on 9 October 2023 at the UN office in New York. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB) compiled the report entitled "*Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and African Union Agenda 2063 at all levels.*": South African priorities for **science, technology and innovation** in its 10-year strategy align with the **2023 AU-EU Innovation Agenda**).

The report noted progress on the SDGs and AU's Agenda 2063 Goals with increases in mobile network coverage, access to safe drinking water, and electrification. Urban slum populations decreased due to infrastructure improvements. However, fewer targets are on track than those needing acceleration or reversal. The report calls for increased funding and resource mobilisation

The need for Africa to unite to achieve poverty alleviation, No Hunger and reverse climate change effects was **emphasised**.

"For Africa, less than 6 per cent of the 32 measurable SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030. Of the remaining measurable targets, 21 need to be achieved in the region and the negative trends for 8 need to be reversed. Overall, data gaps prevent a full picture of the continent's performance."

The FTYIP: 2014-2023

We recognise the progress made in the FTYIP (2014 – 2023), focused on accelerating Africa's political, social, economic, and technological progress while striving for Peace and Prosperity.

Agenda 2063: Launch of Decade of Acceleration

The **Second 10-Year Implementation Plan** of Agenda 2063, spanning 2024 to 2033, is a bold and ambitious roadmap to build on progress made and fast-track implementation to realise "The Africa We Want". This period will be known as the "Decade of Acceleration." The plan marks the beginning of the second phase of Africa's journey toward realising its 2063 vision of a prosperous, peaceful, and integrated continent. It reflects the collective determination of Africans to shape their future, embodying the dream of unity, dignity, and prosperity. The plan outlines seven key "**moonshots**" to be achieved by 2033, with Africa aiming to be prosperous, integrated, democratic, peaceful, cultured, people-driven, and influential.

Educating citizens for the 21st Century.

Building Resilient Education Systems for Increased Access to Inclusive, Lifelong, Quality, and Relevant Learning in Africa: As we end this introduction, we look forward to the **AU theme** of the year, Education, in 2024. Through Education, we can equip the continent to thrive in the 21st century. Universities have a key role to play in educating and empowering our future generations, and contributing to our challenges through research and innovation.

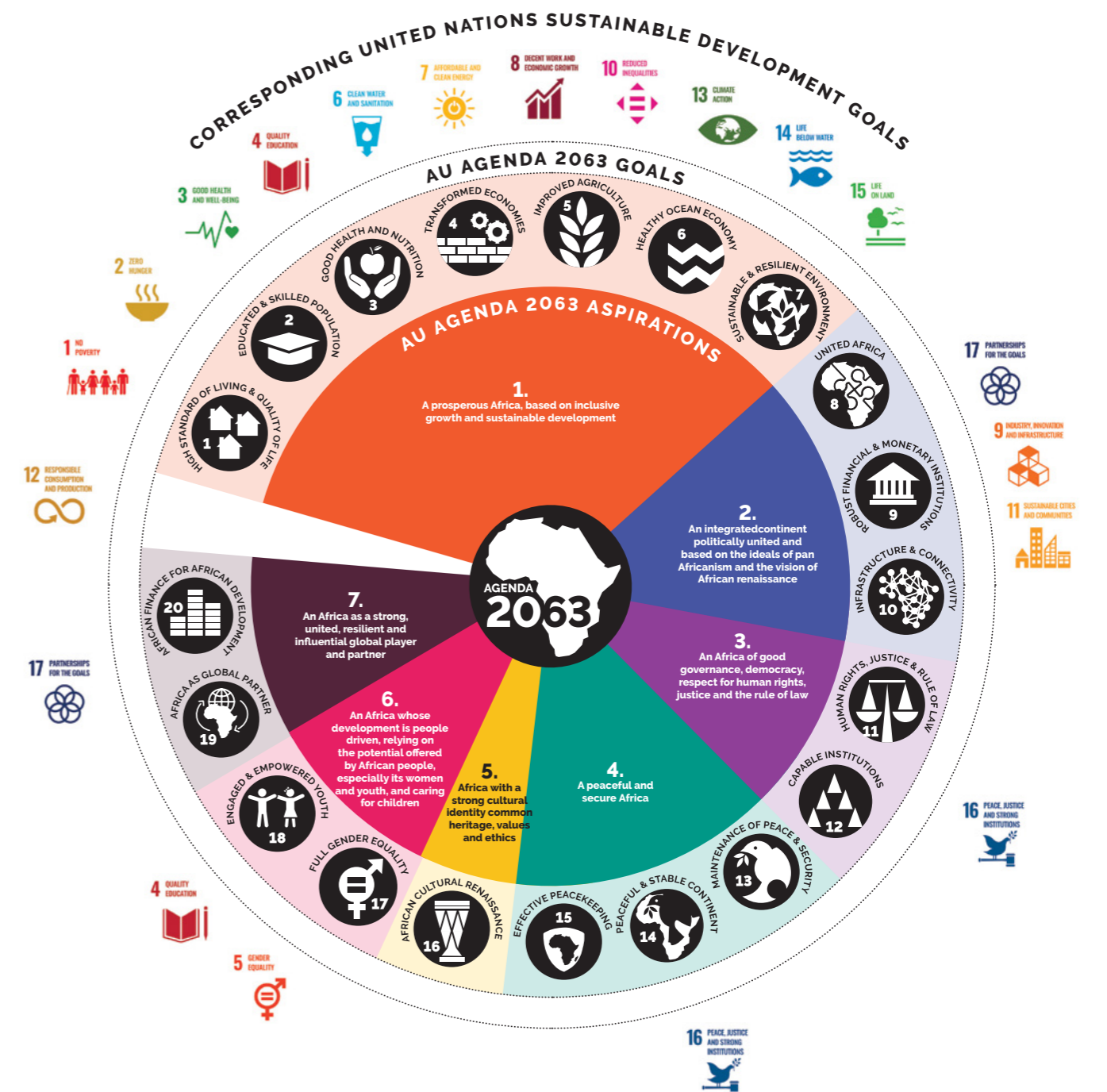
Mapping our report's content

Aligning the seven Aspirations for Agenda 2063 and its 20 Goals with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

African Union (AU) Aspiration	AU Goal of the First 10-Year Implementation Plan	United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	Page
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 1: A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all	SDG 1: No Poverty	12
		SDG 10: Reduced Inequality	14
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 2: Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation	SDG 4: Quality Education	16
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 3: Healthy and well-nourished citizens	SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	20
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 4: Transformed economies and job creation	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	22
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 5: Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production	SDG 2: Zero Hunger	18
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 6: Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth	SDG 13: Climate Action	24
	AU Goal 7: Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities	SDG 14: Life Below Water SDG 15: Life on Land	
Aspiration 1	AU Goal 7: Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	24
	AU Goal 6: Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	
Responsible stewardship	No AU Goal aligns with responsible consumption	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	34
		SU's Environmental Stewardship	36
Aspiration 2	AU Goal 8: United Africa (federal or confederate)	No equivalent SDG	40
Aspiration 2	AU Goal 9: Key continental financial and monetary institutions established and functional co-existence	SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goals	40
Aspiration 2	AU Goal 10: World-class infrastructure that criss-crosses Africa	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	42
		SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	44
Aspiration 3	AU Goal 11: Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	48
Aspiration 3	AU Goal 12: Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels, cross-cutting with Governance		50
Aspiration 4	AU Goal 13: Peace, security, and stability are preserved	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	51
Aspiration 4	AU Goal 14: A stable and peaceful Africa		52
Aspiration 4	AU Goal 15: A fully functional and operational African peace and security architecture		53
Aspiration 5	AU Goal 16: African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent	No equivalent SDG	56
Aspiration 6	AU Goal 17: Full gender equality in all spheres of life	SDG 5: Gender Equality	60
Aspiration 6	AU Goal 18: Engaged and empowered youth and children	SDG 4: Quality Education	62
Aspiration 7	AU Goal 19: Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence	SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goals	66
	AU Goal 20: Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development		66

Two agendas, one vision

Stellenbosch University presents our 2023/2024 report on sustainability contributions through research, teaching, operations, community engagement, and governance. As we look to Africa's aspirations to become a global powerhouse, we align the 20 AU Goals and seven Aspirations that make up the AU's Agenda 2063 for the First 10 Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) for a *peaceful and prosperous* Africa with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda for a sustainable and prosperous future for all.



ASPIRATION

A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development



Aspiration 1

This aspiration aims to eradicate poverty, inequality, and unemployment by leveraging Africa's natural resources and human capital. Education, good health, access to good food and nutrition, as well as inclusive growth in infrastructure, agriculture, and green energy, are key pillars to increase our standard of living and prosperity.



AU Goal 1:
A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all

>> Page 12



SDG 1:
No Poverty
SDG 10:
Reduced Inequality



AU Goal 2:
Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation

>> Page 16



SDG 4:
Quality Education

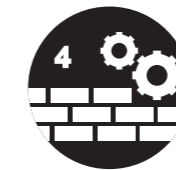


AU Goal 3:
Healthy and well-nourished citizens

>> Page 20



SDG 3:
Good Health and Well-being



AU Goal 4:
Transformed economies and job creation

>> Page 22



SDG 8:
Decent Work and Economic Growth



AU Goal 5:
Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production

>> Page 18



SDG 2:
Zero Hunger



AU Goal 6:
Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth

>> Pages 28-33

AU Goal 7 also corresponds with SDGs 13, 14 and 15



SDG 13:
Climate Action
SDG 14:
Life Below Water
SDG 15:
Life on Land



AU Goal 7:
Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities

>> Pages 24-33



SDG 6:
Clean Water and Sanitation
SDG 7:
Affordable and Clean Energy



AU Goal 1:
A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all



SDG 1:
No Poverty

Eradicating Poverty

South Africa remains the most unequal country in the world, according to the **World Bank**. Government spending on social services mitigates low job access, with **one-third** of the population receiving grant support. AU Goal 1 speaks to *A high standard of living, quality of life, and well-being for all African citizens*, aligned with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). These Goals address the first Aspiration envisioning a future where poverty is eradicated and everyone has access to equal social and economic opportunities, sharing improved livelihoods.

Poverty reduction through anti-corruption measures

Published in 2023, **"The Nexus between Poverty and Corruption: Quo Vadis?"** co-edited by SU's Prof Pregala Pillay and Prof Chris Jones, exemplifies SU's research contributions towards eliminating poverty. Up to **42% of people in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to live below the poverty line**. The book delves into the unique challenges African countries face in combating corruption-induced poverty and explores potential solutions, emphasising a comprehensive approach.

The nexus between poverty and corruption – a vicious cycle

History shows that growing up in poverty and experiencing deprivation can have lifelong ramifications. Research shows another important aspect: the vicious cycle of poverty and corruption. Peter Eigen, founder of Transparency International, argues, "Corruption is a major cause of poverty as well as a barrier to overcoming it. The two scourges feed off each other, locking their populations in a cycle of misery. Corruption must be vigorously addressed if aid is to make a real difference in freeing people from poverty."

The World Economic Forum estimates corruption costs the world \$2.6 trillion annually, or 5% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Businesses and individuals pay more than \$1 trillion in bribes every year, undermining poverty reduction efforts. In many African countries, corruption and high illicit financial flows are a challenge, with losses up to US\$ 88.6 billion, or 3.7% GDP.

The way forward

In *The Nexus between Poverty and Corruption: Quo Vadis?* experts from different African countries address the continent's challenges. Key themes centre around corruption that facilitates poverty, as the former corrodes public trust and investor confidence. Additionally, it undermines democratic gains and the rule of law, leads to human rights violations, disempowers citizens, and erodes a nation's global credibility and quality of life.

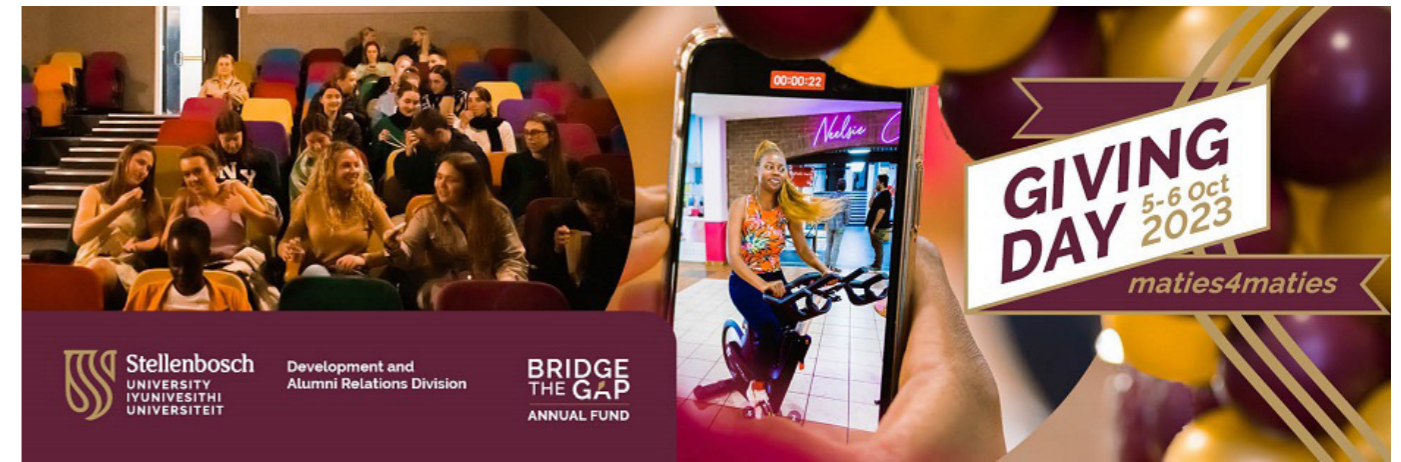
Pregala Pillay is a Professor in the School of Public Leadership and Director of the Anti-Corruption Centre for Education and Research at Stellenbosch University. Prof Chris Jones is the Head of the Unit for Moral Leadership in the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. The book was co-edited with Dr Sakhile Zondi and Prof Purshottama Reddy from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.



Prof Pregala Pillay is a Professor in the School of Public Leadership and Director of the Anti-Corruption Centre for Education and Research at Stellenbosch University.



Prof Chris Jones is the Head of the Unit for Moral Leadership in the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University.



First-generation students

In 2023, SU registered 6 206 first-year students, including 2 781 first-generation students starting a degree at SU. (The term refers to the children who are the first generation within their family to attend formal tertiary education.)

Funding for student support

Our philanthropic donations support key strategic objectives. Funding for 2023 (R336.2 million) exceeded 2022 (R272.75 million), continuing the upward trajectory. Revenue from private donations increased by 24.3% (2022: 6.8%) to R332 million (2022: R267 million). The University uses the majority of philanthropic funds for bursaries to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. SU also contributed to bursaries from the main budget, amounting to R108 million in 2023.

Wrap-around support for funded students

In 2023, we managed bursaries worth R1 273 million (2022: R1 366 million). Additional support is available to

encourage student success through tutoring, learning communities, financial aid, situational support, mental and social health, career readiness, and an alumni community. The Motsepe Foundation contributed to the Students' Representative Council #Access4All campaign, reducing student debt by more than R900 000. Through these interventions, SU aims to foster academic achievements and societal impact by reducing student debt.

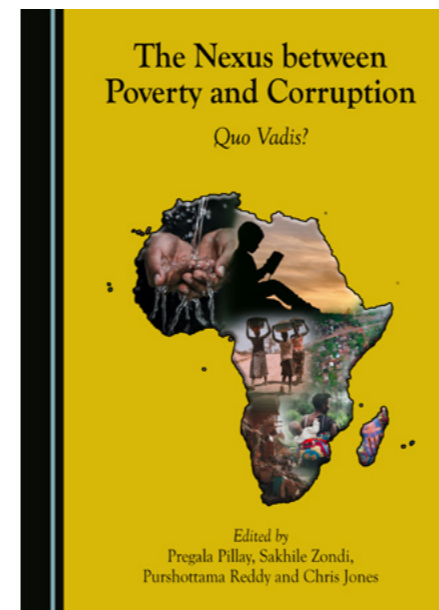
Giving Day 2023

Our annual Giving Day in October 2023 raised funds for a range of initiatives including #Move4Food and the #TygerbergPantry Project (to battle food insecurity), #CaughtintheMiddle (for students that do not qualify for state financial assistance), #GradMe (to pay remaining student debt before a student graduates), #Action4Inclusion (to eradicate historical debt), and the #EndPeriodPoverty (access to period resources) programme.

Students raising funds for students

In August 2023, several students in the Simonsberg male residence held a fundraising hike and market to help raise funds for fellow residents whose NSFAS funding is insufficient to cover their study costs, food, or travel to and from campus. They established the fund, 'Simon4Simon', several years ago to help combat financial inequality amongst Simonsberg residents.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>





AU Goal 1:
A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all



SDG 10:
Reduced Inequalities

Reduced Inequalities

The AU Goal 1 and SDG 10 aim to reduce inequality within and among countries is the major challenge of our time. Inequality remains high in post-apartheid South Africa and has increased. These goals advocate for a high standard of living and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all people, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status, for a high quality of life. SU focuses on solutions to educate a diverse and inclusive student body.

SASL teaching leading the way for the hearing-impaired community

In May 2023, South African Sign Language (SASL) became the 12th official language through a constitutional amendment, joining Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. This aims to "promote the rights of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing", a significant step in a country like South Africa with its complex history and diverse cultures. Despite slow integration of sign language and interpretation, SASL has a rich history with South Africa's deaf community that dates back to the 1970's. Since 2017, SU has enrolled deaf students in various faculties, supported by sign language interpreters. These milestones led to the employment of two deaf academic lecturing staff in the Department of General

Linguistics, teaching SASL acquisition as a credit-bearing module.

