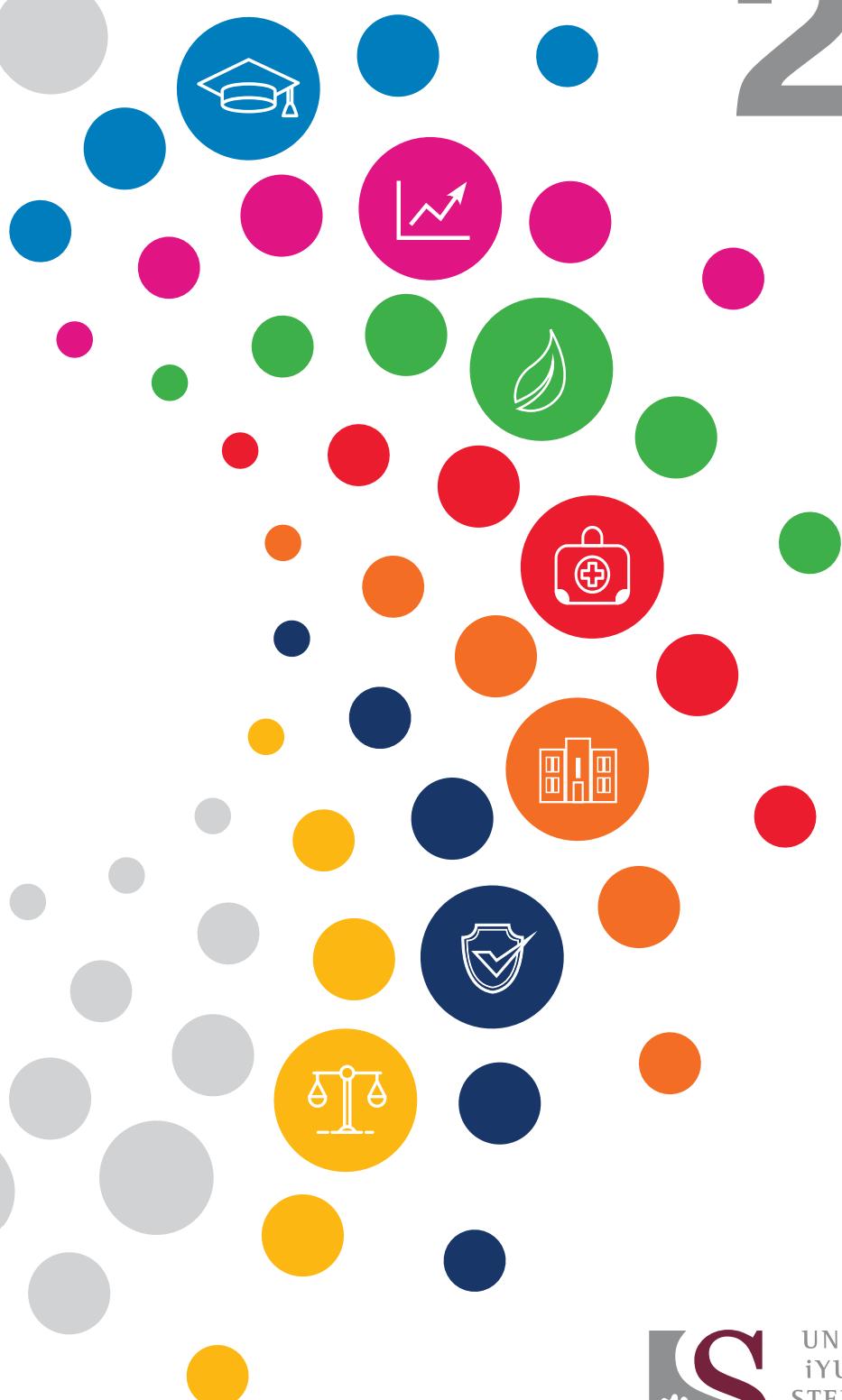


**Social Impact**  
@  
**Stellenbosch University**

**2018**



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# Social Impact

## @ Stellenbosch University 2018

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# **Message from the Vice Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel**

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Universities exist to have an impact on society, to have relevance, significance and meaning, to make a difference, and to add distinct value. This we do through our learning and teaching, our research and innovation, our internationalisation and strategies, our professional and academic support services, our staff and student volunteerism, and our partnerships.

Certain types of impact are immediately visible, while others are perceived only much, much later. Some forms of social impact are easy to measure; others are more difficult to assess.

The impact of universities is a reciprocal notion. This means that universities both have an impact and are impacted upon. This two-way reciprocal impact occurs in all spheres of society: politics, the economy, ecology as well as civil society with all its institutions (local communities, religious communities, educational institutions, sport, culture, art, non-governmental organisations, social movements, various volunteers and activists, etc). Today, the sphere of public discourse that influences public policymaking and practices constitutes yet another area of university impact.

The impact of universities is transformative. It is impact with a specific orientation, direction and purpose. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa clearly stipulates in which direction South African institutions and individuals should transform. South Africa is to become a country where there is dignity for all, healing for all, justice for all, freedom for all, and equality through equity for all. In this regard, Stellenbosch University's transformative social impact may be made in at least three ways, namely to strengthen the communal logos, ethos and pathos of society.

Logos refers to a commitment to intellectuality, rationality, reasonability, analysis, systematisation and scientific labour (which also explains why our academic disciplines are called socio-logy, psycho-logy, theo-logy, etc.). Intellectual endeavours seek appropriate ways forward amidst complexity, ambivalence, ambiguity, plurality, paradoxicality (apparent though not real contradictions), duality (and-and instead of only either-or approaches), tragedy and aporia (dead-ends). We need some form of simplicity to counter complexity. We need a simplicity on the other side of complexity, a simplicity that has wrestled with complexity. We need intellectual labour and the formulation of theories because, as Immanuel Kant said, there is nothing as practical as a good theory. We need to join hermeneutists and sense-makers' pursuit of using words to make new worlds. We need to restore the love for logos.

Ethos, in turn, relates to the type of habitat we are creating: the habits, skills and dispositions we live with, and the actions we take. Ethical citizenship and leadership, even ethical heroism, form part of the duty of a university as one of society's most cherished, civil and sophisticated institutions.

Finally, pathos is about compassion, which is also one of Stellenbosch University's key values. We are committed to personal and institutional compassion. Pathos that seeks the well-being of all, especially of the most vulnerable in our midst, is the driving force behind all our endeavours as a university.

I am pleased to be able to say that, at Stellenbosch University, the social impact imperative is enjoying increasing attention and is increasingly embraced with enthusiasm.

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**Prof Nico Koopman, Vice-Rector: Social Impact,**

**Transformation and Personnel**

# **Message from the Senior Director:**

## **Social Impact and Transformation**

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In the course of 2018, Stellenbosch University (SU) has seen a steady increase in initiatives registered on the Social Impact Knowledge Platform. Clearly, the foci and implementation of the social impact (SI) themes and strategic plan are taking shape at our institution. This will continue to strengthen and evolve in the years ahead as social impact at SU is further aligned with the University's Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024. The Division for Social Impact (DSI) will carry on playing a facilitative role in this regard.

Noteworthy developments in the past year have been our focus on registering and strategically clustering SI initiatives, enhancing partnerships across boundaries, and expanding relationships with the local Stellenbosch community.

### **SI initiatives**

The number of SI initiatives at SU is growing. The current focus is to divide the initiatives into themed clusters and geographic areas. This will enhance the overall impact of the initiatives, which span all SU faculties and professional and academic support services (PASS) environments.

### **Strategic partnerships**

DSI continues to expand its partnerships on numerous initiatives with both internal and external stakeholders. These partnerships include signed agreements with state departments, local municipalities, other higher education institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), cutting across the traditional boundaries of teaching and learning as well as research.

### **The local community**

Having an impact on the broader Stellenbosch remains a priority for SU. This is done at numerous levels. DSI continues to engage with numerous stakeholders in town, including the local municipality, religious leaders, schools, NGOs, etc. This has been enhanced with the recent establishment of a new stakeholder engagement forum – the Co-Management Forum – that brings together various community structures in the greater Stellenbosch.

