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SOCIAL IMPACT @ STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

2019



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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE RECTOR:

Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel

Prof Nico Koopman

Stellenbosch University (SU) is committed to making an impact on society. This is clearly demonstrated in the institution's commitment to social impact as formulated in its vision.

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

We advance knowledge in service of society

One of the four aspirations of the university is its desire to have "an all-encompassing impact on the social, financial and environmental wellbeing of the town, region, country, and continent, with a global reach."

This is underpinned by the mission of the university to be "a place connected to the world that enriches and transforms local, continental and global communities". To achieve this mission, we will not only need to "influence and change the world around us" but be responsive and embrace change ourselves.

Social impact is at the centre of our commitment to advance knowledge in service of society and is embedded in the six strategic themes of the university. These themes focus on providing a transformative student experience, networked and collaborative learning and teaching, research for impact, participating in and promoting purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks, turning the university into an employer of choice as well as a thriving institution. Through these themes SU wants to make a reciprocal, transformative, humanising and dignifying impact on all spheres of

societal life, from the most intimate to the most public, from the most local to the most global, from the most personal to the most cosmic.

SU is not alone in its commitment to advance the public responsibility of institutions and the social impact of universities. Worldwide, literature and research suggests that there is a fresh understanding that the vocation of universities is to resist being ivory towers, but to be reliable agents of change and renewal in societies. The list of publications, such as *The uses of the university*; *The engaged university*; *Universities and the common good*; *What are universities for?*; *The soul of a university: Why excellence is not enough*; that argue for universities to take public responsibility, is ever-growing.

This publication provides a brief overview of the social impact mandate at SU. We use the notion of embedded social impact. Embedded implies, on the one hand, that all university environments launch specific, explicit social impact initiatives. Embedded social impact especially refers to the so-called inherent, day-to-day social impact mandate that forms part of the university's practices of, among others, learning and teaching, research and innovation, staff and student volunteerism, and partnership-building in all walks of life.

A university that prioritises social impact, impacts upon the manifold social concerns in the domains of social, political, economic and ecological life, as well as in civil society and the sphere of public discourse and public opinion-formation in local and global contexts. During the time of Covid-19, these concerns are being intensified and revealed more clearly. Through the mandate of Social Impact, we intentionally focus the immense intellectual, scientific, cultural, esthetic, moral and human capacities of universities upon the creation of a life of dignity and quality for all.



MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR:

Social Impact and Transformation

Dr Leslie van Rooi

Social impact at universities is attracting more and more attention. This is due to at least two reasons.

Firstly, it has to do with the fact that more and more international higher education ranking agencies take social impact into account as one of its measuring indicators. This guides universities in re-interpreting their footprint and impact on a local and global level.

Secondly, it is driven by renewed efforts – nationally and internationally – to link the social impact of universities to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Measuring SDGs has become a key focus and universities are viewed as contributors to realising most, if not all, the goals.

Social impact is no longer a feel-good activity executed by a few

These two factors also influence our work at Stellenbosch University (SU). Over the last 5 to 10 years it has significantly changed our understanding of social impact – what we do, how we do it, and who we partner with as an institution. During this period the core role that social impact plays within our university has been emphasised and it is pleasing to see that social impact is indeed an integral part of SU's being.

This publication demonstrates that social impact at SU is indeed no longer a separate, once-off, feel-good activity executed and celebrated by a few individuals. It is fully embedded in our teaching and learning and research engagements and endeavours. As such, social impact also has a strong link with all the core strategic themes of our university, namely in helping the institution create a thriving Stellenbosch University; a transformative student experience, purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks, and networked and collaborative teaching and learning, as well as conduct research of impact and become an employer of choice.

Without the tireless work of the various faculty and professional administrative support service (PASS) environment committees for social impact, the Social Impact Committee (Senate), the Social Impact Funding Committee as well as the Division for Social Impact, it would not be possible to embed social impact in SU. And without the commitment, deliberateness and eagerness of a growing number of SU researchers, academics, students and volunteers, SU would not be able to positively impact on society.