Under Dr Arné Binneman (Head, of Multilingual Learning at our Language Centre) the SASL team works with the SU Disability unit to support the community and students by interpreting, translating, and transcribing language support. Many areas are still ripe for growth, like employing permanent SASL experts who are deaf and expanding the university's deaf portfolio. SU is open and determined to include students and employees with diverse skill sets. Currently, SU currently serves seven deaf staff members, one full-time student in Education, one part-time student doing an Honours degree in Linguistics and the PhD studies of one of the seven deaf staff members.

Language Implementation

SU is a multilingual institution, focusing on the three predominant languages in the Western Cape to promote the advancement of multilingualism in academic spaces. For access to equitable university education, SU's Language Centre has Language Implementation Funding for Faculties and other environments. This funding can be applied to translation, editing, or transcription services for class materials and even website content.



Dr Arné Binneman

Class in progress for SASL



Transformation Indaba 2023

"In being a multi-facet driver of institutional culture, strategies at SU in developing the university's capacity to transform the way it creates knowledge and develops the potential of its students and staff."

– SU Transformation Office

Supporting the SU community for equity, transformation and inclusion

SU follows a transformation model where divisions, staff, and students, help create a transformed and equitable institution. Collectively, the **SU Equality Unit, Transformation Office and Disability Units** strive to create an institution that integrates diversity, equality, inclusion, and human rights. This progress is measured by the **Transformation Barometer** guidelines. The Committee for the Institutional Response to the Commission's Recommendations (**CIRCoRe**), established in April 2023, develops short-term interventions for implementation following the 2022 Khampepe report on racism at SU. Five work streams focus on the following: Student life/communities; Curriculum; Institutional culture; Race, human categorisation and science; and Strategic organisational alignment.

Equality Unit

The **Equality Unit**, in the Centre of Learning and Teaching, **implements SU's policy on harassment and unfair discrimination** and provides services and support to students and staff to ensure social justice without fear of institutional retribution. Students and **staff can report** all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, victimisation and abuse to the Unit through an **online platform**. The Unit offers

services, training, and interventions to combat gender violence and HIV/Aids, including prevention, testing, and counselling. Additionally, it provides support on issues related to the LGBTQIA+ community.

The SU Transformation Office

The **Transformation Office** facilitates the establishment of sustainable, embedded, transformation committees through the Institutional Transformation Committee in academic departments, faculties, and support environments. It advises, supports and resources academic faculty, as well as Professional, Administrative, and Support Staff (PASS) environment transformation committees on transformation strategy and programming to support the implementation of the SU Transformation Plan. It engages with student bodies to initiate events to further the transformation agenda at SU. This is coordinated by Dr Jean Farmer, Programme Manager for Transformation.

Disability Unit

With approximately 741 students and 43 staff members with disabilities on our campuses, it is a high **priority** for SU to facilitate, support and guide the intentional inclusion of all. SU promotes diversity and inclusivity through its **Disability Unit's Disability Access Policy and Accessibility Guideline Checklist**. This checklist serves as a roadmap for SU events, meetings, and conferences, ensuring accessibility for all individuals on campus. The Unit facilitates academic success through various services for students to support their learning and research. Working with Facilities Management and Maties Sport, students with disabilities are accommodated through inclusive building infrastructures and access to an active, healthy lifestyle.

Facilitating efficient and equal student success

The institution's efforts mean recruiting a diverse student body – 46.6% of total enrolments and 55.6% of first-time entering first-year students are black, coloured, or Indian (BCI) students, fostering an inclusive and dynamic campus culture. This diversity carries through to gender diversity, with 57% being female, and 1 652 international students from developing countries. We have a diverse staff profile, with 33% of academic staff, 23% of management and 67% of PASS staff being black, coloured, or Indian.

Transformation Indaba

The annual **Transformation Indaba** is a space of perspective and value sharing among SU students and staff. In 2023, the forum grappled with navigating *Action-Based Relational Transformation*. Prof Nico Koopman (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel) highlighted the need for translating the transformative vision into tangible actions, of moving beyond thoughts and words through unity and intentionality. Topics of historical legacies, opportunities for learning at SU, and the complexities of transformation were unpacked to redress the inequalities that SU experiences.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal 2:
Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation



SDG 4:
Quality Education

Access to Education

Aspiration 1 aims to eradicate poverty and maximise Africa's natural resources and human potential.

AU Goal 2, *Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation*, promotes well-educated citizens and a skills revolution driven by science, technology, and innovation. It aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education). Education is a catalyst for development and inclusive growth, and empowered citizens lead to AU Goal 18: *Engaged and empowered youth and children*. This is part of Aspiration 6, where the youth drives prosperity and development.

SU contributes to this vision by training primary and secondary school teachers and adding to the Scholarship knowledge through research and international collaboration. In South Africa, primary school completion is on track and inclusive education is improving, but secondary school completion remains a concern, according to the Statistics South Africa *SDG Country Report 2023*.

Teaching

SU provides a stimulating and intellectually rigorous learning environment that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a commitment to lifelong learning. In 2023 we awarded 8 760 qualifications in total, of which 1 590 were master's degrees and 320 doctoral degrees were conferred.

Dr Sonja Strydom, is a Senior Higher Education Advisor at the Centre for Learning Technologies at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. She obtained a DLitt et Phil (Psychology) in 2012 and a PhD (Curriculum Studies) in 2018.



African Digital University Network

The African Digital University Network (ADUN) is a collective of African scholars and practitioners focused on integrating technology into higher education. Based at the Centre for Learning Technologies at SU, this network explores digital teaching and learning. ADUN's primary objectives are to advance educational

tech scholarship, expand African educational tech theory and practice, and network with peers interested in African educational tech. ADUN aims to contribute significantly to African educational tech, fostering academic discourse and innovation.

The network gathers input from scholars through colloquiums and working groups. In 2023, ADUN hosted a '**Decolonisation of Educational Technology**' webinar series exploring educational technology's role in decolonisation. The Social Justice in Digital Context Colloquium allowed African scholars to share insights on digital tech, education, and social justice. Topics included open education's role in social inequalities and digital tech's support for queer activism. The event highlighted the complex relationship between digital tech and social justice in Africa.



Lifelong learning measures

SU is not only responsible for educating students for degree purposes: The University hosts a range of public lectures, for example, a series of **inaugural lectures** by academics that are also recorded for posterity and further dissemination.

Nobel in Africa

A highlight of 2023 was the continuation of the **Nobel in Africa** series held at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS). SU, partnering with STIAS, with a special grant from the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation, is the first institution outside Scandinavia to host a Nobel Symposium on behalf of the Nobel Foundation. In 2023, the focus of the series was in Chemistry with the theme "**Tuberculosis and Antibiotic Resistance – From Basic Drug Discovery to Clinic.**" The symposia spotlighted scientific breakthroughs and culturally or socially significant topics, supporting and showcasing advanced research in Africa. They promote research excellence and collaboration, providing an international forum for innovative, high-level scholarship and highlighting the importance of scientific research for the future of Africa and the world.

Telematic Schools Project

The **Telematic Schools Project** is a collaboration between the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and SU's **Centre for Learning Technologies (CLT)**, aimed at enhancing education through technology. It delivers lessons via satellite and live streaming to Grade 10-12 learners across South Africa, focusing on 18 key subjects. The goal is to provide high-quality teaching to support regular classroom instruction, aligning with the WCED's vision of quality education for all students.

Harnessing satellite technology

The project uses satellite technology for stability and reach, even in areas with poor connectivity, while offering live streaming options. Access is free to all learners, and the digital platform is zero-rated for data usage. Learners can interact with presenters through various digital platforms, and all materials are downloadable on the Telematic Schools website. The partnership leverages the expertise of both institutions, combining educational content with technological delivery. It includes teacher development sessions, providing a cost-effective means of reaching educators across the region.

Education without borders

SU's commitment to education extends beyond the lecture hall and research labs. We participate in partnerships and outreach programs that promote educational equity and access across Africa. Since 2023, a working group in ADUN supporting

teachers in refugee camps by collaborating with the African Higher Education Emergencies Network (**AHEEN**) to design inclusive and digitally mediated courses for refugee students in Africa.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference 2023

SU Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement held the 16th annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (**SoTL**) from 30 October to 1 November 2023. The SoTL conference aims to reach a worldwide audience and promote scholarship in teaching and learning through lectures, workshops, and discussions. The purpose was to create a space for SU academics to share and celebrate teaching, learning, and assessment. Participants shared best practices, research findings and innovative ideas about teaching and learning, while evaluating current trends and methods.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>





AU Goal 5:
Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production



SDG 2:
Zero Hunger

Food Secure Africa

In light of Aspiration 1, focusing on inclusive growth and sustainable development, universities can advance food security through AU Goal 5: *Modern Agriculture for Increased Productivity and Production*, aligned with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through education, research, innovation, and community engagement. A commitment to a food-secure Africa aligns deeply with African philosophy and culture. Ubuntu, a central tenet emphasising interconnectedness, compels us to ensure the well-being of all. Without access to adequate nutrition, we hamper individuals' potential to learn, work, and contribute to society while undermining their country's development.

According to a recent AU-UN Africa Sustainable Development Report, food insecurity and hunger rose by 11 million to 281.6 million from 2021 to 2022, due to droughts and conflict. By prioritising sustainable food production, Africa will ensure its population has access to nutritious food for physical and mental well-being and create sustainable, resilient, self-sufficient communities. These Goals are linked with Good Health and well-being (AU Goal 3/SDG 3) through access to good food and nutrition.

Southern Africa Food Lab

The African Food Systems Dialogue Series, led by SU's Southern Africa Food Lab at our Faculty of AgriSciences, addresses key issues in African food systems like hunger, malnutrition, and resource inequality. It brings together leading food policy experts, researchers, policymakers, community leaders, and students for lectures and discussions to share knowledge and solve problems.

The series aims to build relationships and understanding to drive actions like research projects and policy recommendations for a sustainable and equitable African food system.



Food Dialogue highlights in 2023

Prof Scott Drimie, Director of the programme, coordinated the following events:

13 March: *Wildlife's role in food systems*

This session focused on integrating wild animals and plants into the food system while supporting conservation, with insights from the African Wildlife Economy Institute (AWEI). Panel members noted that "there was a strong endorsement of the use of wildlife and the creation of wildlife-based businesses for livelihoods and for food [at the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Montreal in late 2022]. Explicit mention was made of food security and how wild harvesting for food can be used to mitigate climate impacts and other environmental concerns".

13 June: *Africa's Food System Paradox*

Cristina Duarte, UN Special Advisor on Africa, highlighted that Africa's food system challenges stem from geopolitical, financing, and energy issues rather than agricultural resources. She emphasised the key role that agriculture can play: "To ensure a better future, African nations must build highly productive, labour-intensive economies that can generate 80 million jobs annually. The agricultural sector is best placed to deliver on this."

Cristina Duarte



Prof Scott Drimie has been with the Food Lab since 2013 and has a split role as a Associate Professor (Extraordinary) in the Department of Global Health and at the Centre for Systems in Transition through the School of Public Leadership at SU.

13 November: *Counting the real cost of malnutrition on a country's economy.*

"The assumption is that if you have enough money, you will have enough food, and that nutrition is solved. That is not always the case. Agriculture must transform to become nutrition-sensitive and deliver on many of the SDGs."

Prof Simba Sibanda of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) addressed rising malnutrition in Africa, noting food security has deteriorated since 2014. He stressed agriculture must become nutrition-sensitive to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Africa is the only region where malnutrition is rising in absolute numbers. Severe food insecurity is increasing, with the poor becoming poorer.

The need for Sustainable Agricultural systems

Africa has the youngest population of any continent but significant poverty. Agriculture is the backbone of many economies, but many rely on traditional practices which can be vulnerable to climate change, soil degradation, and resource scarcity. By modernising agriculture, Africa can boost productivity, create resilient economies, and expand job creation in the sector.

Educating future agriculturalists

SU's Faculty of AgriSciences produces graduates who contribute to sustainable food production and is respected locally and internationally for its research and teaching. It has around 1 000 undergraduates and 700 postgraduates. In 2023, out of 8 891 SU graduates, 511 were from AgriSciences in fields such

Food waste on SU campuses in 2023

	Stellenbosch Campus	Tygerberg Campus	Bellville Campus	Total
Food waste	158 810 kg	66 492 kg	4 919 kg	230 220 kg
Students	26 618	4 493	1 752	32 863
Staff	2 419	1 013	55	3 487
Campus Population	29 037	5 506	1 807	36 350

as Aquaculture and Aquaponics, Conservation Ecology and Entomology, Agricultural Economics, Agronomy, Animal Science, Forest and Wood Science, Horticultural Science, Soil Science, Viticulture and Oenology, Food and Nutrition Security, and Sustainable Agriculture. The master's in **Food and Nutrition** is offered in collaboration with the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, and the master's in **Sustainable Agriculture** is an inter-Faculty programme linked to various AgriSciences departments.

Serving nutritious food while reducing food waste

Reducing food waste on campus, especially in our dining halls, has been an ongoing project at SU for years. In 2023, over 742 325 online meal bookings were made in residence dining halls, and 916 607 on-demand meals were purchased from call-order cafes. As students prebook their meals, the kitchens are able to prepare the meals on demand, avoiding food waste. SU's Facilities Management tracks the food waste generated across our three main campuses.

Accessible meals

Whether students live in a formal residence or a private student organisation's residential hub, they can access dining facilities offering three wholesome meals daily with a balanced mix of protein, starches, and vegetables at R100 to R110 a day in 2023. The University's dining halls cater to various dietary preferences, including vegetarian and vegan meals, and Halaal certified kitchens. Atypical food needs and allergies can also be accommodated on request.

The carbon footprint of our meals

Global food systems are responsible for 25 – 30% of the global greenhouse emissions. Our purchasing agreements require kitchens to buy local and sustainable food, where possible, benefitting Small and Medium Enterprises. In 2023, the university purchased the **Klimato** system, the first institution in Africa to do so. This programme is adapted to South African food production conditions and determines the carbon footprint of every plate of food. The University can

identify the biggest carbon costs and manage their environmental impact by optimising our purchasing and creating a sustainable value chain.

Organic Waste Management

SU's Facilities Management monitors the food waste diverted from landfill. Food waste and organic materials are sent to **Urban Farms Recycling**, which recycles food waste through composting processes or vermiculture into nutrient-rich soil fertilisers.

#IdeasForChange Food Security Challenge

Stellenbosch Network presented the #IdeasForChange **Food Security Challenge**, in partnership with the Agricultural Sustainability Education Lab and the Department of Science & Innovation's Regional Innovation Support Programme (RISP). The challenge was to improve food security in the local community, and enhance the sustainability of the various local ecosystems the town relies on. The **winner** was Hein Duvenhage with his submission **Arable Grow**, focused on controlled vertical farming, a system that has technology, expert horticulture, and a steadfast commitment to sustainability at its core.

The "Seeds of Good Anthropocene: Fostering Food Systems Transformations in Africa"

is a research project funded by the Canadian International Development Research Centre, since January 2022. Led by Prof. Reinette (Oonsie) Biggs, it aims to support local food initiatives ("seeds") in creating sustainable, just, and resilient food systems across Africa. The project focuses on three coastal urban regions: Cape Town (South Africa), Accra (Ghana), and Mombasa (Kenya). It has identified 150 initiatives and conducted interviews and workshops to understand how to scale them up and support them. The findings will be shared through publications and media.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal 3:
Healthy and well-nourished citizens



AU Goal 3:
Good Health and Well-being

Good health

Without Good Health, countries and individuals cannot fully participate in the socio-economic activities to lift them out of poverty. Aspiration 1 emphasises the need to address these challenges by investing in robust healthcare systems, universal access to services, and health education, especially in rural and underserved areas. Access to quality healthcare and nutrition are needed to address preventable diseases, malnutrition, inadequate healthcare access, and high maternal and child mortality rates in Africa and South Africa.

SU is proud of its contribution to AU Goal 3 and SDG 3, and the work towards sustainable food production and eliminating hunger (AU Goal 5 and SDG 2).

We focus on protecting our citizens from climate change's impact on good health.

The influence of climate change on health and well-being

Climate change is a major health challenge in the 21st century. The Division of Family Medicine and Primary Care at SU has introduced planetary health in teaching and research. There are three key aspects: the health and social effects of climate change, the ability of primary care facilities to function under pressure, and minimising environmental harm from the health sector.

Our ecological crisis impacts health through changes in air quality, food production, access to fresh water, exposure to infectious diseases and direct natural hazards. These impact health in terms of malnutrition, increased risk of infectious diseases (such as cholera, HIV, dengue fever and malaria), complications from non-communicable diseases (like diabetes and hypertension), injury and trauma, displacement and migration and mental health problems.

Poor communities are more vulnerable to ecological changes — especially children, pregnant women, older adults, and those with chronic diseases. We need to work with communities to improve resilience and use available assets and resources. Access to care for migrants or displaced people may be particularly challenging.

These events impact primary care facilities and services. For example, the infrastructure may be damaged or destroyed, water, energy or medical supplies may be unreliable, or people may struggle with extreme temperatures while waiting in line. We need to improve the climate resilience and environmental sustainability of our health facilities and services. Key issues include workforce, water and sanitation supply, waste disposal, energy supply, infrastructure and equipment.

The health voice is critical in advocating for national and global change. People care about their health, yet we often overlook, forget or disregard the health effects of the ecological crisis.