The engagement, functioning and impact of the Social Impact Committee of Senate (SIC[S]) also gained momentum in 2018. This has seen stronger, more deliberate implementation of the SI Strategic Plan. Through this committee, as well as through the various SI committees in the respective faculties, SI is embedding itself at our institution by way of SU's core business of teaching, learning and research, becoming an integral part of everything we do.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Antoinette Smith-Tolken for more than 20 years' service to SU. In particular, we will remember her contribution to embedding service learning at our institution, ensuring that research is relevant to society's needs and implementing the SI Strategic Plan – first as deputy director and later also director of DSI.

In addition, I would like to welcome Ernestine Meyer-Adams as new DSI director. Ernestine previously served in a similar role at the University of Johannesburg. She brings a wealth of experience on national community engagement platforms.



**Dr Leslie van Roon, Senior Director:  
Social Impact and Transformation**

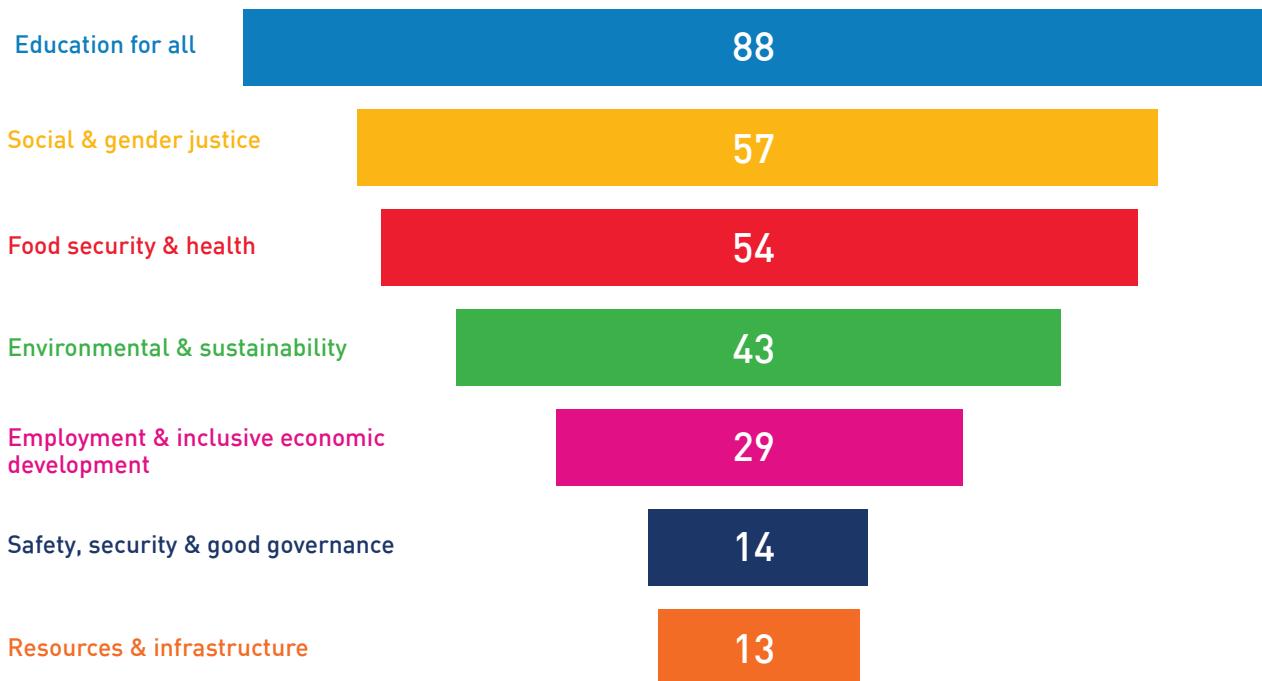
# SU Social Impact themes

Stellenbosch University frames its impact in terms of seven impact themes which articulate with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, National Development Plan and Provincial Strategic Goals.



## SU's contribution to the 7 themes

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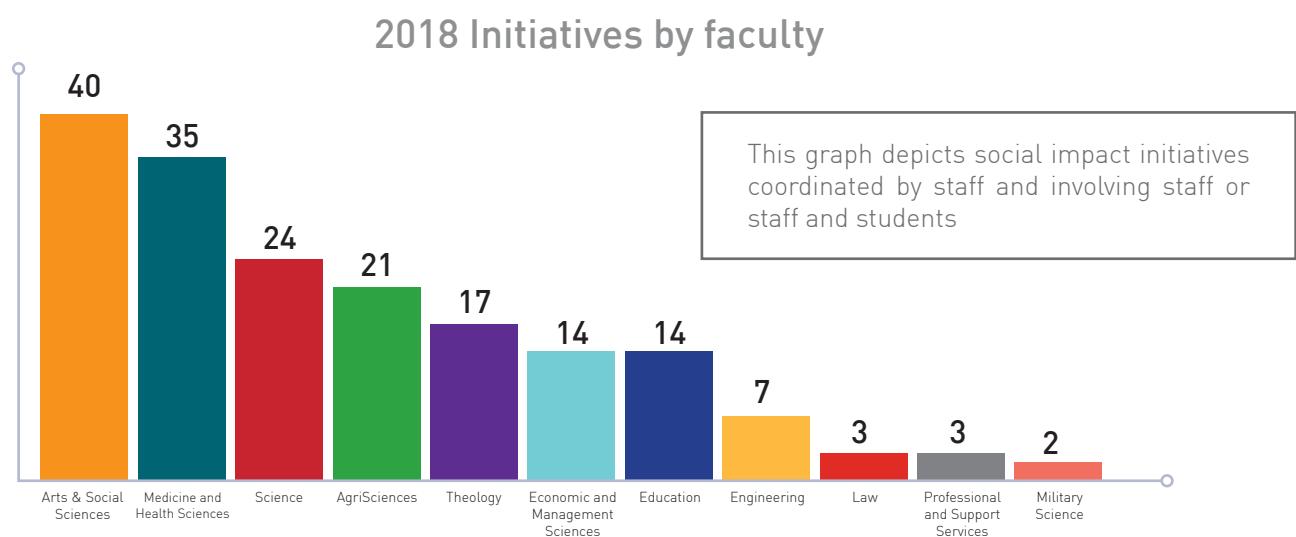
## Analysis of SU's Social Impact

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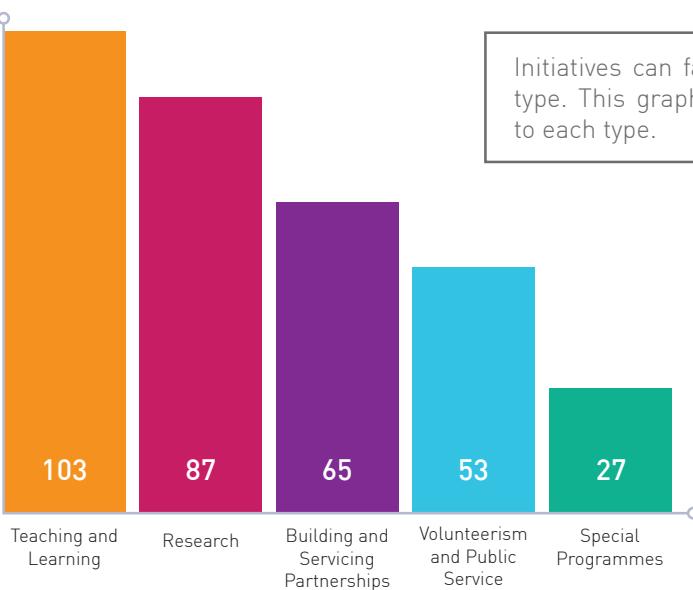
During 2018, 180 social impact initiatives coordinated by staff and involving staff or staff and students, and 43 student volunteer initiatives were registered and approved. SU staff and students engage in social impact initiatives with partners predominantly in the Stellenbosch and broader Western Cape, but also nationally, regionally and internationally. Below follows a graphical depiction of SU's social impact.