This publication thus celebrates the work of various SU colleagues who, over the last years, have made the world a better place. For this I salute you.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Division for Social Impact

Ernestine Meyer-Adams

While Stellenbosch University (SU) has a long tradition of giving back to communities, social impact must still be fully realised in our academic and co-curricular practices. It is only when social impact becomes ingrained in the culture of an organisation that social justice can be achieved.

The Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019-2024 of Stellenbosch University (SU) identifies “modernisation, social justice and the need for the fundamental transformation of the higher education system (including institutions themselves)” as key components to bring about change in the higher education sector globally and in South Africa.

These imperatives are shaped by SU’s values – compassion, accountability, respect and excellence, and equity – as articulated in its Vision and Strategic Framework. We are in the process of reviewing our Social Impact Strategic Plan (2017 – 2022) to fully align it to the university’s Vision 2040. This is part of our mission to bring about systemic and transformative social impact as the ultimate goal through institutional collaborative activities with internal and external role players, all while upholding the values of shared responsibility, empathy and leadership in service of others.

Social justice can only be achieved when social impact becomes ingrained in the culture of an organisation

SU is committed to furthering its impact on the social fabric of a democratic society whether with regards to politics, the economy or the environment, and in civil society, including family life, culture, art, education, sport, health, public discourses, public opinion-formation, and public policymaking amongst others.

Our mission as a division is therefore based on an institutional strategic priority through which the university

commits itself to reciprocally influence, motivate and activate the Social Impact Strategic Plan, which was approved on 25 November 2016 by stakeholders within the university and in society. The plan focuses on bringing about equitable social change through Social Impact’s core functions and tacit expertise, and aligns to local, national and international development goals such as the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, the National Development Plan, and the Provincial Strategic Goals and Integrated Development Plans.

To bring our plan into being, we need to:

- Move beyond ‘corporate citizenship’ and demonstrate transformative scholarship through the work of our faculties.
- Transform systems: It is not enough to say we teach social impact and transformation. We need to learn, apply and measure social impact and transformation. This requires a university deployed ‘understanding’ of colonialism, coloniality and post-Apartheid institutional culpability that helps us set and articulate measurements for social impact in future.
- Form institutional collaborations that ensure a meaningful social impact. This requires an audit of our structures and partnerships.
- Take on shared responsibility in moving from a more academic understanding of social impact to an appreciation of the servant leadership that is now required in the world.

If we are able to get the above right, our staff, students and external communities will not ‘wonder’ about the impact of this institution, it will feel, see and partake in it.

SU’s commitment to bringing about social impact through social justice is clearly articulated in its Vision 2040, which states: “Stellenbosch University will be Africa’s leading research intensive university, globally recognised as excellent, inclusive and innovative, where we advance knowledge in service of society”. It is this vision that our division aspires to embody.

The plan focuses on bringing about equitable social change through Social Impact’s core functions and tacit expertise, and aligns to local, national and international development goals



Advancing knowledge in service of society

These words best sum up the role of the Division for Social Impact (DSI). The DSI is responsible for advising, guiding and supporting staff and students at Stellenbosch University (SU) who manage or are involved in social impact initiatives in service of society. We also facilitate engagement between our researchers, staff and student volunteers, student interns, partners, and communities.