Prof Bob Mash, a Distinguished Professor and the Executive and Divisional Head at the SU Department of Family and Emergency Medicine, is chairperson of the Dean's Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability (DACES).



SU Nursing Students

SU's contribution to training Health Professionals

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) educates future professionals to be engaged citizens and thought leaders. Graduates promote health, prevent disease, and provide healthcare services, empowering communities to engage in positive social and economic activities in South Africa. Throughout 2023, the SU FMHS leveraged its strengths in teaching and research to impact medicine and health science on the continent. With 15 departments, seven research areas and exceptional teaching programs, the Faculty graduated 1 147 professionals (75% female), of the 8 891 graduates in 2023 (approximately 13%).

The FMHS ensures its academic and service activities are evidence-based, internationally competitive, and locally relevant. Aligned with the South African National Development Plan (2030), the Faculty prioritises social accountability by directing education, research, and service efforts toward addressing the country's key health concerns, extending this focus to the broader African continent and beyond. Faculty members, staff, and students are encouraged to design and implement initiatives that tackle these health priorities locally, regionally, and globally.

Health outreach programmes

FMHS released a comprehensive Social Impact Report for 2019 - 2023 highlighting several SDG-aligned projects in Teaching and Learning, Research, Social Impact, and Environmental Responsibility.

Some notable programmes:

Social Impact: Co-creating a Culture of Wellness in the Western Cape

The Western Cape on Wellness (WoW!) initiative aims to co-create and sustain a culture of wellness across the Western Cape to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases (NCDs), working with government and civil society. In 2023, SU contributed by supporting the local WoW-Cloeteville community with monitored exercise sessions, promoting healthy habits and empowering participants to maintain an active lifestyle. These kinds of initiatives strengthen community ties, reduce health disparities, and enable students and staff to engage as active, informed citizens.

Ukwanda for Dietetic IV

Final-year Global Health Dietetic IV programme students are placed in rural communities for six weeks through the *Ukwanda Centre for Rural Health programme*. This immersive experience helps to address healthcare inequities, while students benefit from combining classroom knowledge with practical application. The students are enabled to provide nutrition services, deliver education sessions, and collaborate with healthcare teams. The programme prepares future dietitians to meet the unique needs of underserved communities in South Africa.


Current collaborations with health institutions

SU and its FMHS aim to revolutionise healthcare and research with a groundbreaking partnership with PET Labs Pharmaceuticals. Launched in

November 2023 and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation it aims to establish a cutting-edge cyclotron facility — a first for the Western Cape. It produces vital radiopharmaceuticals for diagnosis and research and strengthens SU's position as a leader in nuclear medicine, addressing the shortage of nuclear medicine professionals in South Africa. While supporting enhanced patient care and diagnostics, the facility will accelerate research in infectious diseases and oncology.

Cultivating a love of active lifestyles

In 2023, the University's Maties Sports division introduced the *Campus Sport Bumper Evenings* for students to participate in sports and support their favourite sports teams in rugby, netball, hockey, soccer, basketball, tennis, and table tennis. A total of 106 matches were played over the three Bumper Evenings, with an average of 755 student-athletes participating per evening.

 More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal 4:
Transformed economies and job creation



SDG 8:
Decent Work and Economic Growth

Inclusive Economic Growth and Job Creation

Universities can achieve AU Goal for *Transformed Economies and Job Creation*, which complements SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through inclusive growth. Universities drive education and training, skills development, innovation, and research that transform economies and drive job creation. In Africa's transition to diverse and resilient economies, research and development can address local and regional challenges in productivity, industries, and infrastructure, while creating platforms, like incubators, for startups and small businesses from university-led innovations.

Developing small businesses

At SU, several programmes develop these competencies for our students and staff. Students are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurial activities to become economically active after graduation, working closely with industry and innovation entities to commercialise ideas.

Empowering economic growth through the SBA

Stellenbosch Business School's **Small Business Academy (SBA)** drives inclusive job creation and economic transformation. It exemplifies how targeted educational programs and strategic partnerships can drive economic growth and job creation. Its focus on equipping entrepreneurs with essential skills, nurturing innovation, and sustainable business practices positions the SBA as a key player in transforming economies and sustained job creation.

Established in 2012, the SBA programme supports and empowers small business owners and nurture entrepreneurs, particularly among historically disadvantaged owners in South Africa. Small businesses are pivotal for economic growth and job creation in developing countries. However, the survival rate for small, micro, and medium enterprises (SMMEs) is low, with 70-80% failing within five years, primarily due to a lack of fundamental business skills.



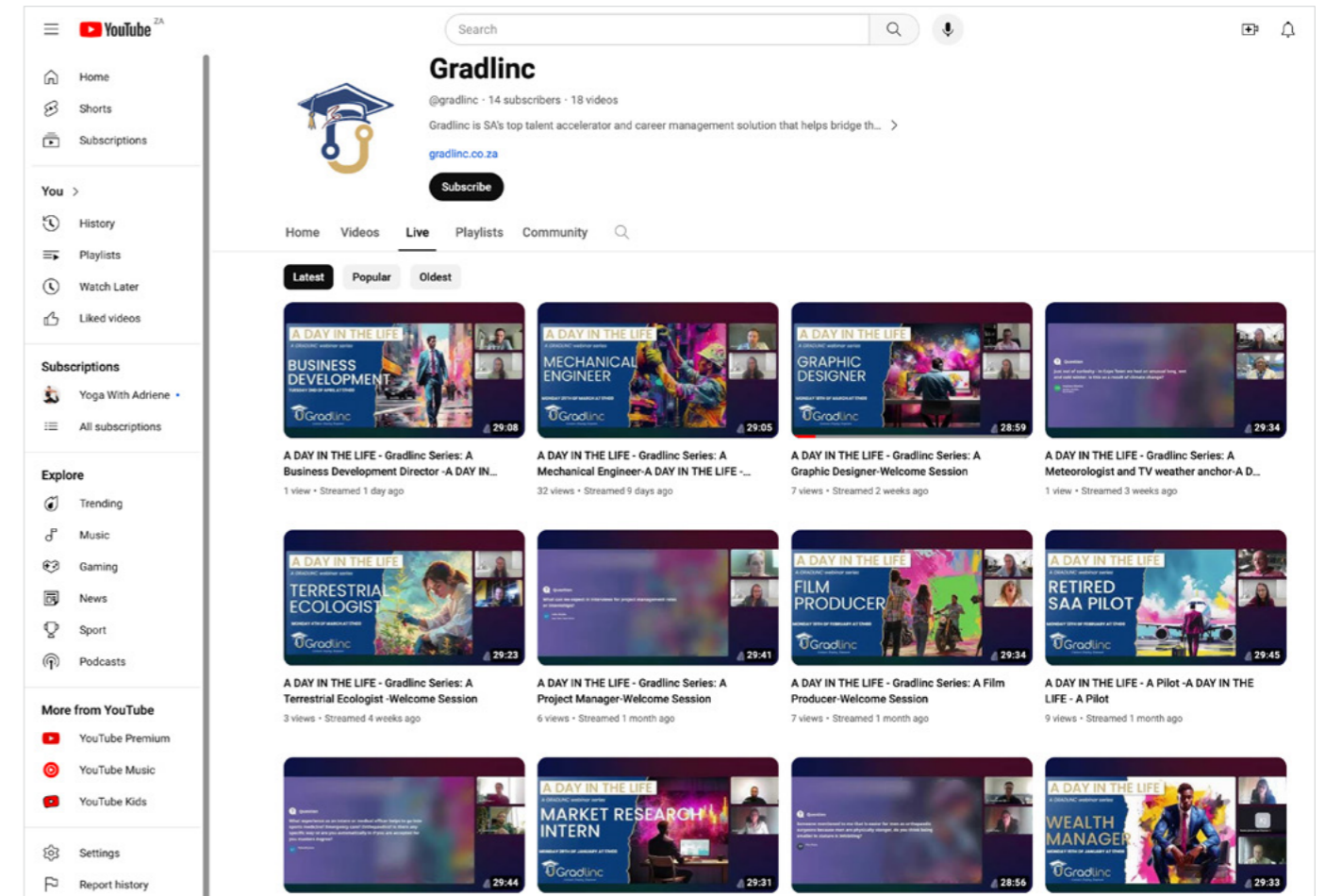
The SBA is headed up by Dr Armand Bam, head of Social Impact at the Business School, and a lecturer in business in society, quality and integrity, and leadership development

A key to the SBA's success is its curriculum, tailored for small business owners. The nine-month Development Programme provides essential skills in strategic planning, financial management, marketing, and business pitching. The Academy is a vital incubator for small businesses, bridging the skills gap and addressing the high failure rate among South African SMMEs. Participants get a minimum of 12 hours of one-on-one mentorship from seasoned mentors and Stellenbosch Business School alumni, crucial for applying classroom learning to real business, boosting confidence and decision-making.

The SBA is active in underserved Western Cape communities (Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Bonnievale), and recently outside of the province (East London, Aliwal North, Port Nolloth, Springbok). Since 2012, the SBA has graduated more than 400 delegates, with 80.8% still operating their original businesses. In 2022, a survey of SBA alumni revealed significant positive outcomes: 91.8% of alumni businesses have full-time staff, and 88.9% have part-time staff, indicating the SBA's direct contribution to job creation in low-income communities.

Besides skills development, the SBA fosters a culture of innovation and sustainability among its participants. Through partnerships with local organisations and government entities, the SBA encourages businesses to adopt sustainable practices that improve operational efficiency and contribute to broader economic and social goals. The SBA's expansion to Port Nolloth and East London demonstrates its commitment to reaching marginalised communities, empowering them with the tools to drive economic transformation.

The SBA's impact creates a ripple effect in the communities it serves. By empowering entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, the SBA contributes to a more inclusive economy essential for South Africa's long-term growth and development.



The various resources offered by the Gradlinc platform on Youtube

Supporting SU Students and Graduates to Secure Employment

In December 2022, SU launched **Gradlinc**, an innovative graduate career development platform funded by Innovus, SU's commercialisation arm. This national, cloud-based platform connects employers, graduates, and universities, attracting almost 40 company registrations and 1 400+ student sign-ups in 2023. It partners with major companies like Mediclinic, Forbes Africa, CNBC News, CCBA (Coca-Cola), and Shoprite and joined forces with the PPS Foundation to enhance job opportunities for graduates in South Africa. Gradlinc develops features to track job placements and introduced a student internship program for work experience with spinout companies and alumni businesses. Additionally, it hosts events to improve students' work readiness.

Entrepreneurship development

According to the World Bank, South Africa remains the most unequal country in the world (2023), and access to employment is a key priority; reducing barriers to entrepreneurship and self-employment is being addressed nationally. The Entrepreneurship

Development in Higher Education (EDHE) programme, an initiative of the Department of Higher Education and Training, aims to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of students, academics, and leaders. In 2023, three SU students placed top in their categories at the regional EDHE finals.

The Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship

Driving data-driven conversations for sustainable development through entrepreneurship across Africa,

the Allan Gray Centre for African Entrepreneurship, established in 2023, is a flagship project within the School of Public Leadership at SU. The Centre aims to develop an ecosystem of responsible entrepreneurs in Africa, focusing on job creation and poverty alleviation to enhance community well-being and stimulate economic growth.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



Stellenbosch Business Academy marketplace

ACCESS TO WATER AND ENERGY:

In addition to climate action and conservation work on land and life below water, SU contributes to AU Goal 7, promoting environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities, by addressing clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) and affordable and clean energy (SDG 7). SU integrates research and practical solutions in the water sector. We champion innovative water management, training, and conservation practices, addressing the need for sustainable water systems in communities vulnerable to climate change and droughts in South Africa.



AU Goal 6:
Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth



AU Goal 7:
Environmentally sustainable climate-resilient economies and communities



SDG 6:
Clean Water and Sanitation

Water and Sanitation

While we've made strides in universal basic sanitation by securing access to clean water and sanitation, 3 in 5 Africans (411 million people) still lack access to safe drinking water. In October 2023, the African Union launched the Mind the Gap – Invest in Water Campaign to accelerate SDG 6/AU Goal 7 and create resilient economies and communities. At SU, we have programmes that serve local communities in Stellenbosch and South Africa and contribute to continental knowledge.

Why we need a Blue Revolution?

In 2010, SU established the **Water Institute (SUWI)** to tackle South Africa's water-related challenges. The SUWI still harnesses the expertise of SU's leading scientists today to conduct multi-disciplinary research, working closely with industry and government partners. These collaborations address water challenges, facilitate technology transfer, and develop essential human capital.

In 2023, the SUWI launched two initiatives to train and upskill water industry trainers and create collaborative opportunities between the government, agricultural or water industry, and academia:

Strengthening climate-smart agriculture skills in South Africa

The SU Water Institute and Faculty of Agrisciences, with Maastricht School of Management, held a workshop to present the findings on a programme to boost climate-smart agriculture skills in South Africa (17 March 2023). This project, part of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Orange Knowledge Programme, aims to strengthen the skills of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) staff and students in water use and climate-smart agriculture. Achievements include developing student learning materials, setting up three high-tech greenhouses, and launching a Cloud-based Moodle e-learning platform. The project also led to agreements between academia, government and the agricultural industry.

Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Water

The first regional Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Water was launched on 23 May. This is the first initiative outside the EU of the Platform CoVE in Water, established to upskill water sector professionals. Through the CoVE partnerships between Universities and TVET colleges, the private sector, and government will be strengthened. Outcomes include collaborating with TVET institutions to expose them to the latest research, increasing training relevance to the labour market, and improving graduates' employment prospects.

The SUWI offers two certified short courses. The first, Water Treatment Process Management at Water Works, focuses on the core principles and management concepts of water and wastewater treatment, equipping tutors, trainers, engineers, and government officials with the knowledge to select and apply these processes effectively.



Manual Jackson is the manager at the SUWI.



CoVE Cohort 2023

The second course, **Water Quality Management and Risk Assessments at Water Works**, is designed for water professionals to coordinate and implement risk-based water safety and operational activities.

SU's leadership in this project underscores its commitment to addressing Africa's pressing challenges. Through its expertise and international partnerships, SU is driving positive change in the water sector and contributing to a more sustainable future for the continent.

ACEWATER Project

SU leads a collaborative effort in transboundary water management with the ACEWATER III project (Africa Centres of Excellence in Water III), running from 2023 to 2027. Coordinated by the secretariat for AUDA-NEPAD SANWATCE (African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development, Southern Africa Network of Water Centres of Excellence), based at the CCA (SUI). The €5 million initiative, funded by the European Commission, aims to boost collaboration for water management in Africa via STI research. SU, with 20 partners across AUDA-NEPAD networks, will build on previous ACEWATER projects.

The projects will benefit the management of water resources in Africa via research, training, short exchanges, and engagement with WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) stakeholders, including policymakers. By generating knowledge, building capacity, and enhancing collaboration, it will aid sustainable water management and better livelihoods. SU's lead role highlights



its commitment to Africa's WASH challenges, driving positive change and a sustainable future through its expertise and partnerships.

Resilient Waters programme

The **Resilient Waters** programme ran from 2018 to 2023, focusing on enhancing resilience and water security in Southern African communities and ecosystems. The Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) at SU was a key knowledge partner during the programme funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

During the programme, the researchers worked with regional institutions, river-basin organisations, conservation agencies, national

governments, and local communities to strengthen institutions, improve information systems, and promote sustainable natural resource management. The project supported various CST staff and funded 11 postgraduates, including four PhD and seven master's students. CST's contributions included co-developing resilience dialogues, a webinar series, supervising and training students, and creating two online courses on UNESCO Open Learning. They also made two online portals for easy access to resilience materials.

More:
<https://susdev.sun.ac.za>





AU Goal 6:
Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth



AU Goal 7:
Environmentally sustainable climate-resilient economies and communities



SDG 7:
Affordable and Clean Energy

Clean Energy

SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) is key in creating sustainable cities and communities (AU Goal 7). SU's contributions center around advancing renewable energy research, focussing on solar, wind, and energy efficiency. The university's research and partnerships with industry and government are driving sustainable energy solutions that support affordability and environmental sustainability. These efforts are key to transitioning towards a low-carbon economy and building climate resilience.

Access to Clean and Affordable Energy was another area of progress in the 2023 Africa Sustainable Development. In his keynote opening at the 14th International Sustainability Transitions Conference in Utrecht (August 2023), Prof Mark Swilling noted the world's interest in Africa adopting low-carbon energy solutions. Currently the continent's electricity generation is less than Germany and France combined. If Africa continued to develop using fossil fuels to achieve its legitimate right to development, the Paris Agreement targets would be unachievable. SU is at the forefront of research in renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and biomass, to lead sustainable development alongside governments and civil society.



Prof Mark Swilling is a Professor at the Centre for Sustainability Transitions and a SARChI Chair in Urban Governance and Energy in Africa

The Just Energy Transition

Prof Swilling discussed the dilemma of the just energy transition. On one hand, we have the accelerating energy transition steering the global economy toward decarbonisation to mitigate global warming. On the other, there is the persistence of poverty, deepening inequalities, and the need to develop industries and innovation.

From policy to practice monitoring South Africa's carbon tax implementation

Prof Lee-Ann Steenkamp argues that carbon tax may drive behavioural change (or fill government coffers), but if properly designed, carbon tax revenues could fund the "green economy."

In South Africa, the pursuit of a "just transition" pathway is especially important where high unemployment and poverty compete with climate change realities. After over a decade of public consultation, South Africa's carbon tax was introduced on 1 June 2019. This levy assigns price on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, giving effect to the "polluter pays" principle. Initiated at R120 per ton CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) emissions, the price will increase annually (R190 in 2024), but is much lower than the global average.