## Staff coordinated Social Impact initiatives

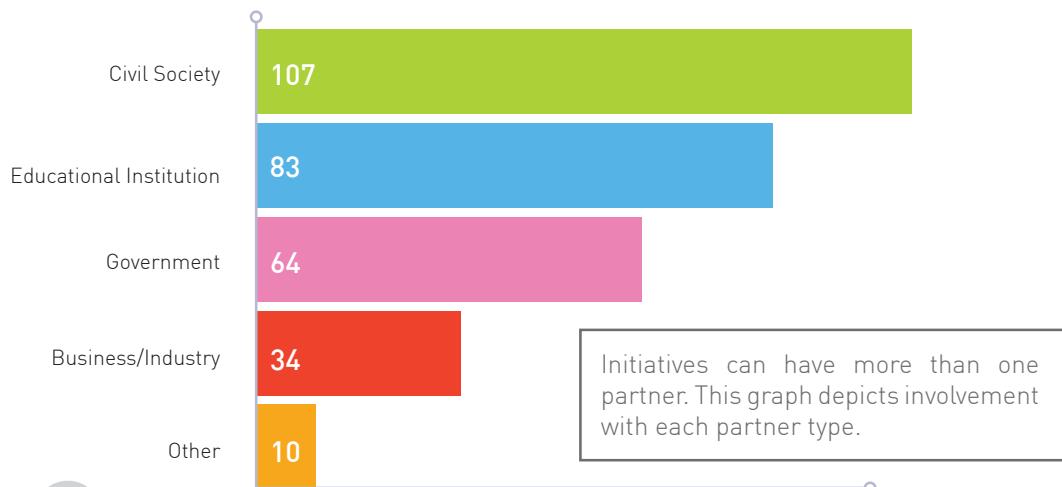
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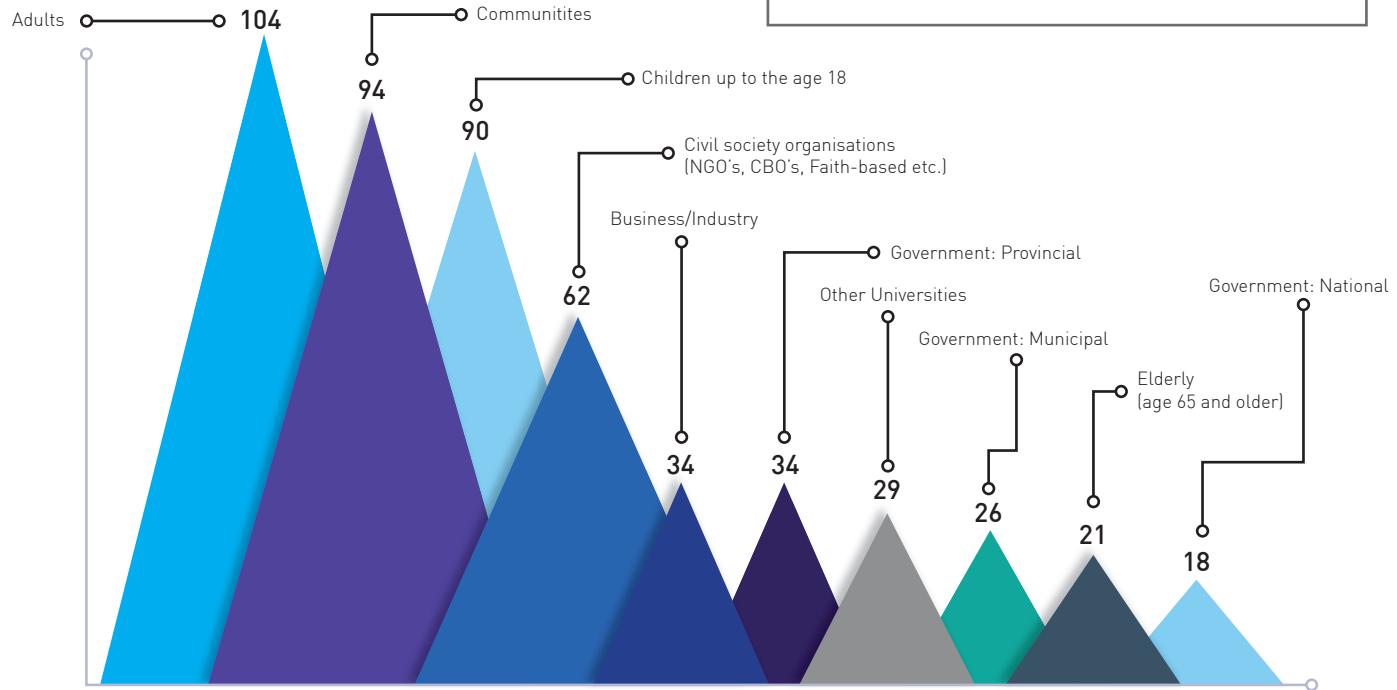
## 2018 Initiatives by type



## 2018 Initiatives by partner category



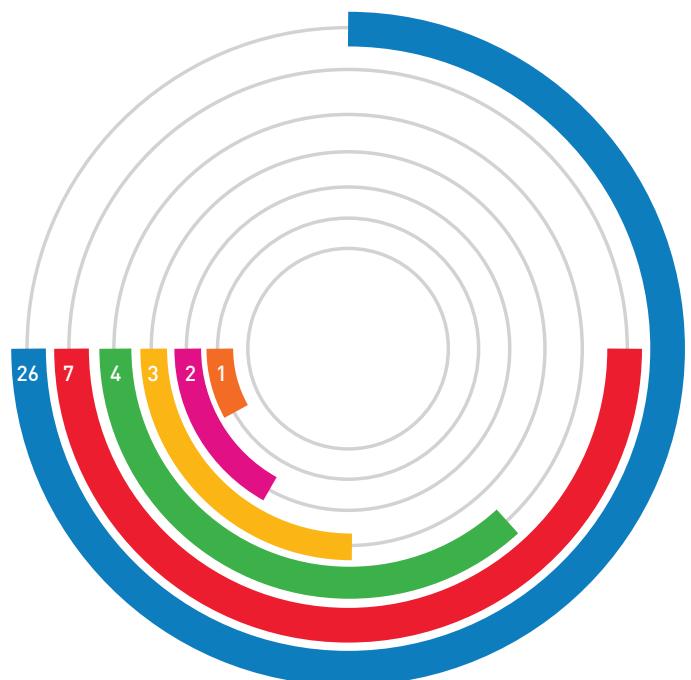
# 2018 Initiatives by target group



# Student coordinated volunteer Social Impact initiatives

## 2018 Student initiatives by theme

Themes	Number of Initiatives
Education for all	26
Food security & health	7
Environment & sustainability	4
Social & gender justice	3
Employment & inclusive economic development	2
Resources & infrastructure	1
Safety, security & good governance	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>



# Stories of SU's Social Impact



## Giving 'roots and wings' to the Rooidakke community

The provision of affordable housing is key to improving quality of life and ensuring that household members have a secure asset to ensure a better future.

The reality is often different because of the sub-optimal quality of houses handed over to beneficiaries. The quality of houses has often been so inadequate that the municipality could not confer title deeds, meaning that the houses are not legally recognised as transferable assets.

In order to address this, a collaborative initiative was established between the Stellenbosch University faculties of Engineering and Economic and Management Sciences, the University of Bath in the UK, the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements, the local municipality, building contractors and the Rooidakke community.

The aim of the initiative is to introduce an accountability intervention in the construction of subsidised government housing so as to improve the quality of the houses being constructed.

A pilot project was initiated in Rooidakke, a community just outside of Grabouw, based on the hypothesis that additional oversight could improve the quality of the houses, and in doing so, improve the satisfaction and sense of ownership of the beneficiaries.

The economics of the situation is very difficult to resolve. Due to a high demand for housing, there is a serious backlog of houses that need to be completed. Inflation and inadequate housing subsidies mean that poor-quality labourers have to be employed from the community, with little or no skills. The construction company then has to transfer these skills to the labourers, who subsequently leave for better pay elsewhere. This in turn leaves semi-skilled labourers to train unskilled workers, resulting in quality issues, and in the longer term, more resource being required to rectify these issues.

But who is responsible and can anyone be held accountable? Is it government, the construction companies, the labourers, budget constraints or the state evaluators?

Students from the Department of Civil Engineering engaged in weekly visits to the building sites to perform inspections. The students then reported their findings to the contractors so that issues could be rectified and feedback could be taken into account. Training was also given to field workers recruited from the Rooidakke community to empower them to assist the community with providing feedback.

Afterwards, a survey was conducted to gauge the satisfaction of the beneficiaries, who all indicated a much higher degree of overall satisfaction with their new homes. Beneficiaries were also equipped with the knowledge needed to provide their own feedback when issues arose.

"The collaborative work done by the students was instrumental in bringing all the stakeholders together to discuss problems and work on solutions together, thereby enhancing working relationships and dealing with quality issues as they arose, rather than after the fact. It has also given the students insight into real-life problems in a working environment," says Marisa von Fintel, lecturer with the Department of Economics of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

The next steps for the initiative are to expand the scope of the project through the development of an app to capture real-time inspection checks and the introduction of workshops for all related parties.