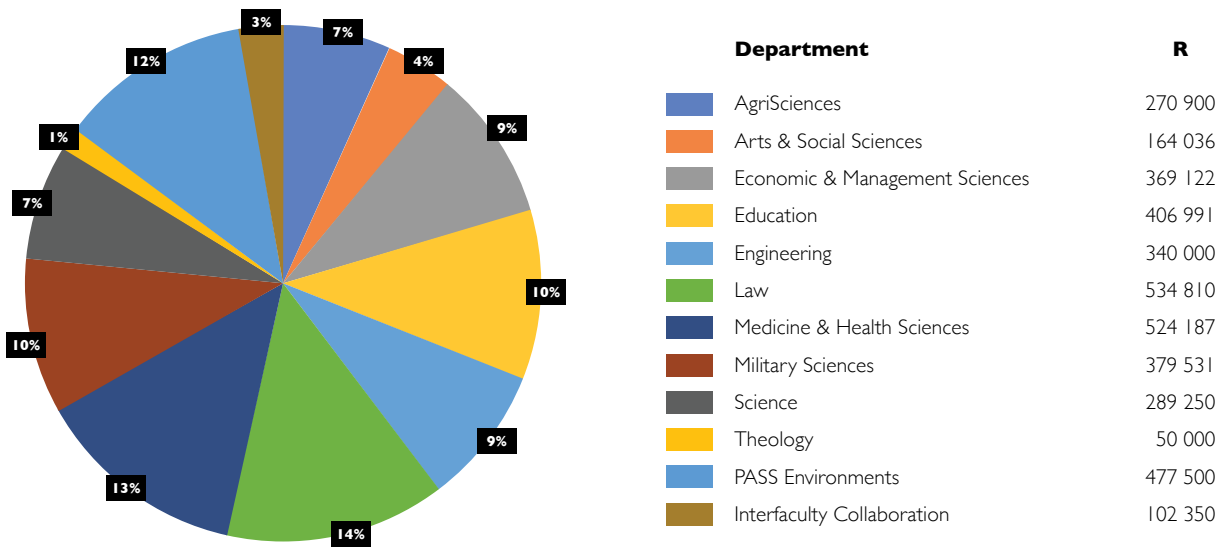
We support SU in its mission to enrich and transform local communities through its teaching, learning and research as well as social impact initiatives. These goals are based on the university's Vision and its core strategic themes contained in the Strategic Framework 2019-2024. The themes that we focus on, particularly in our work, include providing students with a transformative student experience and building purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks.

We help SU to deliver on its commitment to provide students with transformative experiences by providing them with advice and support and equipping them with the skills they will need to engage with a diverse range of partners from business, government (meso and macro), and civil society (micro and macro). Matie Community Service (better known by its Afrikaans abbreviation, MGD) resorts within the DSI and drives engaged citizenship through our voluntary student and staff social impact initiatives. Through the DSI we are able to cultivate specific student attributes within our graduates to help them reach their full potential and make an impact on society while at university and upon leaving SU.

We are also focused on building purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks to help SU "engage and collaborate with stakeholders, the communities it serves, industry, government and university partners at a local, regional, continental and global level". Additionally, we support the communities we "serve to bring about social, cultural, environmental and economic development and change".

Social Impact invested a total of R3 908 677.31 in social impact initiatives across all 10 faculties, the professional administrative support service (PASS) environment, and interfaculty collaborations in 2019. A total of R78 351.61 remains for future use for student and partner projects.

Funds approved for 1st and 2nd round



Our social impact initiatives are aligned to the international, national, and regional goals set out in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, the National Development Plan of South Africa, and the Western Cape's Provincial Strategic Goals and are divided into seven impact themes.



Our contribution to Stellenbosch University’s 7 themes

In 2019 Stellenbosch University’s staff participated in a total of 136 social impact initiatives and projects that fall within the university’s 7 social impact themes. A total of 213 staff members spent 78 545 hours on these initiatives and projects.