The disconnect between carbon tax policy and practice can lead to difficulties in interpreting and applying the legislation and regulations, continuing decarbonisation efforts and remaining tax compliant. It is at this juncture where academia, industry and government can (and should) re-connect.



Prof Lee-Anne Steenkamp's research focuses on 'green tax' issues, including biodiversity conservation, the taxing of energy use in developing countries and most notably South Africa's new carbon tax.



Prof Steenkamp serves on the Carbon Tax Committee of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) to address roll-out issues with the carbon tax regime. As the subcommittee Chair, she 'translates' member feedback into carbon tax policy recommendations for the South African National Treasury. One **example** is that future carbon tax rates should be in the local rands, and not the US dollar, to limit taxpayers' exposure to currency volatility. These submissions can lead to amendments in policy and legislation, thereby creating greater certainty for taxpayers and streamlined application of the policies.

Comprehensive Guide to Carbon Tax

A feedback loop between academic research and policy development is important. Prof Steenkamp wrote two chapters for the **Comprehensive Guide to Carbon Tax** (LexisNexis, South Africa), a practical guide on carbon tax administration. The first chapter cover the generic policy and design considerations for a carbon tax using examples from other countries, and the second addresses the development of South Africa's carbon tax legal regime and highlights watershed moments in its evolution.

e-Taxis: minibus taxis

The South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI) is working with SU to **retrofit** existing minibus taxis from petrol or diesel to electric vehicles. The team lead Prof Thinus Booysen said: "More than 70% of the trips in South Africa are by minibus in the informal sector, which is why we are hoping to encourage the retrofitting of some of the 250 000 minibuses in the country with electric propulsion. These

will be cheaper and much more environmentally friendly than new electric vehicles."

The Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies

The **CRSES** at the Faculty of Engineering at SU advances a sustainable future through world-class renewable and sustainable energy research, advisory services, awareness campaigns, community engagement, and training programmes.

Energy Storage Systems short course

As part of its training mandate, the CRSES offered an Energy Storage Systems short course in September 2023. Participants were enabled to understand the concepts and technologies used for electric energy storage (ES), specifically lithium ion batteries, which are the dominant technology. It was aimed at energy sector engineers, technologists and technicians, Government and local authority officials, as well as investors and students.

Southern African Sustainable Energy Conference

In 2023, the CRSES, in collaboration with Nelson Mandela University,

hosted the Southern African Sustainable Energy Conference (**SASEC**) 2023. The conference focused on research, development and deployment of methodologies, technologies and systems within the Southern African context related to sustainable energy. The scientific programme covered a broad range of topics to advance sustainable energy practices including Solar, Thermal Energy, Photovoltaics, Wind Energy, Hydrogen, Hydroelectric Power, Ocean Energy, Resource Assessment, Energy Storage Applications, Power Systems, and Bioenergy.

ARUA Centre of Excellence in Energy

The CRSES hosts the Centre of Excellence (**CoE**) in **Energy** within the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) network. **The Centre has received funding from the Grand Challenges Research Fund (UK)** for cutting-edge research to address challenges faced by developing countries, and build the research capacity of African researchers. It is also co-leading the new ARUA-Guild Renewable Energy CoRE alongside the University of Ghent.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>





AU Goal 6:
Blue/ocean economy
for accelerated
economic growth



AU Goal 7:
Environmentally
sustainable climate-
resilient economies
and communities



SDG 13:
Climate Action

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Both the UN and AU Agendas focus on environmental sustainability to protect our planet and conserve resources for future generations. For Earth Day 2023, Prof Guy Midgley, director of SU's School for Climate Studies noted in his address "How to Avoid Climate Disaster: An African View," that while Africa produces just 2% of emissions, we're hit first and worst by climate change. Without international funding, Africa bears a heavier burden by spending more of its GDP on climate research than the rest of the world. He concluded that Africa sees itself as part of a "global community, which is following a pathway that is not supportive of a sustainable development trajectory for our countries".

With this in mind, we explore environmental sustainability in light of Climate Action, Life on Land, and Life below water and how this leads to climate-resilient communities supported by AU Goal 7 and AU Goal 6.

Climate Change

Recognising the urgency of addressing climate change and creating climate-resilient economies and communities, SU established the **School for Climate Studies (SCS)**, the only one of its kind in Africa. The School engages in transdisciplinary research, collaborations with SU entities, and, building activities through learning and teaching, commercialisation, and social impact initiatives. They contribute to climate resilience, sustainable economic growth, and responsible environmental resource use while ensuring that *communities effected will continue to thrive*. This section features interventions by the SCS and SU to combat climate change.



Prof Guy Midgley

Increasing our impact for the climate crisis

Professor Guy Midgley, Director of SU's School for Climate Studies, has worked in global change and biodiversity science since the 1980s, starting at the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). He was subsequently appointed at Stellenbosch University (Botany and Zoology) in 2014. Previously A-rated in Plant Sciences, he now holds an NRF A-rating in Earth Sciences, recognising his international leadership in earth system science, including biodiversity, carbon dynamics, climate change, and species adaptation. He has received the SA Royal Society Marloth Medal and Humboldt Foundation Research Award for lifetime science contributions. He is ranked 180th on the Reuters Hot List of top climate scientists

Launch of Africa Hub of the CliMigHealth Network

Launched in March 2023, CliMigHealth is a global network of academics, NGOs, and individuals focused on climate change, migration, and healthcare. Co-led by Ghent University (Belgium) CliMigHealth network and Stellenbosch University's SCS, the Africa hub promotes research and knowledge sharing on these topics in Africa. Prof. Guy Midgley from SCS leads climate science research, while Dr. Lokotola Christian Lueme, a public health researcher, focuses on climate change, air pollution, sustainable urban health, and their effects on migration and health.

"...while Africa produces just 2% of emissions, we're hit first and worst by climate change."

Prof Monteiro, an oceanographer at SU's SCS, leads in Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR). His leadership in the Southern Ocean Carbon-Climate Observatory (SOCCO) focuses on the interplay between ocean physics and carbon fluxes, addressing uncertainties in the carbon budget and long-term climate projections.



applied climate adaptation research in Africa, especially in disaster risk reduction.

Business Schools for Climate Leadership (BS4CL)

In November 2022, Stellenbosch Business School and five other African business schools, joined the Business Schools for Climate Leadership (BS4CL) at COP27. These institutions, acknowledging higher education's role in combating climate change, launched the Cairo Declaration for Business Schools for Climate Leadership Africa (BS4CL Africa) with the African Chapter of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). This initiative aims to create a collaborative framework for climate action, transforming business education curricula to align with Africa's needs.

More:
<https://susdev.sun.ac.za>

Carbon-Climate Constraints Workshop

In May 2023, the SU SCS facilitated an **NRF workshop** *Integrated Regional Observation Carbon-Climate Constraints*, with Prof Pedro Monteiro to improve greenhouse gas emissions observations in South Africa. The workshop united the carbon observation and policy communities, enhancing regional modelling capacities to create a carbon inventory for better understanding the changing carbon-climate-water interplay. These efforts are crucial for informing national and international mitigation policies and a just transition.

Carbon dioxide removal research

Profs Guy Midgley and Pedro Monteiro from the **School for Climate Studies (SCS)** produced a paper "Building a future Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) science and governance policy capability partnership in South Africa" after the **5th National Global Change Conference** in Bloemfontein (South Africa) in January 2023. This is part of their work to create a national CDR Science-Policy Hub with national and international research institutions, government policymakers and civil society. The side event highlighted CDR interventions in limiting global warming to below 1.5 - 2°C. The **paper**, *Building a carbon dioxide removal science-policy partnership for southern Africa*, stresses the need for a Hub to connect CDR interventions with policy to improve carbon reduction in South Africa. This initiative affects warming, ocean acidification and confidence in carbon pricing, central for CDR investments.

Research collaboration on climate change impacts

In South Africa, a priority is boosting government capacity and societal resilience against climate change. This reduces vulnerability to climate risks, focusing on impacts like high temperatures on crops and changes in infrastructure due to altered flood patterns. In November 2023, the SU School for Climate Studies **signed** an agreement with the Western Cape Government's Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs. This agreement focuses on research, joint projects, and opportunities for postgrads in agriculture programs, targeting climate change on agriculture and communities in the Western Cape.

Building resilience through training

South Africa adopted a proactive disaster risk management approach focusing on adaptation, prevention, and mitigation. In this spirit, the **PeriperiU Secretariat** (Partners Enhancing Resilience of People Exposed to Risks) at SU hosts a Disaster Risk Reduction network of 19 African Higher Education Institutions, to advance disaster risk-related scholarship for sustainable development. The Secretariat and the University of Arizona hosted the first Climate Adaptation Research Programme (**CARP**) **workshop** at Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in November 2023. The event provided a platform over 70 African professionals, including 33 emerging scholars, in climate adaptation to network and collaborate. The CARP project, funded by USAID, supports



The Periperi U secretariat hosted its first CARP workshop at Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



AU Goal 7:
Environmentally sustainable climate-resilient economies and communities



AU Goal 6:
Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth



SDG 14:
Life Below Water

Our Life Below Water

Marine ecosystems absorb carbon, regulate climate, and support biodiversity, ensuring food security and livelihoods for millions, especially in Africa's coastal regions. AU Goal 7 promotes the development of economies and communities that can adapt to climate change. Together, these goals foster a balanced approach to environmental sustainability and resilience amid climate pressures.

The Earth as a patient in need of healing

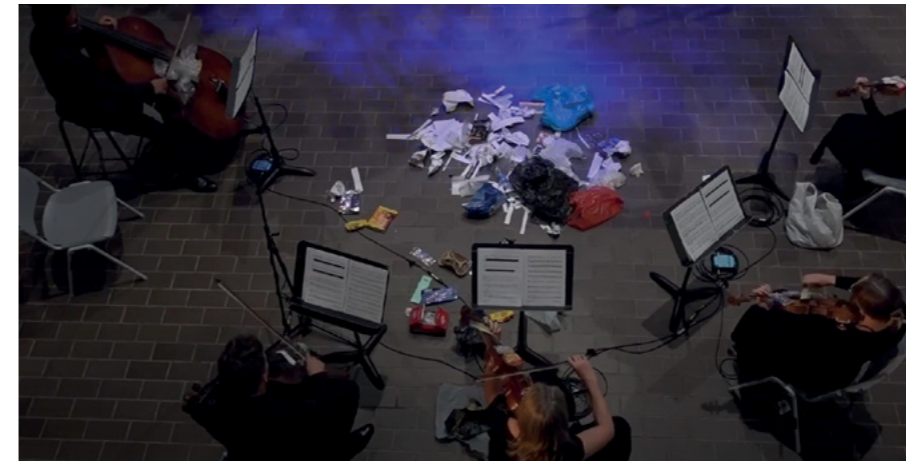
Thulani Makhalanyaane, a microbiology professor at SU, researches marine microbiomes' roles in breaking down pollutants, monitoring ecological health, and adapting to climate change, crucial for protecting marine life and creating sustainable, climate-resilient economies and communities.

He is most passionate about working with extreme environments like the Southern Ocean, Antarctica, and Marion Island. His research on microbial communities' adaptation to change informs predictions on marine ecosystems' response to climate change. Marine microbes are foundational to oceanic food webs, and understanding their resilience or vulnerability to environmental changes provides insights for conserving marine biodiversity under shifting climate conditions.

Makhalanyaane's team studies estuarine microbiomes to detect harmful ecological shifts, like cyanobacterial blooms, affecting marine and freshwater life. Monitoring these changes informs policies and river management strategies to reduce pollutants entering the ocean. This ecological surveillance ensures early intervention, protecting riverine and marine ecosystems from degradation.

Another critical aspect of his work is identifying marine microbes that can break down microplastics, which harm marine life by entering the food chain. Understanding how certain microbes adapt and thrive in microplastic-contaminated environments can help monitor ocean health and develop biotechnological solutions to mitigate marine pollution.

Prof Thulani Makhalanyaane joined SU in 2023. He holds a joint appointment at SU's Department of Microbiology and the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking. He's been appointed as a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Goalkeeper for his work towards the SDGs, and specifically SDG 14.



to the rich biodiversity of these vital marine ecosystems.

Changes needed to save our marine resources

For world Ocean's Day on 8 June, PhD candidate in Science, Courtney Gardiner, **explained** why the theme, "Planet Ocean: tides are changing" is so apt: The rapid and complex changes in ocean environments due to rising temperatures and other climate factors are significantly impacting marine species, ecosystems, and human livelihoods. Immediate action is required to mitigate these effects, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adopting adaptive management strategies. Additionally, as species shift to find suitable habitats, it affects food security and economic stability for millions of people, emphasising the need for both local and global efforts to address these issues and develop resilient solutions.

Also see the work of the SU Water Institute under AU Goal 7 and SDG 6, and water-sensitive waste management in the Environmental Sustainability **Report 2023**.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>

#CreateCOP28 Open Call Winners

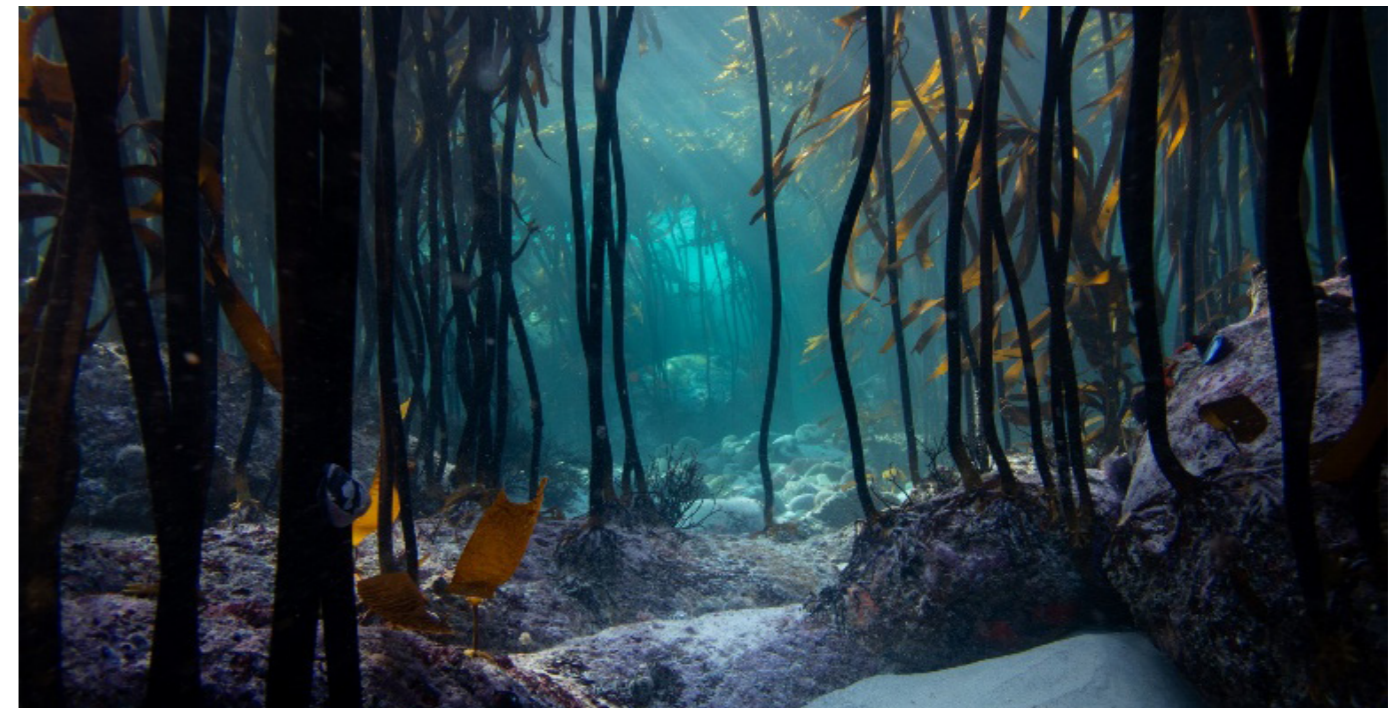
In 2023, Art Partner, a leading global creative agency, presented the #CreateCOP28 Open Call, aimed at highlighting climate change and environmental issues ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28). The initiative elevated young voices from marginalised communities and addressed climate change manifestations. SU Master's student Lizé Briel achieved 3rd place with her work "Ocean Soundscape: An Installation about Ocean Pollution." The work was composed for string quintet, garbage, and electronics, and received recognition at the UN Climate Change Conference in December 2023.

Her work was subsequently showcased at the UN Headquarters in New York and in the *Whale Hall* at the Iziko South Africa Museum. Briel says this composition "highlights

the environmental degradation of our oceans, blending the sounds of discarded items with traditional instruments to create a powerful message about conservation and creativity. The piece takes listeners on a journey from the ocean's depths to its surface, delineating the devastating impact of pollution through distinct sections".

The Great African Seaforest

Marine researchers at SU's Department of Botany and Zoology and our School for Climate Studies partnered with the Sea Change Project in **2023** to study the biodiversity of the Great African Seaforest through a two-year project. Kelp forests, which cover about 1 000 km of the South African coastline, are highly biodiverse but have seen a decline in research since the 1970s. This collaboration aims to fill knowledge gaps by documenting species diversity and examining the ecological processes that contribute



The Great African Seaforest is a unique large-scale marine ecosystem that covers about 1000 kilometres of the South African coast line. Photo: Jannes Landschoff



AU Goal 7:
Environmentally sustainable climate-resilient economies and communities



AU Goal 6:
Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth



SDG 15:
Life on Land

Our Life on Land

SU has a long history of contributing to land conservation (SDG 15) and supports the African Union's Goals 7 and 6, focussing on environmentally sustainable, climate-resilient economies and promoting the blue economy for accelerated economic growth. Our interdisciplinary efforts in conservation biology, sustainable agriculture, wildlife economies, and climate research contribute to protecting ecosystems, fostering sustainable development, and building resilience to climate change across land and marine environments.