Stellenbosch University students interacting with the Rooidakke community



The SciMathUS programme forms part of a variety of units within the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University (SU) and specifically in the SU Centre for Pedagogy (SUNCEP). The programme annually offers 100 learners who have already passed Grade 12 but do not qualify for higher education a second opportunity to improve their NSC results in Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Accounting and Introduction to Economics to enable them to reapply for university programmes.

Since its inception in 2001, more than 1 100 students have successfully completed the programme. For SciMathUS students, there is also an overarching desire to improve their lives, achieve their dreams and plough back into their local communities – the essential skills and knowledge they have been equipped with at SU.

According to Dr Trevor Louw, SUNCEP director, the success of the SciMathUS students is a testament to the hard work that every staff member at the programme puts into the students. "It's an absolute thrill to see our students performing at this level. They have shown that it is possible to overcome the challenges many young people face in our society. Our big thing at SciMathUS has always been to provide access to a second chance at tertiary education. It's even better when that access leads to success."

Lungiswa Tolobisa says that the SciMathUS programme helped her to be more conscious of paying it forward and giving back to other prospective SU students. While completing her degrees at SU, she helped with administrative work for prospective SciMathUS students and was a resident mentor at Boland College in Stellenbosch, where many of the SciMathUS students are accommodated while completing the programme. "I wanted to share those experiences with new students in the programme and, hopefully, help them achieve their goals at SU as well."

SciMathUS students are not only given a second chance to qualify for higher education through the programme, but are also given an opportunity to participate in the SciMathUS Graduate Employability Initiative (SGEI), which helps them make informed career decisions and exposes them to their dream job.

The SGEI is a collaborative effort between SciMathUS and Thyme2B, a career and employability coaching company. The goals of the SGEI are to support current SciMathUS students to make informed career choices and to build and enhance their self-confidence and their people and soft skills. A next phase includes assisting former SciMathUS students in developing and expanding their social networks during their higher education journey and supporting them in making the transition into first-time employment.

According to Dr Elza Lourens, a SciMathUS facilitator and the one who spearheads the SGEI, helping students with career choices and building social networks are vital to their career success. "Research shows that accessing the job market becomes increasingly difficult if a prior possible work network is not built. With the SGEI, we want to help students explore their passion and help them to decide on careers that will be best for them in the long term."

The initiative has helped the 100 current SciMathUS students with career choices and the development of networks. One of those students is Karabo Thobejane, a current SciMathUS student interested in astronomy and astrophysics. He had the opportunity to visit the South African Astronomy Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town to talk and spend the day with astrophysicist Mrs Shazrene Mohammed. "Mrs Shazrene was very friendly and explained how things work in the career field of astronomy. I was also fortunate to chat with other SAAO staff, astronomers, PhD students and postdoctoral research fellows at the SAAO. SciMathUS has so far been very critical to my growth. I learned that knowledge without understanding is worthless," says Thobejane.

Apart from career opportunities, the SGEI also helps develop students' people and communication skills in order to be able to ask the right questions and promote themselves effectively. The SGEI offers various workshops, coaching sessions, assessments, group interventions and conversations to provide SciMathUS students with enough information to make informed decisions about their choice of career.

For more information on the SGEI and the SciMathUS programme, contact Dr Elza Lourens at 021 808 2608 or el3@sun.ac.za.



SciMathUS graduates



SciMathUS opening function

# Impacting sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health issues in the Dunoon and surrounding areas

This initiative, a partnership between Stellenbosch University (SU), Sharing Abundant Life Together (SALT) and the Department of Health (DoH), largely serves the Dunoon area where many women are HIV positive and unemployed. There is a huge gap between the capacity for services and the needs of the community.

SU's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences works closely with SALT, an NPO for social justice that seeks to bridge the gap between public and private healthcare. "Accessibility, education and information need to be there for the most vulnerable in our communities as well. We are passionate about women's health in its entirety: mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and socio-economic," said Sandra Warne of SALT. "We also assist women in applying for ID books, birth certificates and grants and offer a counselling service ranging from unemployment and life skills to prostitution and human trafficking. We believe in equal rights and dignity for all."

During the course of the year, Johnson & Johnson's baby products division provided training and information on baby baths and massage and basic skin care for newborns and children to SU's midwifery students. The information and skills were then passed on to the mothers at SALT. Forty-three students gave informational talks to 120 women and they were coached in the topics of immunisations, breast examinations, diarrhoea and danger signs, contraception, baby massage and baby baths. The women could then pass this information on to family, friends and community members. "As a midwife I can improve the lives of women and children and make an impact on the first 1 000 days of a child and beyond," said Sr Amy Howes.

"What we learnt is the importance of developing personal skills by speaking in a language that a woman can understand. We empower women by educating them and this will help strengthen our community and our nation. Our desire is to re-orientate health services from the treatment of disease and traumas to the prevention thereof. By creating a supportive environment for health services, we create a non-judgemental attitude towards people's choices, lives and opinions. We want all women to know that we are here for them. This also creates a trust environment – it is very important that nurses have a non-judgemental attitude. The realities of women in different communities, such as lack of transport money, can prevent them from accessing a pharmacy in cases of emergency, for example for anti-diarrhoeal medication. One has to look at the problems realistically and inform them of what they can do in an emergency for themselves or their children. It was a humbling experience to witness the big social need within the community and the need for basic education," said Sr Amy Howes.

During the course of the year, advanced midwifery students partnered with SALT and had a wellness day with 80 women. They took blood pressure readings, weight and BMI and performed urine analyses and pregnancy tests to get a general idea of the women's health. They held a talk on reproductive health and family planning and spoke about antiretroviral adherence. They provided oral and injectable contraceptive options on the day and once again, it was highlighted that the women do not have access to basic information and have inadequate access to basic preventative healthcare measures.

On 7 August, as part of women's month, in collaboration with SALT and Pink Drive, students conducted breast exams for the women of Dunoon and the public. They saw 158 women and did breast exams, health education and demonstrations about breast self-examinations. Women with access to private medical care did not need any follow-up. Sixty women were referred for follow-up, five of which were malignant and did not have access to private medical care. This shows an unequal experience in terms of women who have access to private healthcare and those who do not.

There is a serious lack of access to information among women in Dunoon and a lack of access to basic healthcare. The existing healthcare is overburdened and results in long waiting periods that cannot accommodate follow-up periods for women needing injectable contraceptives. As a result, unplanned pregnancies arise. There were many other issues raised as well – social, emotional and mental health issues. Students were there to listen to the women and could contribute to the fight against breast cancer.

Students involved in this initiative experienced personal growth in terms of project management skills, increased their personal knowledge and gained the opportunity to be of service to this community. The gap between public and private healthcare needs to be bridged. There needs to be more collaboration between SU, the DoH and NPOs in this regard and more of these health promotion and screening days going forward.



Johnson & Johnson's provided training and information on baby baths and massage and basic skin care for newborns and children

## SU brings biodiversity and community together – the Ingcungcu Sunbird Restoration Initiative

The Ingcungcu Initiative, named after the Xhosa word for “birds with long beaks”, aims to re-open a migration corridor for nectar-feeding birds across the City of Cape Town by planting gardens of bird-pollinating plants on school grounds.

Led by Prof Anton Pauw of the Department of Botany and Zoology at Stellenbosch University (SU) and Bongani Mnisi, head of nature conservation for the City of Cape Town, the initiative involves learners and teachers from eight schools across the Peninsula and numerous partners from the greater community. Ceinwen Smith, a private conservation and education consultant, is currently managing the project.

The project started in 2013 when Bongani, then a part-time student at SU, decided to write his master’s thesis on how restoring the nectar-feeding bird community can identify and nurture leadership for biodiversity. His supervisors, Prof Pauw (PhD) and Dr Sjirk Geerts (PhD), based at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, guided Bongani down the path that has today led to a highly successful biodiversity and community initiative.

The challenge, as identified by Prof Pauw, was how to mitigate the impacts of the expanding city on its natural environment, while at the same time harnessing the benefits that biodiversity brings. “A unique aspect of the fynbos vegetation that surrounds the city is that the dominant shrubs depend on birds for pollination and subsequent seed production. However, the city is a barrier to the migration of these birds,” said Prof Pauw.