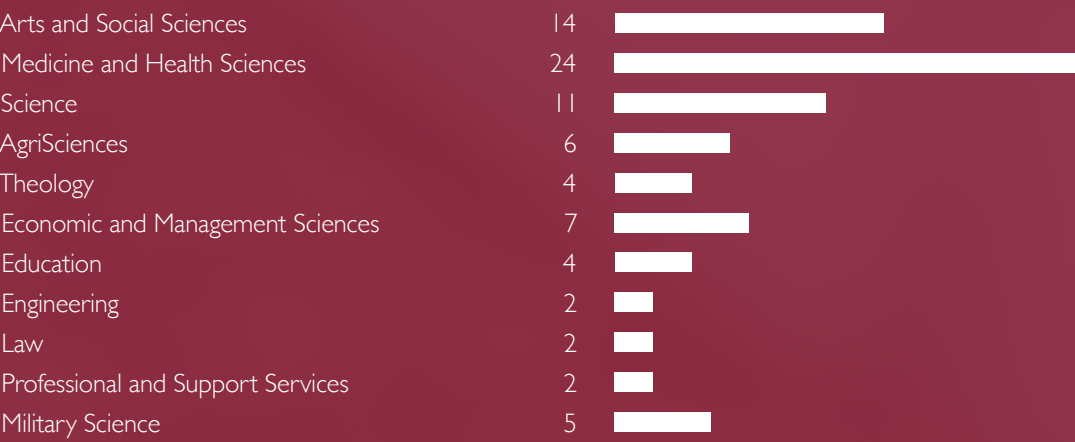
Breaking down our social impact

During 2019, 136 social impact initiatives coordinated by staff and involving staff or staff and students, and 30 student volunteer initiatives were registered and approved. SU staff and students engaged in social impact initiatives with partners based predominantly in the Stellenbosch and broader Western Cape, but also nationally, regionally and internationally.

Below are graphical depictions of SU's social impact.

Staff-coordinated social impact initiatives

Initiatives by faculty:



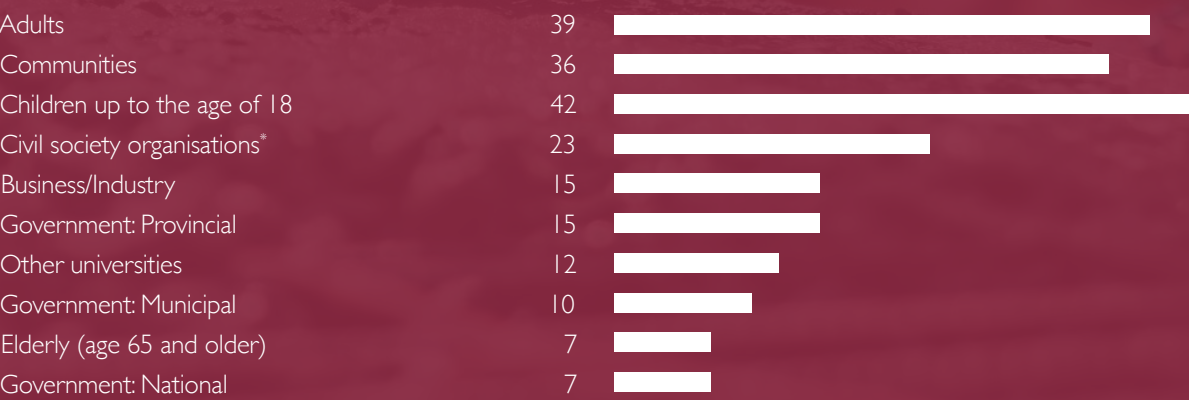
Initiatives by type



Initiatives by partner category



Initiatives by target group



*NGOs, CBOs, faith-based, etc.

Student-coordinated volunteer social impact initiatives

Student initiatives by theme

Approximately 1 472 students participated in 30 student-coordinated projects and initiatives in 2019, volunteering 336 hours of their time and benefitting 2 450 individuals.



One of the core strategic themes of Stellenbosch University's Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework is to provide a transformative student experience to all its students

Matie Community Service: A forward-looking NGO focused on developing graduate attributes

One of the core strategic themes of Stellenbosch University's (SU) Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019-2024 is to provide a transformative student experience to all its students. This entails creating opportunities for students to acquire specific graduate attributes that leads to:

- an enquiring mind focused on lifelong learning, critical and creative thinking, and the ability to exercise responsibility in their learning and the use of their knowledge.
- an engaged citizen with leadership and entrepreneurial skills and the ability to collaborate with others while functioning in diverse environments.
- a dynamic professional that is innovative and able to use sustainable and effective technology to solve problems.
- a well-rounded individual that is exposed to cultural, intellectual and sporting life, takes responsibility for their own development and makes informed and considered decisions.