Key contributors include the **Centre for Invasion Biology (CIB)**, which tackles biological invasions threatening biodiversity and ecosystems. The **Faculty of AgriSciences** develops sustainable farming practices that maintain biodiversity, enhance soil health, and build crop resilience. These efforts help conserve life on land and make agricultural systems and their communities adaptable to climate change, supporting the AU's climate resilience goals. The **School for Climate Studies (SCS)**, integrates climate research and policy, focusing on adaptation and sustainable development. Through its work in carbon reduction and climate-smart agriculture, the SCS supports SU's mission of environmentally sustainable economies (AU Goal 7) and promotes sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems, contributing to the blue economy (AU Goal 6).

Botanical Garden celebrates its centenary

The **SU Botanical Garden (SUBG)** is South Africa's oldest academic garden. In 2023, it **celebrated** its centenary, marking 100 years of support to SU research and teaching. Its mission centres around SU research and teaching support, conservation of threatened flora, and biodiversity education.

Conservation

Despite being small, SUBG actively contributes to biodiversity targets nationally and globally. Its conservation collections focus on species' extinction risk and data quality. In 2023, SUBG's key achievements include adding 33 high-value accessions, totalling 213. It conserves 168 threatened species, some unique globally, aiding plant conservation and recovery. Annual monitoring of *Haemanthus pumilio* upgraded its Red List status to Critically Endangered. Since 2020, SUBG reintroduced 33 *Marasmodes undulata* (wavy-leafed marasmodes, part of the Sand Fynbos grouping) propagated plants to their natural habitat, supporting species recovery. It also helped propagate threatened Sand Fynbos species, refining restoration techniques.

Number of high value conservation accessions added in 2023 per SANBI Red List of South African Plants threat status:

SANBI Red List of South African Plants status	Number SUBG accessions added in 2023
Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct)	1
Critically Endangered	13
Endangered	7
Vulnerable	10
Near Threatened	1
Rare	1



Education

The biodiversity of our botanical garden serves as a living laboratory for students and researchers, and a green oasis for the community. SUBG strives to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of the natural world to support human well-being and conservation outcomes. The SUBG staff host school groups for tailored educational tours that support biodiversity work in their curriculum. These interactive tours aim to instil an understanding and appreciation of biodiversity and its value for human lives. Visitors can join the garden for free as students and staff, visitors pay a minimal entrance fee.

Biodiversity and land conservation

Dr Hayley Clements, AWEI Research Chair, collaborates with the African Wildlife Economy Institute (AWEI) to develop a strategic research program for thriving wildlife economies in Africa and systems supporting biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, economic opportunities, and human well-being. In partnership with Oppenheimer Generations Research and Conservation, a major initiative is the Sustainable Wildlife Economies project (2020-2026). The project engages stakeholders from the wildlife ranching industry and national governments to create knowledge and tools for inclusive growth within wildlife ranching.



Biodiversity Intactness Index for Africa (BII4Africa)

Sub-Saharan Africa is critically underrepresented in global biodiversity datasets, which are key to include biodiversity into national and international policy and planning. The groundbreaking BII4Africa project (2019 – 2023), funded by a Jennifer Oppenheimer grant, addressed this data gap through a structured expert elicitation process involving experts in African fauna and flora. Using the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII), a simple and practical metric that estimates the

proportion of biodiversity that is intact compared to a reference state such as an intact national park, the Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) convened over 200 experts. The dataset was in Nature's open access journal Scientific Reports. Equally important was the network of African researchers and decision-makers that the project was able to connect to each other, and to researchers and decision-makers more broadly.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal:
No equivalent
AU Goal



SDG 12:
Responsible
Consumption
and Production

Responsible Consumption

Agenda 2063 does not have a corresponding Goal that aligns with SDG 12 and responsible consumption. Unlike more industrialised regions where overproduction and overconsumption are major issues, Africa's challenges lie in resource extraction and the need for economic growth to meet basic needs and improve living standards. However, responsible consumption and production should play a significant role, particularly in waste and resource management, agriculture, and energy, as we develop our environmental policies and practices for long-term sustainability in Africa. In light of the Goals of Aspiration 1, we include SDG 12 in this section, alongside the progress made by our Environmental Sustainability arm at our Facilities Management Division.



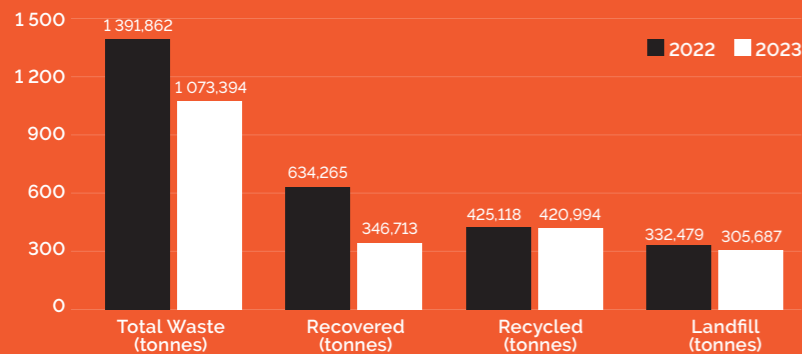
SU's Environmental Sustainability Report 2023.

Environmental Stewardship

SU aims for net zero status by 2050 with the first Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) in 2022. The plan is a roadmap to reduce our campuses' environmental impact over eight strategic themes, including waste management. The ESP's activities and milestones in 2023 are contained in the Environmental Sustainability Report.

Diverting Waste from Landfill

SU has committed to diverting 100% of the institution's waste from landfill. The intermediate steps aim to reduce general waste by 80% and 95% per cent of food and organic waste to landfill, 100% waste sorting and a 20% reduction in general waste compared to 2018, by 2024.



Total general waste in 2022 and 2023' Hazardous waste of 1 711,62 tonnes was generated in 2023 but excluded from the report

	Total Waste (tonnes)	Recovered (tonnes)	Recycled (tonnes)	Landfill (tonnes)
2022	1 391,862	634,265	425,118	332,479
2023	1 073,394	346,713	420,994	305,687

Waste management and reduction

Aligned with SDG 12, SU tackles landfill waste by reducing waste generation and promoting reuse and recycling. SU's Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020 – 2025 sets goals through a waste inventory, focusing on recovery and recycling. Waste streams are measured for targeted reductions, supported by infrastructure initiatives, awareness campaigns, and campus community training. A service provider operates a central Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) that processes materials for reuse and recycling. SU has also compiled material specifications to eliminate single-use items, ensuring only reusable and recyclable products remain on campus. Regular collaboration between experts, waste specialists, and local government foster ongoing improvements in waste management.

Waste tracking

Waste is measured and managed within the university. The university prioritises waste services into 11 different streams and measures the volumes generated. Total non-hazardous waste produced (1 073 394 t) in 2023 was lower compared to 1 391 862 t in 2022. This reduction in waste had a noticeable influence on the volume of materials recovered for reuse, while similar amounts were sent for recycling (including food and garden waste), or to landfill.

In short, recovery is the act or process of regaining or repossession of something lost while recycling is the practice of sorting and collecting waste materials for new use.



Recyclable materials being baled to increase storage capacity



Sorters next to the conveyor belt

Sorting at source

To ensure efficient waste sorting, SU has implemented a three-bin system that pre-sorts waste into organic (compostable), recyclable, and non-recyclable waste before it reaches the MRF. Separate e-waste stations are set up at strategic campus points.

A bailing machine was installed in 2023 to optimise space and transport costs, reducing carbon emissions. A weighbridge and extended loading area have been added to house more waste and improve data capture and operations. As part of the Facilities Management outreach, regular tours are given to select student leaders and environmental activists to spread the word in their communities.

Green Living Awards 2023 report

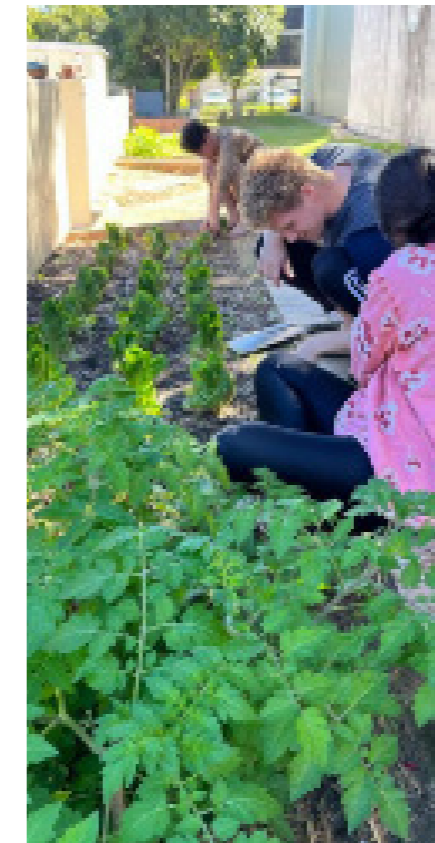
The Green Living Awards is an annual competition to reward student communities (residences and commuter groups) that encourage and work towards changing behaviours to reduce utilities and raise awareness about environmental sustainability. The teams had to represent an event, an educational project to change behaviour and a project involving the broader community. The judging panel used criteria like project continuity, participation rate, environmental impact, and SDG relevance to evaluate the projects.



Ms Thato Kesilwe, student leader from eNkanyini residence, receiving the first prize in the residence category from COO Prof Stan du Plessis.



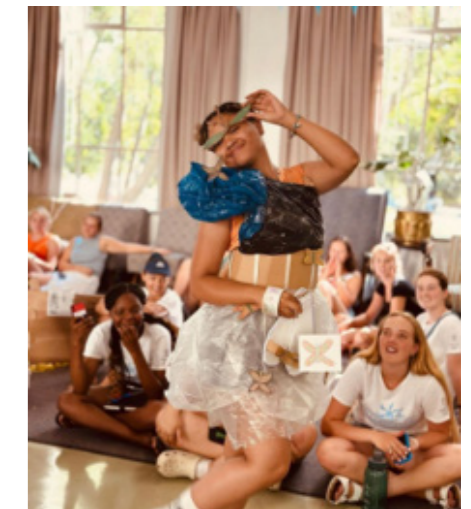
Mr Victor Makusha, a student leader from Oude Molen, winner in the commuter student category with Prof Stan du Plessis.



Pieke's community garden

The winner in the residence category was eNkanyini residence, winning R15 000 for the house fund under the leadership of Ms Thato Kesilwe. Mr. Victor Makusha received the prize on behalf of the commuter student community, runner-up Oude Molen, winning R13 000 for the house fund.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



Heemstede trashion show



Lydia's waste sorting games during the welcoming programme

Operational Sustainability

Environmental Stewardship at Stellenbosch University

Over the past four years, SU's **Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020 - 2025** has guided the institution to "respect ecological thresholds and enhance both society and the natural environment." As part of its management practices, SU avoids the depletion or degradation of natural resources and ensures diverse, resilient and productive ecosystems for current and future generations, along with a transition to carbon neutrality and net zero emissions.

The plan addresses eight themes and their affiliated SD Goals as below, the ESP contains the specific 2024 targets for each theme.

Water management and conservation



As a water-scarce country, water management is crucial. The University aims to conserve potable and irrigation water by reducing, reusing, and exploring alternative sources. To this end, projects in 2023 included the installation of water-efficient fittings, the use of alternative water sources, and the integration of a greywater system. The University also introduced rigorous leak detection measures and installed smaller, 6 l toilet cisterns. The project houses extensive water infrastructure, including 16 boreholes, 29 km of potable water lines, and 28 km of stormwater lines.

Energy and emissions



SU aims to reduce its direct emissions (Scope 1), indirect emissions from purchased electricity (Scope 2), and our dependence on fossil-fuelled energy through dynamic and continuous energy-management programmes through energy-efficient and renewable energy solutions. SU installed solar as part of a R73 million multiple photovoltaic project across its five campuses in 2023 alone. Additionally, SU has reduced its energy consumption through a comprehensive LED replacement program, HVAC system upgrades for lower energy use, and investments in alternative energy sources.

Sustainable buildings and green certifications



SU uses sustainable design principles to reduce the environmental impact of our construction, refurbishment, and operational projects. The University's sustainability and carbon emission targets include implementing a four-star Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) standard for sustainable construction and refurbishment and creating a Green Star-rated portfolio certification. The newly-built Biomedical Research Institute (BMRI) and new Jan Mouton Learning Centre became the first new campus building to receive a 4-star rating from the GBCSA, which is considered "Best Practice" in terms of environmentally friendly design and functionality. In 2023, the university celebrated its 19th GBCSA building certification with a stellar, six-star award for the Visual Arts Building, a heritage building constructed in 1906.

Travel and mobility



SU is in the process of developing a sustainable transport strategy and implementing initiatives like the Victoria Street non-motorised transport lane, which includes a bicycle lane, a pedestrian lane, and a tactile paved sidewalk for universal accessibility. These efforts will help to reduce the environmental impact of travel and encouraging the use of efficient modes of transport to reduce emissions.

Waste reduction



Through SU's waste reduction plan, the University is actively managing and reducing waste generated on campus and diverting it away from landfills through prevention, reduction, reuse, recycling, beneficiation, and responsible disposal.



The Visual Arts Building is the nineteenth building on campus to be awarded Green-Building certification by the GBCSA.

Responsible procurement of goods and services



SU aims to evaluate the environmental impact of the goods and services it uses to establish a baseline for greater environmental responsibility. The University advocates in its ESP to purchase goods and services from companies and organisations where chain-of-custody credentials are available and evaluated. Through this, SU hopes to raise awareness of environmental sustainability among these companies and organisations through collaboration and education.

Biodiversity and land use



SU operates in the biologically diverse Cape Floral Kingdom, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The University is acutely aware of the threats posed by urban development and are taking proactive measures to protect and enhance biodiversity on our campuses. Maintaining rich biodiversity and through sensitive land use of our campus, mountains and rivers in our local areas, we create resilient and diverse landscapes. We preserve Indigenous fynbos and Karoo veld, as well as encourage natural pest control by erecting owl and bat boxes by collaborating with local government and nature conservation entities.

Engagement



The environmental sustainability plan encourages and guides student and staff engagement with initiatives that enable stakeholders to identify opportunities for creating lasting positive change. A yearly calendar sets the scene for a year of activities according to special monthly themes, highlighting prominent national and international environmental awareness days, such as Earth Day, Labour Week, and International E-waste Day.

Earth Day 2023: SU hosted a mini expo to showcase the environmental sustainability work on its five campuses. The exhibitors included environments within SU engaging in the climate change conversations, such as SU Facilities Management, the SDG/2063 Impact Hub dealing with the Sustainable Development Agendas of both the UN and AU at SU, The School for Climate Change, EcoMaties, the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies, and companies helping SU to achieve a net zero campus.

All recent activities and milestones reached by the institution are contained in the 2023 Environmental Sustainability Report published by SU's Facilities Management.

An integrated continent, politically united, and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance



Aspiration 2

By 2063, Africa aims to achieve full political unity through the free movement of people and integration. Interconnected infrastructure and a rise in both intra-African and global trade will lead to economic freedom and global influence.



AU Goal 8:
A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all

» Page 40

No equivalent SDG



AU Goal 9:
Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation

» Page 42



SDG 17:
Partnership for the Goals



AU Goal 10:
Healthy and well-nourished citizens

» Page 44



SDG 11:
Sustainable Cities and Communities



AU Goal 8:
United Africa (federal or confederate)
[No corresponding SDG for AU 8]



AU Goal 9:
Key continental financial and monetary institutions established and functional co-existence



SDG 17:
Partnerships for the Goals

Africa takes charge

AU Goal 8: United Africa (federal or confederate) is rooted in the Pan-African vision of a unified continent. It envisions a peaceful, prosperous, and secure continent. AU Goal 9 envisages key continental financial and monetary institutions established and functional to support the vision of a developed and financially stable United Africa. SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals) in Higher Education focuses on capacity building and collaboration for sustainable development.

SU has a longstanding tradition of fostering a diverse and inclusive campus community. Annually, hundreds of international students choose to enrich their academic journeys at SU, contributing to a vibrant tapestry of cultures and perspectives. Aligned with SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals and AU Agenda 2063's emphasis on knowledge sharing and innovation, SU is committed to integrating international students into the South African context while celebrating their unique cultural backgrounds.