Although there are only four species of obligate nectar-feeding birds in the Cape, they are the pollinators of about 350 plant species.

In order to test the theory regarding the importance of habitat corridors for the maintenance of biodiversity, eight schools were chosen as locations for the cultivation of gardens containing bird-pollinating plants.

The eight schools were selected to form a corridor linking part of the Table Mountain National Park with the isolated Rondevlei Nature Reserve on the Cape Flats. Gardens measuring around 200 m<sup>2</sup> were established at the four high schools in April/May 2014 and at four primary schools in August 2017. The learners and staff from each school are involved in the preparation and planting of the gardens, and were taught how to identify and record bird sightings.

The opening of this migration route is especially important when fires temporarily decimate the vegetation, forcing the birds to leave in search of nectar.

“The project is still in a very early stage and the effects are still small. Malachite sunbirds were seen in the gardens for the first time in 2016. However, the effects on learners were more impressive, with a significant increase in their knowledge of nature,” said Bongani.

Aside from SU being involved in the hands-on application of research findings, leading to scientific papers and improved environmental health, the initiative provides learners with an opportunity to become active role players in the creation of a more sustainable future.

Both the schools and the environment benefit from the gardens, which provide an increase in green spaces in the urban environment and an opportunity to connect with nature.

Ongoing plans for 2019 include rolling out the initiative to another 3 schools and expanding and formalising new partnerships to increase funding and access to resources.

“Our vision for the next 10 years is to grow the corridor right across the Cape Flats to the Stellenbosch Mountains,” said Prof Pauw.

There has been widespread support for the initiative and future plans include the possibility of an app to assist with identifying and recording bird sightings. The collection of seeds and sourcing of plants remain challenges for the dedicated team.

For more information regarding this initiative and how to get involved, please visit the following websites:

- [Stellenbosch University Social Impact Initiative Profile](#)
- [Ingcungcu Sunbird Restoration Project website](#)
- [Ingcungcu Sunbird Restoration Project Facebook Page](#)

Learners from Levana Primary planting *Salvia Africana-Lutea*



## MGD creates a transformed student experience for Maties

The year 2018 has been an exciting one for Stellenbosch University (SU) and Maties Community Service (MGD), which is housed in the Division for Social Impact. Staff and students not only commemorated Mandela's 100th birthday, but also celebrated SU's centenary year with a number of impactful initiatives.

The most notable of these took place during Mandela Week, where students showed that there are more than '100 ways to impact'.

An anchor initiative of the Mandela Week celebration was the Toasties for Tummies Initiative, which entailed making a whopping 10 000 sandwiches for various organisations around Stellenbosch. The Golden Key Stellenbosch Chapter, in association with MGD, hosts the project annually.

Apart from the Toasties for Tummies Initiative, a wide range of events involving education, the arts, sport, health promotion, discussions, reading competitions and donation drives, among others, took place on both the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses.

Activities culminated in a collaborative community event in the Kylemore area, which included the "WOW Debatfees" (debating competition), a health promotion event, Maties Sports Day as well as the Amazing Reading Race – a fun programme designed to create awareness of the importance of reading with speed and comprehension.

These are the types of programmes MGD drives to provide students with the opportunity to connect with communities and to be involved in sustainable initiatives that ensure long-term benefits for the beneficiaries.

Every year, MGD manages one main project that runs throughout the year – this year being an educational programme that happens every Friday at A.F. Louw Primary, an under-resourced primary school in Stellenbosch. In addition, several smaller project run throughout the year, for example the A.F. Louw Sports Day, the Community Interaction Morning, the Trip for Freedom and Mandela Week.

"Our Student Volunteer Programme aims to be sustainable and focuses on achieving long-term results in the lives of all beneficiaries by providing guidance and training to student volunteers to enable them to deliver excellent results within surrounding communities," said Mrs Michelle Pietersen, senior programme manager at MGD. Another key initiative run by MGD is the Primary Healthcare programme. This programme provides a holistic after-hour and primary healthcare service to certain communities of the Western Cape who have limited access to healthcare. The initiative also contributes towards the professional development of students and improves their clinical skills by providing additional training. The students also have the opportunity to spend time with patients and listen to their stories, which contributes positively to the training of undergraduate health professionals.

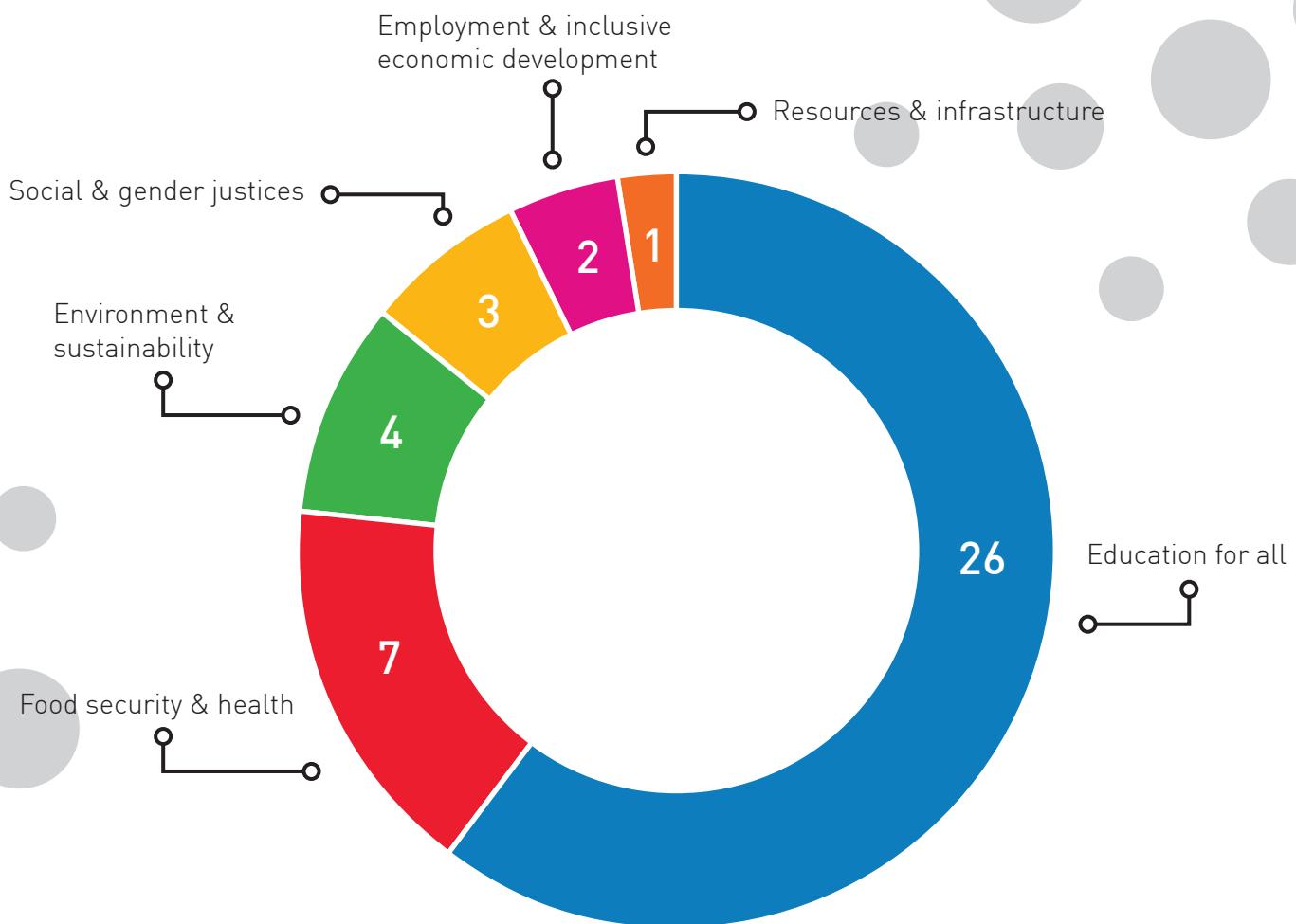
"Our mission is to interact with communities in their specific context through the provision of our services and healthcare education in order to empower these communities to improve and maintain their own development and well-being, thereby creating the hope of a sustainable future," said Mrs Avril Whate, senior project manager at Primary Healthcare at Tygerberg.

During 2018, MGD managed 780 volunteers, who contributed 400 hours over 20 sites.

Maties Sports Day at Kylemore



## Student initiatives by theme



Students gain key competencies, which include collaboration, communication, contextual leadership and team leadership, allowing them to develop into well-rounded, engaged citizens with enquiring minds.

Students can also earn credit hours for their social impact work, which serves as an incentive for both future employment and developing graduate attributes that will enable them to become critical thought leaders who have compassion for people who are less privileged.

"Our work seeks to inspire students to be conscious actors in the world. It is about starting a new thought movement, fuelling new ways of responding to where we are as a nation and as a continent and re-igniting our imagination of what South Africa could be," said Ms Reneé Hector-Kannemeyer, head of MGD and Deputy Director: Division for Social Impact.



Stellenbosch University students working with learners at Kylemore

## Award-winning Stellenbosch University Law Clinic provides much-needed support to the local community

Legal advice and assistance are often not accessible to the poor and marginalised communities of the greater Boland area, leaving them vulnerable to human rights violations such as evictions, abuse and questionable debt-collection practices.

It's here that the Stellenbosch University (SU) Law Clinic steps in, not only to offer legal assistance to those who qualify, but also to empower the community through education in basic financial skills and consumer rights and responsibilities.

It is through the SU Law Clinic's involvement in significant legal impact matters, such as potentially precedent-setting discrimination litigation and tampon tax proposals, that it has become recognised as a leader in the various fields in which it operates.

In acknowledgement of this, the SU Law Clinic has been awarded the Achievement Award at the 2018 African Legal Awards. The award recognises exceptional achievement within Africa's legal community. The Law Clinic is the first recipient of this award.

The event, hosted by Legal Week and the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa, took place at The Wanderers Club in Johannesburg on Friday 7 September 2018.

"The recognition by the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa of our achievements should serve to motivate those individuals and firms who share our objectives where we, as members of the African legal fraternity, appreciate and endorse the importance of the law being accessible to everyone. It also greatly assists us in our continuous quest to bring our vision into reality, and for this we are exceptionally grateful," said Dr Theo Broodryk, manager of the Law Clinic in his acceptance speech.

The Law Clinic operates as a fully-fledged attorneys' office with a walk-in legal service, delivering legal services to the poor and marginalised.

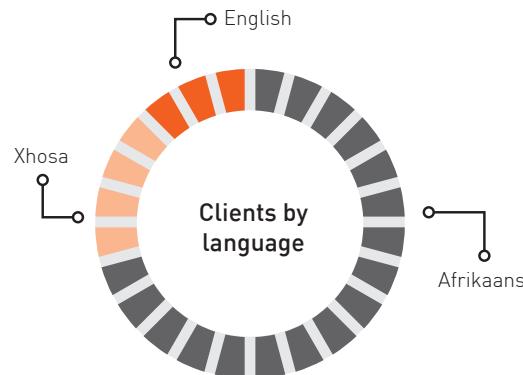
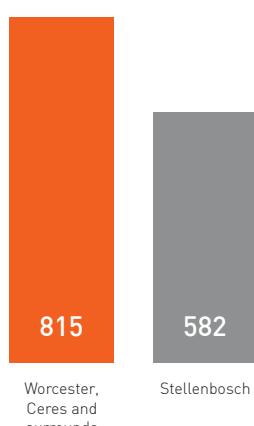
Assistance is offered for a wide variety of civil matters such as family law, debt relief and divorce matters, with a specialised focus on farm evictions, currently one of the most important legal issues in the Boland region. Evictions and consequent homelessness are a real threat to the human rights of farm labourers and their children, as they become outcasts with little hope of finding homes and protecting their family life.

### Interesting facts:

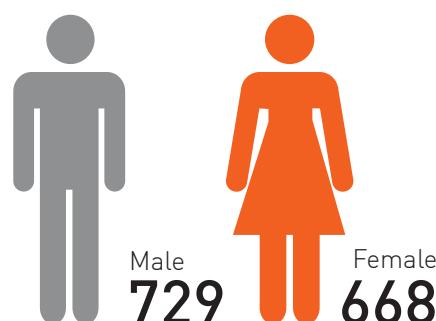
Between January and August 2018, 1 397 people accessed the Law Clinic. Of these, 626 were existing clients. Of the 771 new clients, 468 qualified for legal aid.

## January to August 2018

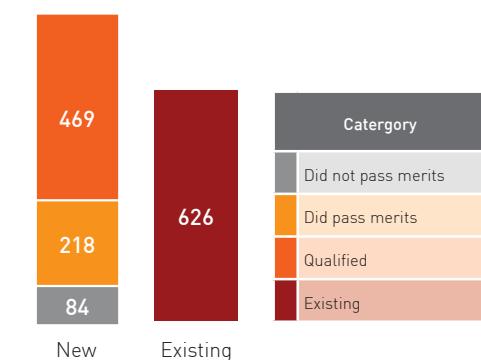
Clients by area



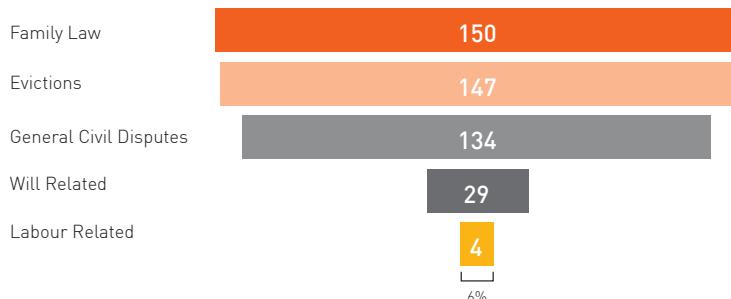
Clients by gender



Existing or new clients



Disputes by type



The Clinic nurtures a culture of civil responsibility, conducting workshops on evictions, debt relief and family violence.

Landmark initiatives in which the Law Clinic has been involved during 2018 include the following:

- A submission to the National Treasury on extending the list of zero-rated VAT items to include female sanitary products. The lack of access to feminine hygiene products, due to the high prices of these products, which are considered 'luxury' items, is an enormous problem that confronts poor, vulnerable and marginalised women and girls in South Africa. See: <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=5731>
- A submission to the Law Society of South Africa to increase the monetary jurisdiction of small claims courts in an effort to make these courts more accessible and affordable to all. See: <https://www.sulawclinic.co.za/news-base-1/small-claims-court-submissions.html>
- The institution of legal proceedings, in partnership with Summit and 10 other applicants, against 49 respondents in the Western Cape High Court to seek judicial intervention in respect of certain debt-collection practices that allow creditors and collection agents to add costs, including legal fees, to debtors' accounts both before and after judgement. See: <https://www.sulawclinic.co.za/news-base-1/news-coverage-of-landmark-litigation.html>
- Representation of Hendri Herbst, South African Paralympic swimmer, in a potentially ground-breaking unfair-discrimination case when he was refused entry into a restaurant because his guide dog accompanied him. It is hoped that this case will highlight discrimination against people with disabilities, in particular against those who do not have access to resources and who would not be able to afford to take legal action. See: <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=5641>

"It is important for us as a clinic not simply to litigate, but to in any way possible, through litigation or otherwise, achieve the purpose of ensuring systemic legal reform to the benefit of poor and vulnerable individuals," said Broodryk.

The Law Clinic also presents training workshops for the local communities and community leaders that focus on the basic rights of individuals and raise awareness of the accessibility of the Law Clinic.

"The Law Clinic is perfectly placed to make a difference by engaging in impact litigation. When we do so, especially if we do it successfully, there is usually a tangible difference afterwards in terms of the number of clients and professionals who seek our advice and assistance. It also allows us to do training on the result of the successful litigation to ensure that the impact filters into the community and is not just of academic importance," said Broodryk.

The Law Clinic provides training for final-year law students and candidate attorneys in the practical application of the law. Under supervision of an attorney, the students consult with clients and provide legal advice.

A key initiative undertaken by the Law Clinic is the Financial Literacy programme. This is an interdisciplinary programme run in conjunction with the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences in which students are given the skills to provide training to local schools and farms on financial literacy topics such as budgeting, the National Credit Act and the Consumer Protection Act. This empowers members of the community with the necessary information and skills to respond to and/or manage issues such as financial planning, debt management, consumer rights and eviction procedures and, where legal intervention is required, to attend the Law Clinic for legal advice.