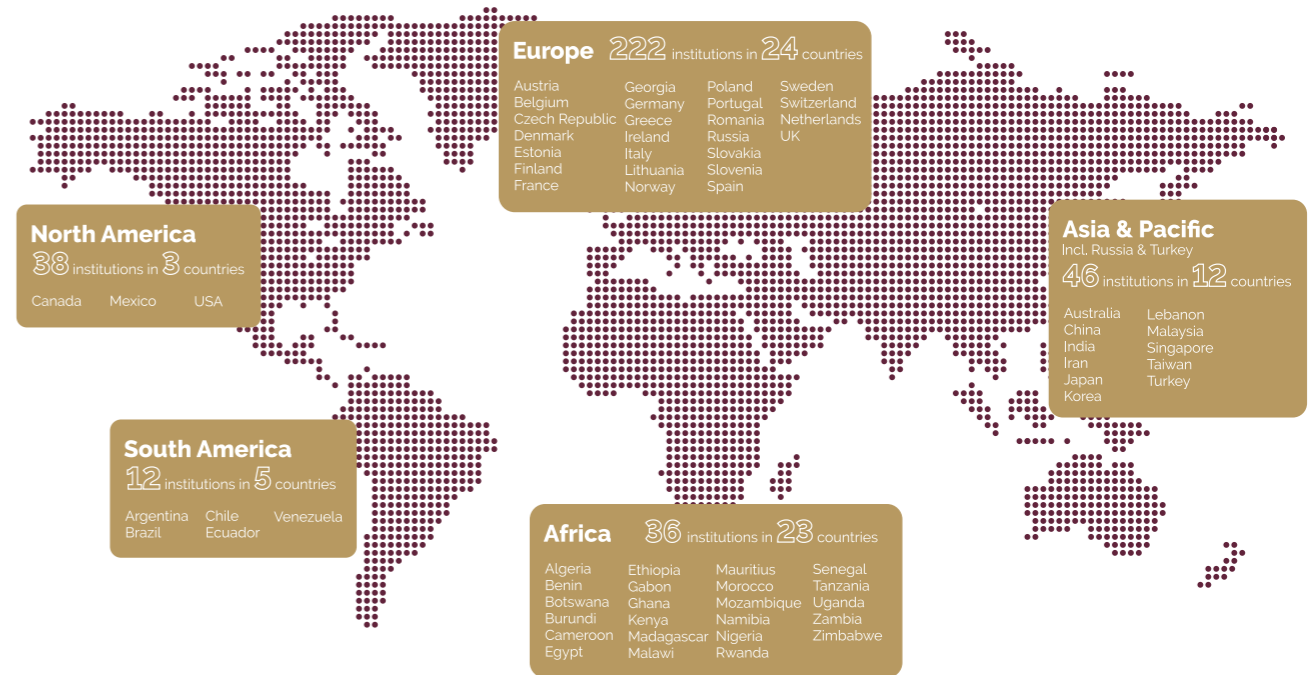


30 Years of internationalisation in higher education

Founded in 1993, SU International celebrated 30 years of internationalisation: It hosted the Stellenbosch International Academic Network Meeting (SIAN) in March 2023, bringing together 128 partnerships from 76 institutions in 37 countries (out of 354 international partners in 57 countries). The meeting discussed topical issues around internationalisation, such as African

multilateral and bilateral partnerships, the sustainable development agenda, and the internationalisation of the curriculum.

The evening also included the launch of the 21/22 Sustainable Development Annual Report: The Africa we Want. In June the report went on to win the SDG Initiative of the Year (Africa) at the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities (ACEEU) Triple E Awards in Barcelona.



354 International Partnerships
67 Countries
6 Continents
34 Erasmus+

The Centre for Collaboration in Africa

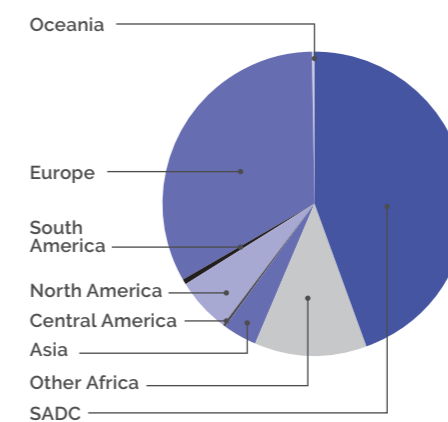
The Centre for Collaboration in Africa at SU International cultivates relationships with institutions in other African countries through bilateral agreements, mobility programs for staff, post-doctoral fellows, student exchanges, and support for themed research networks. This initiative seeks to broaden Stellenbosch University's research reach, promote the growth of its scholars, and strengthen African networks. To increase our influence and visibility internationally, we formed new alliances with organisations in Asia, Europe, and North America, including Guangzhou International Sister Cities University Alliance (GISU), French Business School SKEMA, and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund in the USA.

Fostering global citizenship: SU's commitment to international collaboration

Global Week at SU is an annual week-long event that promotes belonging and fosters global citizenship for local and international students. The programme offers platforms for intercultural exchange and showcases diverse opportunities for students, contributing to SU's reputation as a leading institution for international collaboration and cultural exchange.

As SU welcomes global students, it reinforces its commitment to a more connected and sustainable future. In 2023, 10% of our students were international, and recruiting

International Student Enrolments



Region	Enrolments
SADC	1 951
Other Africa	528
Asia	158
North America	256
Central America	5
South America	32
Europe	1 442
Oceania	6
Total	4 378

international students is part of our strategy. SU is a premier African university that attracts many non-South African students. In 2023, we contributed to the training and capacity development of almost 2 500 African students: Of our international students, 57% were from Africa, followed by Europe.

UNESCO Chair: Complex systems and transformative African futures

In 2023, Prof. Rika Preiser and CST fellow Tanja Hichert were appointed co-chairs of the UNESCO Chair in **Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures**. Part of UNESCO's **Global Futures Literacy Network**, it aims to leverage their expertise in complex systems to understand interdependent social-ecological systems. The Chair will focus on creating sustainable and just futures through research and multi-stakeholder engagement. The chair seeks to advance inclusive processes for students, researchers, and decision-makers and plans to establish a hub for African experts to collaborate on global sustainability challenges. It emphasises a transdisciplinary approach and will run until 2026.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal 10:
World-class infrastructure that criss-crosses Africa



SDG 9:
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Infrastructure and Innovation

Partnerships, Industry and Innovation (SDG 9) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) for world-class infrastructure (AU Goal 10) are strong areas of contribution by SU.

AU Goal 10 and its aim for World-Class Infrastructure, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) are critical to achieving Aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063, envisioning an integrated and prosperous Africa. By building resilient infrastructure and embracing innovation, these goals drive economic growth, create jobs, improve resources, and enhance connectivity. Cross-border infrastructure projects, technological advancements, and sustainable industrialisation are key to unlocking Africa's potential. SU's **Innovus** and its incubator **LaunchLab** support innovation and entrepreneurship and contribute to AU Goal 4/SDG 8 for job creation, further contributing to Africa's economic development.

Making innovation matter

SU champions a rich and vibrant culture of innovation through **Innovus**, its technology transfer and innovation division. Its divisions include **LaunchLab**, a start-up incubator, and a technology transfer office, instrumental in developing pioneering research into practical technologies and commercial

opportunities. By facilitating collaborations among researchers, industry, and entrepreneurs, **Innovus** drives solutions for societal challenges. Through the division, academic excellence and real-world applications produce timely solutions that support SDG 8/AU Goal 4 for job creation, reinforcing Africa's economic development.

University spin-offs since 2014 **30**

University patents since 2019 **27**

Stellenbosch University Group of Companies

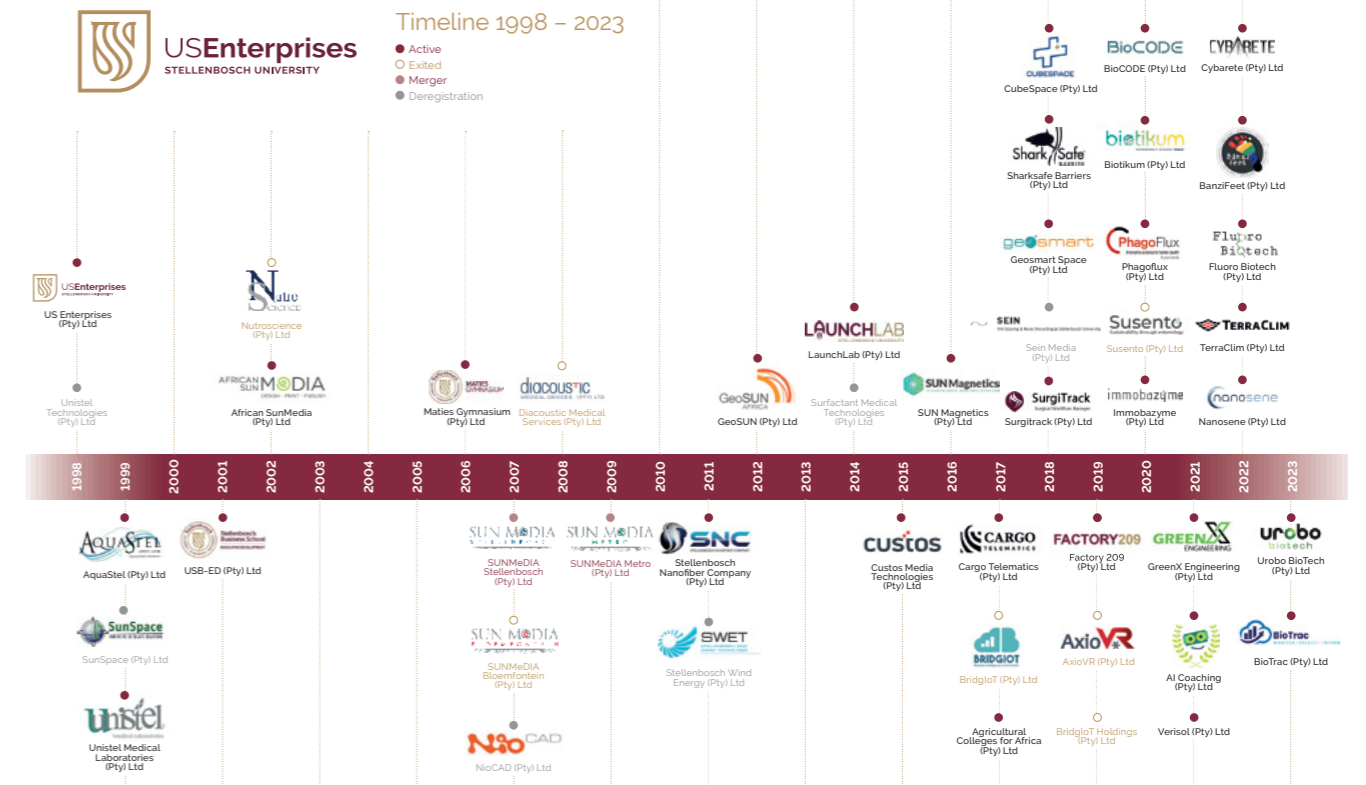


Harnessing SU's intellectual capital

Innovus's entrepreneurial culture is evident throughout the university in our teaching, research, and societal impact. Since 2019, we have registered 27 Patent Cooperation Treaty applications, the highest for a South African Higher Education institution. Since 2014, SU has launched 30 spin-out companies across various sectors. In 2023, two companies, **FluoroBiotech**, producing high-quality, cost-effective recombinant proteins, and **Nanosene** – Africa's first bespoke polymer supplier, attracted significant funding. **Gradlinc**, developed with **Innovus** funding and launched in late 2022, is a platform that connects employers, graduates and universities on a national cloud-based platform for recruitments and internships. These innovations align with the SDGs and Agenda 2063 Goals to develop world-class infrastructure in and for Africa.



SU Group of Companies



Instant Startup – gearing your business into an IDEA!

The **Instant Startup (IS)** is a complete support tool designed to help SU entrepreneurs transition from business ideas to commercial ventures. It supports both the entrepreneur and the technology transfer office by guiding university entrepreneurs through their curated startup journey by providing modules tailored to address the critical phases of starting up or spinning out. With support from technology transfer professionals and business coaches, teams move from idea conceptualisation to an operational business with refinement of inter alia validation of customer insights, identification of applicable sustainability goals and documenting of business models.

A tool for self-paced results

The IS tool offers short videos, articles, courses, and resources to enhance entrepreneurial knowledge. By using its practical templates and completing worksheet activities, teams will be able to engage with university and industry stakeholders effectively. This tool also enables entrepreneurs to work independently, creating capacity relief within a technology transfer office or business incubator.

Since 2023, the IS has supported SU LaunchLab's **Countdown Programme**, a six-week programme helping SU's startups engage with potential partners and customers,

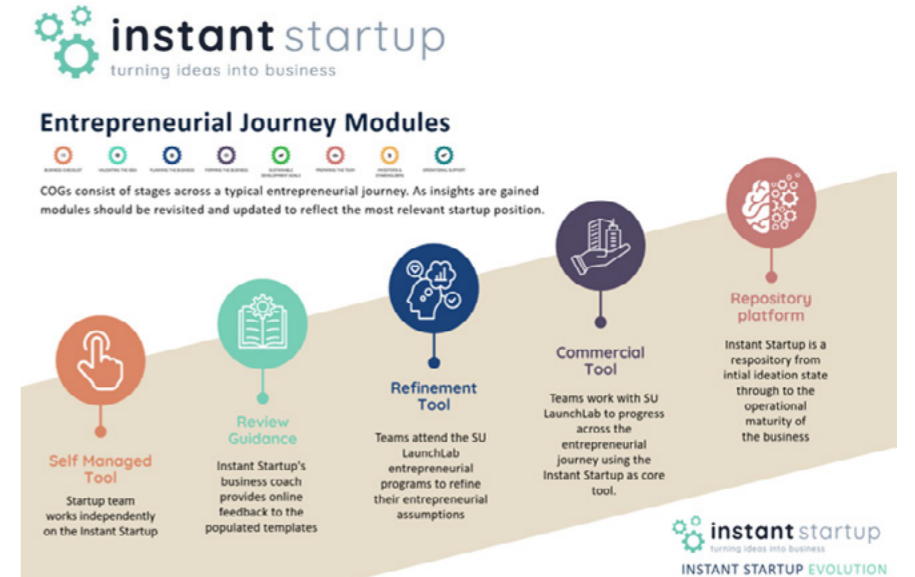


Figure: Instant Startup Evolution

validate ideas, plan business, and pitch to investors on Demo Day. Combined with events like the **LaunchLab Student IdeaSmash**, various entrepreneurs and student boot camps, and the annual SU Hackathon, the IS supports education, networking, and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset under our students and staff members.

Innovation for maternal health

SU highlights Maureen Etuket's groundbreaking work on the SMART PVD device (SMART Postpartum Haemorrhage Volumetric Drape), developed during her Industrial Engineering doctoral studies. This

innovative device, created with Etuket and her team at Pumzi Devices Uganda (Ltd), accurately measures postpartum blood loss and aims to reduce maternal deaths. Etuket also actively supports other young innovators to develop their ideas. Another aspect of her PhD will be to develop a localisation roadmap for medical devices in South Africa. Using an innovation systems framework, the roadmap will help innovators identify and overcome the obstacles that prevent them from commercialising their ideas.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal 10:
World-class infrastructure that criss-crosses Africa



SDG 11:
Sustainable Cities and Communities

Urban Sustainability:

As Africa urbanises, we understand the importance of building resilient, vibrant cities designed for the communities within which they are located. Guided by SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, and AU Goal 10, World-class Infrastructure in Africa, our research, teaching, and environmental programs take a holistic approach, including risk reduction, urban governance, and climate-smart building solutions.

Chair in urban law and sustainability governance

In 2022, the SU Faculty of Law, in partnership with the Law Faculty Trust Fund, committed to establishing a new Chair to focus on the intersection of law, urban development, and sustainability governance. The Chair will contribute to the legal drivers for sustainability governance in urban areas and the systems supporting urban life.

Since July 2023, the inaugural chairholder is Prof Anél du Plessis, who works in the hybrid area of environmental, local government, climate change, constitutional, human rights, and spatial planning law. As an NRF-rated researcher, she has published and supervised postgraduate students on SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities. She also takes an interest in the role of cities as sub-national actors in the development and execution of international law and development policy.

Research and teaching at undergrad and postgrad levels on Water, Affordable Energy, Reduced Inequalities, Climate Action, and partnerships are central to the Chair's first intake of postdoctoral fellows and grad students. Their research tackles climate change injustices in Africa, judicial processes for climate justice, the 'right to the city' in South Africa's spatial planning law, and expanding constitutional environmental rights in Africa. Community interaction and science engagement to reaching the University of Stellenbosch's surrounding communities.

Below: Prof Anél du Plessis and the first cohort of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

(Photo by Stefan Els)



Photo: Justin Sullivan

Sustainable, fire-resilient settlements.

South African informal settlements face significant fire risks, causing severe harm to communities. To address this, the Western Cape Government and the Fire Engineering Research Unit at SU collaborated to **create** the world's first Fire Engineering Guideline for Informal Settlements. This research-based guideline is designed to build local capacity, empower communities, and improve emergency response, rather than offering a quick-fix solution.

Sustainably cities and reduced carbon emissions

The University's **Environmental Sustainability Plan and 2023 Annual Integrated Report** show several commitments to improving our environmental practices and reducing the carbon footprint. By reducing commuting to – and within – SU, we


will reduce indirect carbon emissions as noted in Scope 3 emissions. Hybrid working, evaluating ride-sharing apps and creating a bike/pedestrian-friendly campus add to the initiative.

Our buildings' carbon footprint

In 2020, SU registered for carbon tax as required by the Carbon Tax Act 15 of 2019. For scope-1 emitters, the thermal combustion threshold is set at 10 MW, which SU exceeds with its generators needed to overcome power outages. We serve more than 32 000 students and a portfolio of 487 buildings. These buildings contribute 78% to the University's carbon footprint of 85,241 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent).

Green Building certification helps institutions save water, electricity, and reduce CO₂ emissions, leading to financial stability through lower operating costs. Our facilities

management team is committed to meeting the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) and South African National Standards (SANS) standards for new buildings and is improving energy efficiency in existing ones with cleaner energy. In 2023, Stellenbosch got its 19th GBCSA rating and first 6-Star Green Star for the Visual Arts building, a heritage site from 1906, making it the first university in South Africa to achieve this. With over 487 buildings, expanding this initiative will greatly impact our environment.