The Law Clinic has also established an exciting research partnership in clinical legal education with Coventry University in England, which makes use of double robotics technology to conduct legal education. Students from this education programme receive training; engage in consultations, interviews and tribunals; and generally work with students, staff and clients in Coventry. Using essentially what is a 'big iPad on wheels', they can remotely control movement and interact with staff at a remote location.

The [Law Clinic website](#) provides more information regarding services offered, legal resources and even an online means test to determine whether an individual qualifies for legal assistance.



# Socially integrated engineering research positively impacts fire management in informal settlements

The Fire Engineering Research Unit of Stellenbosch University (FireSUN) has received a R2,9 million from the Lloyd's Register Foundation in 2018, which will be used to develop Africa's first-ever postgraduate programme in fire engineering – ultimately providing the expertise needed to keep the African continent safe in the case of fire.

These funds mean that the FireSUN team can now expand their work by offering postgraduate degrees (MEng and PhD) in fire safety engineering and structural fire engineering. "This represents an exciting development for fire safety engineering in South Africa, and Africa as a whole in 2019," said Dr Richard Walls, who heads up the FireSUN team.

The unit also received a grant of R4,3m in 2017 from the UK-based Engineering and Physical Science Research Council. FireSUN is collaborating with the University of Edinburgh's BRE Centre for Fire Safety Engineering with a shared commitment to socially integrated engineering for effective, safe and sustainable solutions for reducing the impact of fire hazards to informal settlements. The University of Edinburgh is home to world-renowned fire science experts.

The risk of deadly fires, especially in informal settlements, remains a constant in South Africa and worldwide, with approximately one billion people living in such settlements. Due to the close proximity of housing structures, open fires and the use of paraffin for cooking and staying warm during the winter months pose a constant risk in terms of large-scale informal settlement fires. The growing number of shack dwellers living in all countries across all continents only highlights the importance of addressing this potentially devastating problem. Devastating blazes – such as the fires in Imizamo Yethu near Hout Bay and in Knysna in 2017 – also regularly make the headlines. "Research shows that South Africa has one of the highest fire-related death rates per capita worldwide, many of which occur in informal settlements," said Walls.

"With the growth of the African population and the local mining, manufacturing and resource processing industries, the associated fire risks of the continent are rapidly increasing, along with the need for fire engineering professionals. Research needs to be conducted to investigate factors such as fire spread rates, fuel loads, fire modelling, testing of alternative construction materials, requirements for fire breaks, the amount of water required to extinguish fires and more. To this end, a master's in engineering (MEng) and PhD degrees in fire engineering will develop the engineering capacity the continent needs," he explained. "The formal fire engineering programmes will have a significant impact on providing the expertise needed to keep the African continent safe in the case of fire, be it for the residential, mining, industrial or transport sectors," Walls said.

"To improve the safety of those living in informal settlements, there is a desperate need to develop a thorough understanding of how fires behave in those environments, and what products will (or won't) be suitable. As our population rapidly expands and the number of people living in informal settlements increases in the coming decades, it is inevitable that better fire safety solutions will help save lives. Already the roll-out of smoke alarms by the Western Cape Disaster Management and Fire and Rescue Services – and facilitated by Patricia Zweig and Dr Robyn Pharoah of the Research Alliance for Disaster and Risk Reduction at Stellenbosch University – has saved lives in areas such as Wallacedene," he added.

"As any good fire engineer will tell you, fire engineering is an incredibly broad field with a large variety of specialist topics such as fire dynamics, suppression system design, evacuation, structural fire design, emergency response, detection and much more," explained Walls.

The FireSUN team has already undertaken various research projects in areas such as informal settlement fire safety, structural fire design, industrial structural design and petrochemical facility fire safety. These projects include a current investigation, sponsored by Santam, looking at the thousand homes that were burnt down during the Knysna fire disaster in 2017 as well as working alongside the Western Cape Disaster Management and Fire and Rescue Services to investigate how smoke alarms can be used in informal settlements.

This expertise and research have the potential for large application in countries such as South Africa, India, Mexico, South America and Asia as well as refugee camps to ameliorate the risk and impact of fire.

Fire testing of structures



This publication acknowledges the contributions of the Development and Alumni Relations department to this article

## Social Impact within Agrisciences

During 2018 the Faculty of AgriSciences played an important role in the many social impact initiatives in which Stellenbosch University (SU) engages throughout the year.

Concerns about education and training deficits among youths in the agricultural sector shaped the objectives of two of the Faculty's social impact initiatives. The concept of an agricultural training hub at Mariendahl Experimental Farm is rooted in a commitment to facilitate knowledge transfer to youths in agriculture who do not have access to mainstream post-matric education. Mr Henk Stander of the Department of Animal Sciences pointed out that whatever the outcomes of urgent land reform efforts in the country, there would be a need for support, training and research to realise food security, manage ecological infrastructure and maintain livelihoods. Upgraded facilities at the farm to ensure world-class learning are included in the concept and are expected to benefit SU students.



Students from the Pinotage Youth Development Academy

Ms Marianne McKay and colleagues from the Department of Viticulture and Oenology collaborated with the Pinotage Youth Development Academy (PYDA) to deliver a service to youths from resource-poor communities. These students have an interest in the wine industry, but cannot access university degree programmes for various reasons. The student-centred curriculum is customised to the needs of previously disadvantaged youths aged between 18 and 25. Independent and internal assessments show 90% employability of PYDA graduates, increased access to the wine industry and high retention rates, and valued partnerships between the Academy and SU.

The spread of the pathogenic fungus Phytophthora spp. in the Cape fynbos led PhD student Joey Hulbert to solicit the help of citizens to gather samples across the Western Cape. Three boys from Khayelitsha, a mother-daughter team from Stellenbosch and a nursery employee all ended up in the laboratory of supervisor Dr Francois Roets to process samples at the Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology. Samples from ordinary citizens have resulted in extraordinary finds. Naming rights have gone to three contributors for new species found. The three boys from Khayelitsha have expressed a keen interest to join SU to start careers in conservation ecology.

Since 2012, 11 postgraduate students under the supervision of Ms Rhoda Malgas (Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology) have benefited from the research support, local knowledge and wisdom of residents at Genadendaal in the Overberg. Key to these collaborations have been local partners Mrs Anna Joorst, Mr Abie Joorst, Ms Ukita Joorst, Ms Patricia Stevens, Ms Gertrude Klein and Ms Jakoba Moses. Collaboration with local partners has also resulted in opportunities for student training in various disciplines, with input from SU colleagues Dr Shayne Jacobs (Conservation Ecology and Entomology), Dr Marcellous le Roux (Agronomy), Prof. Alex Valentine (Botany and Zoology) and Dr Samantha Williams (Geography). Planned outputs include a community seminar later this year, the publication of a local journal featuring the results of student projects since 2012 and a workshop with local decision makers by March 2019. SU students and alumni will showcase their work as part of the drive to develop graduate attributes, communicate their science and speak to societal needs through research.

To find out more about these and other AgriScience initiatives, please visit the Social Impact [website](#).



Small-scale farmers with a multidisciplinary team of SU staff and students at Genadendaal, The Overberg

# A prison–university educational partnership: Promoting social justice and empowerment by rehumanising learning

The Ubuntu Learning Community (ULC) is a partnership between Stellenbosch University (SU) and the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). It provides higher-education opportunities for SU and Unisa students in Brandvlei Prison in Worcester to study together under the guidance of SU academics and learn with and from one another through dialogue and the sharing of experiences.

The inspiration for the ULC comes from Nelson Mandela, who said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". It is the first time that a residential South African university has partnered with a prison in a way that conceives of collaborative education as the 'practice of freedom' (Paolo Freire) – a tool for transformation and empowerment.

The ULC has various components: an educational partnership between SU and the DCS, social support and reintegration for students after incarceration, and educating and sensitising SU students (and the wider community) about the incarceration system, a component that is student-led. These components are important for participant empowerment through collaboration and interaction, which enable the transformative power of education as a tool for social justice.

Transformative learning takes place when students are exposed to new experiences and perspectives, such as interaction with diverse peers – students develop personal and social responsibility, which helps to integrate knowledge and skills with values, sense of self, identity and purpose.

Participants learn that they think alike, have shared visions, that perceptions can be pleasantly wrong and that people want to engage more.

This initiative is a form of critical citizenship, which is aimed at encouraging critical reflection on the past and the imagining of a possible future shaped by social justice in preparation of living together in harmony in diverse societies.