 More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>










An Africa of
good governance,
democracy, respect for
human rights, justice,
and the Rule of Law

Aspirations 3 and 4

Aspiration 3 envisions an Africa with good governance, democratic values, gender equality, human rights, justice, and the rule of law, deeply ingrained by 2063. We have clear progress through governance for strong institutions and transformed leadership, while eradicating corruption. It ties in closely with Aspiration 4 that sets its sights on a peaceful and secure Africa.

The AU Goals under Aspirations 3 and 4 deal with a peaceful, well-governed and democratic Africa that serves its citizens through competent leadership. It is aligned with SDG 16 for democratic governance and peaceful, safe, just, and inclusive societies.

Aspiration 3	 <p>AU Goal 11: A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all » Page 48</p>	 <p>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</p>
	 <p>AU Goal 12: Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation » Page 50</p>	
Aspiration 4	 <p>AU Goal 13: A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all » Page 51</p>	 <p>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</p>
	 <p>AU Goal 14: Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation » Page 52</p>	
	 <p>AU Goal 15: Healthy and well-nourished citizens » Page 53</p>	



AU Goal 11:
Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched



SDG 16:
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Democracy and Human Rights

The Centre for Social Justice

The **Centre for Social Justice**, established in 2016 at SU's Faculty of Law, is chaired by Prof Thuli Madonsela, former Public Protector of South Africa. The centre focuses on establishing Social Justice as an academic discipline, promoting social and economic inclusion through research for impact at SU, and nationally through partnerships. The Centre is key in creating a transformative student experience through social impact programmes like the **M-Plan** and **#ActionForInclusion**.

Recognition of lifetime achievements

Prof Madonsela, the Law Trust Research Chair in Social Justice at SU was awarded the Annual Lifetime Achievement Award from the South African Education Law Association (SAELA) in 2023. The award recognised her achievements in education and law, as well as outstanding contributions to the SA Landscape. She played a key role in drafting the SA Constitution and various constitutionally mandated laws, including the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Equality Act), Employment Equity Act, and Promotion of Administrative Justice Act. Says SAELA president: "Her legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire generations of legal professionals and advocates of social justice."



Prof Thuli Madonsela



CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE 2023

Director of the Centre for Social Justice,
Prof Thuli Madonsela and the
Council of Social Justice Champions
present

11 October 2023

The 4th Annual International Conference on Social Justice

12 October 2023 and

The 5th Annual Social Justice Summit



ARTSCAPE



Theme: **The Role of Business and Civil Society in Advancing Social Justice**

Conferences for Social Justice

Since 2019, the **Centre for Social Justice** has held annual conferences to support and promote Social Justice by bringing together stakeholders to advance social justice and accelerate progress on ending poverty and inequality in pursuit of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Previous themes include *Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Human Rights Agenda to Advance Social Justice (2019)*; *All hands on deck to leave no one behind in the post COVID-19 recovery agenda (2020)*; *Social Justice, Economic Equality and Peace (2021)* and *Restitution (2022)*.

In October 2023 the Centre hosted the 4th annual International Conference and Summit on Social Justice on "The Role of Business

and Civil Society in Advancing Social Justice" aligned directly with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Academics, policymakers, and civil society representatives gathered to engage in critical dialogue, share research findings, and develop collaborative strategies that business and civil society can use to address the inclusive governance for sustainability.

Intercultural competencies

SU is transforming into a nationally and continentally inclusive institution, focusing on inclusive education frameworks. In **February 2023**, SU received the **UNESCO Chair in Intercultural Competences**, led by Dr Darla K. Deardorff. This Chair promotes intercultural understanding

through research, capacity building, collaboration, networking, and community engagement. It focuses on Gender Equality, Climate Action, and Peace Building, exploring intercultural competence's role in these areas globally and continentally. **UNESCO Story Circles** are used to practice intercultural competences like *listening for understanding*. This initiative highlights SU's commitment to global citizenship and sustainable development, aiming to elevate African voices and perspectives on intercultural competence for harmonious coexistence.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za/>





AU Goal 12:
Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels, crosscutting with Governance



SDG 16:
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Leadership and Governance

AU Goal 12 and SDG 16 emphasise effective governance for accountable institutions. Governments aiming for a just and sustainable society have used legislation to influence corporate behaviour and market conditions. Recently, regulations have evolved to address the human rights impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, alongside increasing demands for transparency in corporate tax practices.

SU's Ethics Code 2040

Stellenbosch University has adopted the King IV™ principles on Corporate Governance for South Africa, ensuring accountability and practice to ethical leadership, sustainable development, stakeholder inclusivity, and transparent reporting. Our internal Integrated Ethics Code (Code 2040) ensures ethical governance and integrity, by integrating values like responsibility and fairness. Together, these frameworks foster ethical leadership and strong governance, making SU a well-run institution focused on sustainable and responsible growth.

Corporate governance

Corporate governance has shifted from a shareholder-focused model to a broader stakeholder-centric approach, recognising the importance of economic, social, and environmental contexts, as highlighted by the King IV™ report. This has led to the adoption of integrated reporting and sustainability standards, reflecting a commitment to sustainability and good governance. At SU, the Centre for Corporate Governance in Africa (CCGA) at the Stellenbosch Business School, contributes actively to the field nationally and internationally.

Best Practices in a Changing World

The CCGA and the School of Accountancy at SU hosted their inaugural Corporate Governance Conference in 2022. Following its success, they presented the 2nd conference themed *Corporate Governance – Best Practices in a Changing World*, in Stellenbosch in December 2023. Themes included Corporate governance best practices and challenges in emerging economies, Corporate citizenship and ethical leadership, Integrated reporting, stakeholder engagement, and Governance of Sustainability. The 50+ papers

presented will be published in special issues of the *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies* and the *South African Journal of Business Management*.



Carrots & Sticks

The Carrots & Sticks (C&S) project co-founded by Dr Cornis van der Lugt and Prof Daniel Malan (SU), launched in the 2000s with KPMG, the UN Environmental Programme and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The C&S team comprises the CCGA, the GRI, the University of Edinburgh, and King's College London. The C&S online database provides insights into the landscape of ESG and sustainability policies covering over 2 463 policies (including disclosure requirements) from 132 countries, 76 organisations, in 38 languages, from 1897 to today. The 2023 C&S report was launched in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 18 September 2023.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za/>



AU Goal 13:
Peace, Security, and Stability are Preserved



SDG 16:
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Peace and Security

Agenda 2063 Goal 13: Peace, Security, and Stability underscores the importance of preventing conflicts, ensuring security, and maintaining political stability across Africa. It aligns with SDG 16 to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and build accountable institutions to ensure fairness and prevent violence globally.

African maritime security strategies

SIGLA (the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa) at SU is a research and capacity-building institute focused on security and governance issues in Africa. Its mission is to conduct research, facilitate policy discussions, and offer leadership development in defence, security, peacekeeping, governance, policy formation, and leadership development on the continent.

As part of its leadership development, it presented the International Maritime Conference in Accra in September 2023, with SU partners from the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) in Ghana. The sessions investigated maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea under the theme Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: *Fostering a Comprehensive Approach to a Complex Problem*.

The event presented security in Gulf of Guinea as a busy but criminally threatened African maritime region. Ensuring stability at sea allows

Africa's blue economy to prosper, promoting development and mitigating organised crime, violent extremism and armed conflict.

Countering threat proliferation in Africa

SIGLA partnered with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) from the USA to present the biennial workshop on countering threat proliferation in Africa: **The African cyber security landscape: Countering cyber threat proliferation**, held in Stellenbosch from 28-30 March 2023. Funded by DTRA, more than 50 African cyber experts from industry, state and academia gathered to network and improve practices for cybersecurity decision-makers and practitioners. Role players offered insights on best practices to employ and protect the continent's cyber infrastructure against cybercrime and related threats to reduce national security risk to African governments.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za/>



SIGLA and DTRA Conference participants.





AU Goal 14:
A stable and peaceful Africa



SDG 16:
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Peace and Stability

AU Goal 14 of Agenda 2063, a stable and peaceful Africa and SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions share a strong alignment in their emphasis on fostering peace, stability, and effective governance as prerequisites for sustainable development. Research and training at SU to promote good governance, fighting corruption and improved public administration contribute to Aspiration 4 and SDG 16 in addition to our peacebuilding efforts and post-conflict rehabilitation contributions.

The legacy of violence and conflict

SU's Centre for the Study of the Aftermath of Violence and Trauma (AVReQ) explores the legacies of violence and conflict in Africa to advance new approaches to understanding transgenerational trauma and reparative practices. It supports the South African Research Chair in Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma, **Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela**, to clarify the concept of violence and its impact on victims, survivors, perpetrators, and their descendants. The Centre uses an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to examine physical, structural, symbolic, and insidious expressions of violence. The focus is on healing after violent histories, exploring strategies to "heal the past" through seminars, dialogue, and arts.

Chair in Human Rights Law

The HF Oppenheimer Chair in Human Rights Law at SU, part of the public law department, was founded in 1986 to promote human rights law in South Africa through research, teaching, and community work. Professor Sandra Liebenberg, an expert in socio-economic rights, currently holds the Chair and advised on South Africa's 1996 Bill of Rights. The Chair focuses on high-quality research, teaching, and community service. In 2023, it hosted Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng, UN Special Rapporteur, for its annual Human Rights Lecture: "Who Believes Black Women? Applying the Right to Health Framework to Undo Epistemic Injustice."

Webinar: Military coups

On 26 January 2023, SIGLA partnered with the University of the Free State to present an online seminar on Exploring the Interface Between Coups, Violent Extremism, and Poor Governance in the Sahel region of West and North-Central Africa. The webinar explored the threat of military coups in Africa to stability and peace, featuring international speakers from Africa. It addressed topics like *Why Sahel countries are prone to coups*, the interface with poor governance, and suggested ways forward.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za/>



Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela



Prof Sandra Liebenberg



AU Goal 15:
A fully functional and operational African peace and security architecture



SDG 16:
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Peace and Governance

SU has various entities engaged in research to build robust peace and security institutions nationally and regionally towards AU Goal 15. This research also reinforces SDG 16, which seeks to develop strong institutions capable of maintaining peace and preventing conflict.

The School for Public Leadership

SU's School of Public Leadership (SPL), at the Faculty for Economic and Management Sciences advances research and initiatives in good governance, anti-corruption, and institutional effectiveness in South Africa and Africa. By focusing on strengthening institutions, SPL builds governance systems responsive to citizens' needs, contributing to a stable society. As seen in AU Goal 1/SDG 1, SPL researches anti-corruption strategies crucial for peace and institutional trust and transparency. In South Africa it trains public officials, civil society leaders, and community members in governance and ethical leadership. These leaders then institutions accountability and good governance.

MOOC: Anticipatory governance

The CST, relaunched its free, online **Anticipatory Governance** short course in 2023, created with the USAID Resilient Waters programme in 2021 and available on the UNESCO Open Learning platform until 2024. The course equipped over 300 participants with tools to enhance governance capacities amid uncertainty. It emphasises participatory foresight and complex systems governance, showcasing southern Africa case studies illustrating pathways to socially just and sustainable futures for effective governance and decision-making in complex environments.

Secure subsea infrastructure

SIGLA completed a 2023 research project funded by the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (Germany) to address threats to subsea infrastructure in the Western Indian Ocean off Africa's eastern coast. The **report, Subsea Infrastructure: The Western Indian Ocean**, mapped the subsea cable networks and addressed the regulatory frameworks of

East African littoral countries and island states to maintain this infrastructure for African and global communications and transactions.

Protecting our seas and coastlines

In the special edition of the South African Journal of Military Science, Prof Francois Vreÿ from SU's Military Science Faculty explains that the increasing use of oceans for shipping, energy, and resources is becoming more complex, relying on modern tech and secure cyber systems. Maritime cybersecurity is crucial for safe and productive ocean use by protecting systems from cyber threats that can disrupt navigation, vessel control, and port operations. Best practices by African countries are essential for a secure cyber environment, safeguarding maritime security and the blue economy.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za/>



Prof Francois Vreÿ

ASPIRATION



An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics



Aspiration 5

This aspiration focuses on preserving and promoting Africa's rich history, diverse cultural identities, heritage, languages, religions and values. It emphasises the need for a cultural renaissance and ethical governance to drive social cohesion, innovation, and development through Pan-Africanism.



AU Goal 16:
African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent

[» Page 56](#)

No equivalent SDG



AU Goal 14:
African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent



SDG:
-

Rich Cultural Heritage

AU Goal 16 focuses on the importance of cultural identity, heritage, shared values, and African unity. It advocates for the revival and preservation of African culture by enhancing the role of arts, language, and indigenous knowledge in development.

A rich cultural heritage

At SU, our thriving arts programmes include a world-class university choir and the departments of music, drama, and visual arts, contributing to a vibrant, culturally rich town and community

The SU Stellenbosch campus is in a historical town rich in heritage, beauty, and culture - the heart of the South African wine industry, attracting many visitors year-round. Most campus areas, including our Museum, Botanical Garden, performance venues, and many green spaces and buildings are open to the public.

The campus boasts several art installations like **The Circle** bronze art installation that brings many of SA's historical or present/future women leaders together on the floor. They are seated as if in discussion or casual conversation in an open space where students often enjoy relaxing or eat lunch.



The Circle

Enriching cultural and artistic expressions through our arts and heritage contribution

The University plays a vital role in preserving and promoting cultural and artistic expressions, contributing to local and global heritage and a vibrant cultural community through our renowned choir, symphonic orchestra, theatre department, Museum, and Departments in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

SU choir

The **SU Choir**, consisting of 120 diverse students, has been ranked the No.1 mixed amateur choir globally since 2012 by **Interkultur**. Established in 1936, it is the oldest and most respected university choir in South Africa. Their **videos** have garnered millions of views on YouTube.



Dizu Plaatjies at the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival



Student and professional participants at the 2023 Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival

Symphony orchestra

Founded in 1981 by Prof Eric Rycroft, the SU Symphony Orchestra (USSO) provides music students with hands-on training and experience in orchestral playing. SU's musical ensembles perform with international guests at the annual **Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival**. The 2023 Festival took place from 5 to 14 July with 29 internationally acclaimed artists who inspired, coached and performed alongside 257 student participants from seven countries. During the festival, students played in a symphony orchestra directed by renowned international conductors.

Celebrating musical heritage

A highlight of the **International Chamber Music Festival** was a performance of Matthijs van Dijk's Concerto for violin, strings, *uhadi* and *umrhube*, conducted by his brother Xandi van Dijk. The soloists included the internationally acclaimed African Music specialist, Dizu Plaatjies on the *uhadi*, a traditional bow instrument that is deeply linked to the oral traditions and musical heritage of the Xhosa people in Southern Africa.

Adam Small theatre complex

The Adam Small **Theatre** Complex is named after the celebrated South African poet and playwright Adam Small. The Theatre at SU is a dynamic cultural venue with a variety of performances, including drama, dance, and music. It regularly hosts professional productions and work by the university's drama department, ranging from classical to contemporary works.

The Theatre plays a central role in cultural festivals and events, like the

Stellenbosch University *Woordfees* (Word Festival), contributing to a rich cultural exchange within the university and the broader community.

Cultural heritage: Die Woordfees

Die Woordfees, or Word Festival, started as a celebration of Afrikaans literature. Hosted by SU since 2000, it has grown into one of South Africa's largest multilingual arts festivals, with over 400 performances annually by **2023**. The festival runs long-term projects like *Woorde open Wêreld*/Words Open Worlds (**WOW**), promoting literacy and providing educational support to disadvantaged learners, reaching over 270 000 learners yearly. **WOW** hosts the biggest spelling competition in South Africa, and offers bursaries and mentorship to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed at university. (In 2024 *Die Woordfees* will become an NGO, and SU will be a sponsor).

The SU museum

The **SU Museum** is key in establishing the university as an anchor institution by showcasing the region's diversity, creativity, and traditions through its exhibitions and events. These initiatives have empowered and connected students, staff, and the community while enhancing the university's reputation for social responsibility. The Museum has improved visual arts accessibility through free access, guided tours, educational programmes, and events like Wednesday Art Walkabouts and Drumming Tuesdays to increase community engagements. In 2023, it offered over 53 exhibitions and sessions to the public.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children



Aspiration 6

All the citizens of Africa will be actively involved in decision making in all aspects. Africa shall be an inclusive continent where no child, woman or man will be left behind or excluded, on the basis of gender, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age or other factors.



AU Goal 17:
Full gender equality in all spheres of life
» Page 60



SDG 5:
Gender Equality



AU Goal 18:
Engaged and empowered youth and children
» Page 62



SDG 4:
Quality Education



AU Goal 17:
Full gender equality
in all spheres of life



SDG 5:
Gender Equality

Gender Equality

SDG 5 and AU Goal 17 aim for full gender equality and empowering all women and girls by addressing their unequal and vulnerable position and their right to safety and opportunities. By providing access to higher education for female students, SU is contributing to individual empowerment and a fair and diverse, knowledge-based society. Our goal for full equality for female students and staff is underpinned by unfair discrimination policies.

Gender equality and public procurement

SDG 5 requires global action to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Gender equality means access to rights and opportunities unaffected by gender and is important to eradicating poverty, improving women's rights, and boosting economic growth. Goal 5 seeks to empower women by narrowing inequalities in access to paid employment; narrowing wage and wealth gaps, and increasing access to economic resources. Gender differences in economic empowerment reinforce gender inequality, making women's economic empowerment a gender equality issue.