The initiative also entails collaborative international research with partners from the University of Cambridge, UK; UC Berkeley, USA (the Fulbright Scholar Program); and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, USA. SU's involvement in this initiative has the potential to generate considerable – and original – research output in the teaching and learning and criminal justice-related fields.

The reintegration component has the objective to support students transitioning from prison to the community to continue their education, obtain employment and lead stable, productive and fulfilling lives on the 'outside'. It also seeks to challenge social disadvantage as a barrier to higher-education learning by offering re-entry facilitation and support for incarcerated students to complete their studies or to study further at SU after their release.

The student-led/campus education component aims to break down the barriers between universities and prisons and sensitise and educate the community about the project, our incarceration system and its realities and the role communities need to play.

"We need to change the way we think about offenders and change the way we think about the incarceration system in order to break down barriers between prisons and universities", said Caitlin Kleynhans (fourth-year LLB student).

According to the DCS, those who participate in education are less likely to return to prison. This benefits individuals, their families and communities. It also lays the foundation for lifelong learning and impacts the whole prison population positively.

As remarked by a Brandvlei prisoner: "When working with SU students, prisoners feel renewed hope and belief in the goodness of people. We feel humanised. You treated us just like any other student."

This partnership can have a tremendous impact to help prisoners become productive members of society and may lead to fewer people entering prison. It improves incarcerated students' prospects for successful re-entry after their release and decreases levels of recidivism.



SU and Department of Correctional Services partners

# Stellenbosch University builds bridges with civil society through research into faith and gender justice

The Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) is an interdisciplinary research unit based within the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. It works with diverse clients and research collaborators around the world, partnering with various organisations and faith organisation to help them engage in sustainable development. With a particular focus on religion and violence, the URDR works with governmental and non-governmental organisations to develop interventions that tackle the root causes of violence and lead to longer-term, sustainable change. At the same time, it develops academic theory, acting as a bridge between academia and praxis.

The URDR was recently commissioned by Girls Not Brides to do a study on better understanding the role of resistant religious leaders from Christian, Muslim and Hindu traditions<sup>1</sup> in efforts to end child marriage and develop effective strategies for working with them for change.

Child marriage violates girls' rights to health, education and opportunity. It exposes girls to violence throughout their lives and traps them in a cycle of poverty. These are the facts:

- **Twelve million girls are married every year before they reach 18.**
- **Almost one in three of these girls are now in sub-Saharan Africa – up from one in seven 25 years ago.**
- **One in nine girls in the developing world are married by age 15.**

Through Girls Not Brides the URDR research team had access to 1 000 partner organisations across multiple faiths and in more than 95 countries, enabling research findings to shape and inform the work being done by this global network of partners, presented at their Global Conference in Malaysia in June 2018.

The final research report, titled, "What lies beneath? Tackling the roots of religious resistance to ending child marriage", is in its final design stages and will be publicly released in December 2018.

"The research found that child marriage is sometimes seen or presented by certain religious leaders as a solution, prevention or protection against sexual activity and pregnancy outside of marriage" said Dr Selina Palm, researcher at the URDR.

While not all religious leaders oppose ending child marriage, this report focused on those who do to help support activists who are facing challenges in their attempts to work with religious leaders. The following seven overlapping drivers (or underlying roots) were identified as shaping the attitudes and practices seen to typically fuel religious resistance to ending child marriage:

- **Marriage viewed as a religious ritual**
- **Lack of awareness of child marriage consequences**
- **Child marriage seen as ordained by religion**
- **Fear of premarital sex and pregnancy**
- **Reinforcement of patriarchal power**
- **Parental protection and power over children**
- **Religious fundamentalism**

Girls Not Brides conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



A number of strategies were therefore suggested in relation to understanding the particular drivers within a specific context and building on what is being seen to work in the field across multiple faiths.

Another key initiative underway is the work being done in partnership with Episcopal Relief & Development, the Zambian Anglican Church and the Zambian Anglican Mothers' Union regarding violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC).

The research project is taking place over a period of eight months in Zambia with a local research team trained by the URDR as part of the ONE VOICE project, a movement working with women's groups and women leaders. Various

<sup>1</sup>. As per the major religion in the highest child marriage countries.

qualitative methods are being used to collect data, including Photovoice, a process by which local research assistants take photos and make voice notes to describe what they are seeing in their local communities. These pictures identify the social and religious norms that underpin violence against women and children in their communities, with a special focus on how women may directly or indirectly condone or condemn VAW and VAC.

Rural Zambian women within the Mothers' Union were trained as research assistants and equipped with camera phones. These women take pictures of what they see within their communities and send the photos, along with a voice note, to the UDRD researchers on a weekly basis.

At the end of the project, URDR researchers will return to Zambia to interpret the photos together with the local Zambian research team (all women), which in turn will inform the dissemination of the results across wider Anglican structures to educate and stimulate discussion at both senior and community levels. The research will also be used to inform longer-term interventions on VAW/VAC within the ONE VOICE work being developed by Episcopal Relief & Development and Zambian Anglican leaders, which also focuses on developing women's leadership.

"Our research begins and ends with the notion of collaboration for the purposes of knowledge production and dissemination. The URDR holds a commitment to scholarship that directly impacts the marginalised and disempowered and we work collaboratively for the purposes of improving practice. We can contribute to achieving best results for and with beneficiaries, in this case women and children who experience multiple forms of violence within their communities," said Dr Palm.

More information and research reports from the URDR's work across the globe can be found at [www.sun.ac.za/urdr](http://www.sun.ac.za/urdr). Dr Selina Palm can be contacted at [spalm@sun.ac.za](mailto:spalm@sun.ac.za).



# Improving career choices for learners from previously disadvantaged communities

**D**uring the course of 2018, over 80 Stellenbosch University students and staff members worked together to develop material and present workshops to provide career guidance to more than 1 100 Grade 9 learners in eight historically disadvantaged schools in Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Delft in order to assist them in making appropriate subject choices.

According to project leaders Mrs Michelle Visser and Prof. Tony Naidoo, with the shift in education to the outcomes-based education curriculum, one of the serious problems in the higher education system has been the lack of career guidance. "In schools across South Africa, Life Orientation teachers now have the task of preparing adolescents to make choices about their future. However, these teachers face considerable constraints and demands on their time, which contribute to limited career education. Also, because of adverse socio-economic conditions, many learners have limited perspectives of career options and the paths to achieve their career aspirations and are inclined to circumscribe and compromise (i.e. place limits) on their potential choices."

Against this backdrop, the departments of Psychology and Industrial Psychology partnered to deliver career development workshops at the Kylemore, Cloetesville, Stellenzicht, Kayamandi, Makapula, Rosendaal, Franschhoek and Groendal high schools.

This intervention sought to assist learners to, among other things, explore and identify their vocational interests and other career attributes, link their career attributes to career choices and make informed decisions about their choice of senior school subjects. The Life Orientation teachers were involved in the project to ensure school capacitation.

"We saw this project as part of the social impact contract that the University has with its community. It is one of the University's strategic objectives to be a knowledge partner and to engage in meaningful interactions with our communities where we can link what we teach and what we research with service," added Prof. Naidoo.

Students who formed part of the initiative spoke about the impact it had on their lives and preconceived ideas. Their experiences included seeing the value of putting theory into practice, seeing learners flourish, realising that conditions at schools were challenging and being able to work together as psychology and industrial psychology students. "We were often blown away by the learners' variety and abundance of potential," they said.

Prior to the workshop only 42,3% of the learners reported feeling prepared to make future career choices, whereas after the workshop, 67,0% indicated feeling better prepared in this regard.

Ms Carin Venter, principal of Kylemore High School, thanked the project team. "You opened a whole new world for our learners. The feedback from both learners and teachers was very positive and we appreciated the extra mile you walked with us," she said.

A group of mothers of learners in Rosendaal High School in Delft were also grateful. "Our children are going to stand out from the crowd. They will be able to become professionals because they are going to have the right subjects to prepare them for tertiary education," they said.

Ms Priscilla Booysen, director of the Rupert Education Foundation, which funded the initiative, mentioned that there is a deep need for these kinds of projects. According to her, they are often confronted by the challenge of learners applying for bursaries without having the right subjects for the career they wish to pursue.

"We should definitely investigate how one could make this project sustainable and scalable. Thank you for allowing us to be part of this beautiful, dynamic process," she added.

A career development workshop in progress



This publication acknowledges the contributions of Pia Nanny to this article.