Women can achieve economic empowerment through access to public procurement opportunities, known as "gender-responsive procurement," which promotes gender equality through public sector purchases. Although women own 30-40% of registered businesses in SA, they only obtain 1-6% of public contracts. This disparity is linked to biases against women entrepreneurs in accessing business finance, discrimination in the public procurement system, cultural norms, the complexity of the procurement process, and corruption.

SU is Africa's leading university in public procurement law. Prof Sope Williams of SU's African Procurement Law Unit (Faculty of Law) has supported international organisations in including women entrepreneurs in several African countries' public procurement markets. In 2023, she collaborated with UN Women (South Africa) to provide public comments on gender-responsive procurement for the draft national Public Procurement Bill. From 2022-2024, she worked with the Brookings Institute (USA) on **gender-responsive procurement in**

Nigeria. Since 2022, she has supported the International Development Research Centre, Canada, in promoting **gender-responsive procurement in five East African countries.**

Her work on gender-responsive procurement in Africa showed women entrepreneurs face **sexual corruption in bidding for public contracts.** She began exploring ways to tackle this issue, leading to a policy paper for GIZ (South Africa). She aims to make legal research accessible through blogs, policy papers, and documentaries. Her anti-corruption research is internationally recognized, earning her the **2022 International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award** for Academic Research from the UN. She holds a B2 rating from the National Research Foundation. She'll continue focusing on gender-responsive procurement and gender and corruption issues and is currently co-editing the "*Routledge Handbook of Gender and Corruption*" to be published in 2025.



Prof Sope Williams-Elegbe, is a lecturer at SU's Faculty of Law and Deputy Director, African Procurement Law Unit.

The proportion of women receiving degrees in 2023	Total	Women	Percentage
Number of graduates	8 892	4 885	55%
Number of graduates: STEM	2 347	1 031	44%
Number of graduates: Medicine	1 147	862	75%
Number of graduates: Arts & Humanities / Social Sciences	1 391	1 017	73%

Female academics

Of the 271 senior academic staff members, women account for almost a third (88) of our staff complement.

Proportion of first-generation female students

In 2023, SU welcomed over **3 607** women who enrolled and started their degrees. Of these, 1 724 were first-generation degree students. These statistics highlight SU's efforts in ensuring inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities for all and empowering women and girls. Females now make up about 60% of SU's student body, necessitating a move by the Division for Student Affairs to address accommodation shortages for females. These figures are reflected in the 2023 graduation figures, with strong female representation in Medicine and the Arts and Humanities.

Alumni-led mentoring schemes

Alumni female-driven mentoring schemes empower and support female students at SU. In 2023, the Stellenbosch Women's Alumnae Network (SWAN), established in 2020, nurtured the Maties sisterhood through various programs locally and beyond. They held talks on personal development, career advice and financial wellness, and the future for female graduates. The publication of the 2023 International Women's Day (8 March) prospectus, featuring various successful female graduates was a highlight.

Gender equality related work and research

The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme supports female scientists at all career stages, addressing the fact that women make up only one-third of researchers globally and often receive insufficient recognition. Jessica Thibaud, a



PhD candidate at SU's Chemistry department, received a grant from the *Fondation L'Oreal* and UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) in 2023. This research aims to address the increasing resistance of malaria to current treatments. Of the 627 000 malaria deaths in 2020, 96% were in Africa, making this research crucial the continent.

HERS-SA Academy

SU supported seven senior women leaders' participation in the Higher Education Resource Services South Africa (HERS-SA) **HERS South Africa Academy**, addressing the critical shortage of women in senior positions in higher education. SU's Prof Michele Miller and Prof Mari van de Vyver were finalists for the 2023 Higher Education Women Leaders Awards.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



AU Goal 18:
Engaged and empowered youth and children



SDG 4:
Quality Education

Empowered Youth

As a higher education institution, SU aims to educate engaged and empowered students who will become the future's leaders, innovators, and policymakers, complementing AU Goal 2 and SDG 4 (Quality Education) as noted in Aspiration 1. We pride ourselves in creating a growth environment to deliver well-rounded graduates who are curious, creative thinkers, responsible citizens, and dynamic professionals.

Leadership development

The Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, **FVZS Institute**, launched in 2011 as part of Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project, honours students acquiring leadership, critical thinking, and active citizenship skills alongside their formal degrees. The Institute has created platforms for young leaders to expand their skills and engage in dialogue on reconciliation, social justice, and democracy issues, supporting Aspiration 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063 and SDG 16. The Institute's work is structured around three key pillars: Leadership and Active Citizenship for applying theoretical knowledge; Social Justice to promote equality and equity within societal structures, ensuring consultative decision-making; and Critical Engagement to promote critical thinking and reflection.

Student societies and mentorship programmes

SU is committed to developing well-rounded graduates prepared to contribute to society and the workforce with at least 55 student societies and clubs. Since 2020, 238 students have taken part in the Strengths, Opportunity, Agency and Resilience (**SOAR**) mentorship programme for first-generation students. In 2023, the programme contributed to **56 degrees awarded** and evolved into an alumni mentoring programme.



SOAR Graduates



In service of society

SU has a strong history of social impact. Led by our Division for Social Impact (DSI), we aim to positively affect society through academic, research, and community programs. The Division encourages active citizenship with initiatives like the **TransGariiep Student Leadership Programme**. In June-July 2023, SU students joined peers from the University of Cape Town and Sol Plaatjies University. Students said:

"This type of immersive experiential engagement focuses on self-rediscovery, transformative human encounters, critical diversity, awareness, and unleashing leadership potential amongst students from the partner institutions taking part in the initiative."

Mandela Day

In 2023, we observed Mandela Day across the university, devoting 67 minutes to constructive change, embodying the principle of community service. With the call to action for "Climate, Food and Solidarity," various environments contributed to the movement with the DSI for student food security and sustainable food ecosystems and the relationship between civic engagement and well-being.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>



ASPIRATION

Africa as a strong, united, and influential global player and partner



Aspiration 7

Africa will be a strong, united, resilient, peaceful, and influential global player, with a significant role in world affairs. Goals include strengthening Africa's role in global governance and partnerships, ensuring they align with African priorities, and taking full responsibility for financing its own development, reducing reliance on aid.



AU Goal 19:
Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence

» Page 66



AU Goal 20:
Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development

» Page 66



SDG 17:
Partnership for the Goals



AU Goal 19:
Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence



AU Goal 20:
Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development



SDG 17:
Partnership for the Goals

Partnerships for Progress

In advancing sustainable development across Africa, SU aligns AU Goal 19, which envisions Africa as a vital partner in global affairs, and AU Goal 20, which emphasises African-driven development financing. These goals resonate with the principles of SDG 17, which advocates for strengthening global partnerships. At SU, partnerships play a pivotal role in scaling impact and generating solutions that address regional and global challenges. Through research, knowledge exchange, and collaborative projects, SU actively supports initiatives that enhance Africa's influence and self-sufficiency, contributing to a resilient and prosperous continent.

Data for progress for the goals

The **School for Data Science and Computational Thinking** launched in July 2019 aims to be a world-class institution in data science and computational thinking for Africa. The Director of the School, Prof Kanshukan Rajaratnam shares some of his success:

Partnerships for progress

A key contributor to our success is the multi-stakeholder partnerships developed from the onset. This aligns with SDG 17 and Partnerships. We're the only School of our kind in Africa, contributing to AU Goal 10 (World-class infrastructure in Africa) and AU Goal 20 (Africa's development responsibility). We realised that any small entity aiming to solve grand challenges cannot succeed independently. Through these engagements, we created partnerships with university academic entities, researchers at other institutions, and private and public entities.

Our partnerships

These successes are best shown by these examples: Through the Data Advancing Wellness in Africa (DAWA) project, we work with researchers from Makerere University in Uganda and Harvard and MIT in the USA to understand Africa's social health determinants. We use technology to collect real-time health data to improve health outcomes (SDG 3 and Metrics 17.2.3, 17.2.5, 17.4.3). Through the Standard Bank Lab, we partnered with Standard Bank to boost efficiency in financial transactions and banking services (SDG 8). The Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) brought over 500 fellows from Africa to SU to build genomic

surveillance capacity (SDG 3 and Metric 17.2.4). These fellows represent academic and public institutions across the continent. This was possible through funding from public and private institutions (target 17.3). Similarly, the South African Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis (SACEMA) partners with universities and governmental organisations locally and internationally to model disease spread and advise governments. (SDG 3 and Metric 17.2.1).

"We aim to solve societal challenges through interdisciplinary programmes in these fields. After four years, we reflected on its progress towards its vision and achievements."



Prof Kanshukan Rajaratnam is the inaugural Director of The School for Data Science and Computational Thinking, the only one of its kind in Africa.



Participants in the 2023 Sustainability World Café event

Pooling resources

Stakeholder partnerships are crucial because no institution has the resources, capacity or skills to solve complex problems on their own. Partnering with communities helps us understand issues at the ground level. Government partnerships help define large problems and bring together resources and networks. Private entities have similar access to resources and networks. Our multi-stakeholder partnerships are diverse in institution type, communities, and geography. Through these international partnerships, we understand these problems through different lenses and bring together diverse ways of thinking.

Our achievements speak for themselves: researchers receiving high-country awards, multiple academic articles in *Nature*, *Science*, and *Lancet*, and multiple research awards. For a small school like ours, these achievements are only possible through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Future17

The Future17 SDG Challenge, launched with Stellenbosch University in 2022, offers students a chance to tackle sustainable development challenges across cultures and disciplines. The SDG/2063 Impact Hub hosted the third and fourth programme sessions in 2023, involving partner universities from New Zealand, Hong Kong, the UK, Egypt, Sharjah, the USA, and Brazil. The programme connects SU students with peers and mentors globally, promoting design thinking, interdisciplinary collaboration, and critical skills in sustainable development. This aligns

with SU's commitment to impactful education on global sustainability, helping students address real-world challenges while boosting employability. It's also an example of Internationalisation at Home, where students work with international peers while studying at SU.

Feedback from SU students, who worked on projects from partners in Africa, the Middle East, the USA, and Europe had the following to say:

"I learnt about the importance of integrated approaches that balance social, economic, and environmental objectives. Sustainable development means generating prosperity while safeguarding the environment and guaranteeing social inclusion and fairness. This holistic perspective encourages people to think about the interplay of several elements of development and to seek solutions that provide multiple benefits."

"I enjoyed meeting new people and seeing the types of careers in the sustainability field. I loved the structure of the course and felt there was more than enough time to complete everything."

"Flexible and collaborative approaches are pivotal for responding to evolving situations and needs for the SDGs to be met. The main takeaway from the course underscores the necessity of collective action and partnership among diverse stakeholders to address the SDGs effectively and that linear strategies may lack the adaptability required to navigate complex and dynamic challenges with multiple uncertainties."

Sustainability world café

SU International's Unit for Global Education (UGE) hosted **Global Week 2023** from 9 – 13 October. The week was marked by various engagements to drive conversations around student mobility, sustainability, and global citizenship. The week began with the Sustainability World Café on 9 October, hosted with the **SDG/2063 Impact Hub**. The event brought together diverse voices to discuss Sustainability. "The World Café was an enriching experience that underscored the importance of education, individual initiative, collaboration, and leadership on our journey towards a more sustainable world," says Corina du Toit of the Hub. "By working together, sharing ideas and pooling resources, we can achieve more and create lasting change on a global scale."

Volunteerism

Beyond AU Goal 18's Impact work, our engagement with local communities builds shared purpose and strengthens our social license. In 2023, the university had 30 active social impact initiatives and 19 pending. These initiatives enhance community well-being and offer students and staff chances to engage and understand societal challenges. Staff initiatives involved 77 staff, 56 students, and 51 partners, totaling 12 276 staff hours and 4 771 student hours. Find a full list by Faculty and SDG on the Social Impact Knowledge Platform (SIKP) website.



Partnership for Research Progress: ARUA-Guild CoREs

The ARUA-Guild Centres of Research Excellence (CoREs) represent a transformative collaboration between African universities in the ARUA (African Research Universities Alliance) network, and the Guild (The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities). These CoREs focus on crucial aligned with the 2023 AU-EU Innovation Agenda and address key societal and scientific challenges through innovative, interdisciplinary research.

Strengthening research and innovation collaboration between Africa and the European Union is a key priority considering the challenges of our continent. The CoREs represent existing and potential synergies between the continental approaches to attaining the UN and AU Sustainability Agendas, working towards relevant globally and local research. These partnerships enhance the ability of African and European universities to create knowledge that promotes societal transformation, builds climate resilience, and drives innovation for Sustainable Development.

From November 2023, SU will co-lead the following CoREs:

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING **Genomics for health in Africa**, which will be linked to the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) in our School for Data Science and Computational Thinking;

AU-EU Priority Area: Public Health. The CoRE for Genomics for Health in Africa aims to harness genomics

to transform healthcare across the continent. Genomics offers insights into rare diseases, cancers, and infections, leading to more effective and personalised treatments. However, its potential remains underutilised in Africa due to limited infrastructure, resources, and scientific capacity. To address this, the CoRE will build capacity for genomics-based diagnostics, investigating protein structure-function relationships, and supporting drug and vaccine development

The ARUA Leads are Prof Tulio de Oliveira, and Professor Shahida Moosa at SU, with the Guild Universities of Bern and Tübingen.

13 CLIMATE ACTION **Nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation**, is linked to our School for Climate Studies:

AU-EU Priority Area: Green Transitions. The CoRE for Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation aims to address Africa and Europe's vulnerabilities to climate variability, highlighted in the IPCC (the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Sixth Assessment (AR6) report. Vulnerabilities include heat-related health risks, biodiversity loss, reduced food production, and water scarcity. This CoRE focuses on building a multidisciplinary research network between African and European institutions to develop nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

The ARUA co-lead is Prof Guy Midgley of the SU School for Climate Studies with the University of Cape Town and the University of Bologna for the Guild Network.



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE **Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and Theoretical and Computational Thinking** is linked to the National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Science (NITheCS)

AU-EU Priority Area: Innovation and Technology. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool for addressing societal challenges, driven by advancements in connectivity, computational power, and data access. AI applications are poised to play a crucial role in achieving many SDGs, tackling climate change, food security, education, public health, and social justice. The Cluster will enhance research capabilities and postgraduate training in AI at key African universities, and initiate relevant research projects.

The ARUA lead is Prof Francesco Petruccione from the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking, with Uppsala University for the Guild.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY **Renewable Energy**, which will be linked to the SU-hosted within the existing ARUA Centre of Excellence in Energy – through the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies (CRSES)

AU-EU Priority Area: Green Transitions. This CoRE will support a long-term, sustainable transition toward a resilient energy system. It is seen as a critical partnership to address current energy challenges in Africa and Europe. It focuses on three pillars: technology development, equitable societal transition, and sustainable education and training.

CRSES, as the existing ARUA CoE in Energy, was tasked to co-lead the Africa-Europe Renewable Energy CoRE alongside the multidisciplinary research group EnerGhentIC at Ghent University in Belgium.

In addition, we will be a partner in the CoRE on **Multimorbidity**, which will be co-led by the universities of Ghana and Warwick. It will be linked to our South African Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis (SACEMA), with Dr Cari van Schalkwyk serving as SU project lead.

More: <https://susdev.sun.ac.za>

Last word

As we bring this year's Stellenbosch University Sustainable Development Annual Report 2023/2024 to a close, it is fitting to reflect on the significant strides we have made in contributing to the objectives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. These efforts reaffirm our unwavering commitment to creating a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for all.

Central to our endeavours is the SDG/2063 Impact Hub, housed within the Centre for Collaboration in Africa at SU International. This hub serves as a vital platform for partnership, and transformative engagement, bridging local imperatives with global aspirations. It embodies our dedication to leveraging the

collective expertise at SU in research, teaching, and stewardship as we collaborate with government, civil society, and the private sector to address complex challenges and deliver impactful solutions.

This year has been particularly significant in amplifying activities even better with the African Union's Agenda 2063. Guided by the strategic vision of the African Union for a peaceful and prosperous Africa, we have deepened our efforts to integrate the principles of this transformative agenda into our outputs. These endeavours underscore our role in advancing a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainably developed Africa.

I take pride in our contributions, which remain steadfast in its mission



to extend its influence beyond academia, serving as a catalyst for meaningful change on the continent and beyond, as evident in this report.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration in this journey toward sustainable development.

Dr Nico Elema
Director: Centre for Collaboration in Africa

Contributors and a vote of thanks

This report documenting SU's contributions to sustainability is presented by the **SDG/2063 Impact Hub at the Centre for Collaboration in Africa (SU International)**.

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Please note that the initiatives highlighted in this report represent only a portion of the diverse and impactful projects within SU. We would like to encourage our SU colleagues to contact us to include their initiatives at susdev@sun.ac.za. Your participation is vital in ensuring that the full spectrum of sustainability initiatives is recognised.

Photographs:

Stephan Els and Ignus Dreyer, Stellenbosch University and www.sun.ac.za/english/news-events

P. 23. Jovan Koeresies, LBK Industries, www.instagram.com/jovan.koeresies

P. 31. Dr Jannes Landschoff, Stellenbosch University, <https://saveourseas.com/project-leader/jannes-landschoff>

P. 35, 37. Curt Ruiters, Quickclick Productions, <https://qcproductions.co.za>

P. 45. Justin Sullivan, www.justinsullivan.org/photography

P. 51. Prof Francois Vreÿ, SIGLA.

Various:

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