Volunteerism presents an opportunity for students to further develop and apply these attributes while participating in social impact projects in schools, government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses and other community-based organisations. We partner with these organisations to assist students to gain practical work-integrated learning experiences and benefit the organisations they serve through their knowledge.

These volunteer opportunities are created through the One-Stop Student Volunteer Programme, which is run by Maties Community Service (better known as MGD), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) situated in the Division for Social Impact (DSI). MGD is headed up by Ms Reneé Hector-Kannemeyer, who is also the Deputy Director: DSI. The NGO acts as a hub for all student social impact projects and provides project leaders with training in sustainable community development to address real needs within the communities they serve.

Our students also acquire functional skills while working on these social impact projects, that in turn contribute to their personal development.

In 2019 a total of 1 472 student volunteers spent 336 hours volunteering, reaching 2 450 beneficiaries through 30 projects focused on education, health, food security and social justice and were registered with MGD. Students who participate in these volunteer opportunities receive formal recognition on their transcripts for their involvement in co-curricular activities. Well-rounded graduates are viewed in a more favourable light by employers, which in turn improves the employability of our graduates.

**In 2019 a total of 1 472
student volunteers spent 336
hours volunteering**

As our objective is to ensure that students leave the university with more than a degree, MGD repositioned itself as a training centre in 2019 with the aim to equip students with both the skills and competencies to contribute meaningfully to the world. In future, the centre will operate as a placement agency for students within their field of expertise, in particular bursary students. The placement of a 100 Social Work students in the NGO sector over the past five years demonstrates MGD's ability to provide this service successfully. Going forward, MGD will expand this service to include the placement of students from a variety of disciplines, especially students who need to complete practical training as part of their degree requirements.

It is clear that the sustainability of MGD's programmes does not only lie in a return to its foundation of providing volunteer services through our students and staff, but also in the opportunities that the training centre will offer.

Empowering learners and students

The “I CAN read” literacy project aims to improve the literacy levels of Foundation Phase learners and to alert prospective teachers to how context can and should influence their approach to teaching.

The project is the brainchild of Dr Zelda Barends, a lecturer in Curriculum Studies and the Programme Coordinator of the Foundation Phase in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University (SU).

“South Africa is experiencing a huge literacy crisis, with 78% of our learners unable to read with comprehension.”

To address this, Barends designed an after-school language development programme that supplements the existing curriculum and focuses on Foundation Phase learners (grades 1 to 3) at a school in the Stellenbosch area.

In 2019, a total of 75 Education students in their fourth year offered language support to 330 learners at the school twice a week for 11 weeks in the first semester. The lessons consisted of phonics and word-building activities and were concluded with storybook readings to develop the learners' vocabulary and expand their knowledge.

The Education students were divided into pairs and had to work together on the lesson plans, with emphasis on the reaction of learners during the lessons and discussions on how it should influence their teaching strategies.

“It was important for me to create learning opportunities where students work in contexts that are unfamiliar to them, so that they can become aware of how their own choices, opinions and world views influence their teaching.”



“These books give them a sense of agency. They now see that they can read and they can write. It also empowers learners and gives them self-confidence.”

“Feedback from teachers indicate that the children can now write descriptive sentences.”

**We need to acknowledge
who our learners are and
where they come from**

Barends' dream is for SU to produce teachers that can teach efficiently in different contexts (context-responsive teaching), while addressing the needs that exist in schools.

“It is hard work to be a teacher – you are challenged on all levels. You cannot be prejudiced and a ‘one size fits all’ approach does not benefit anybody. We need to acknowledge who our learners are and where they come from.”

According to Barends this project is a good example of how the different responsibilities of academics (research, teaching and learning, and social impact) can be implemented and how the community and university can benefit from these projects.



At the end of the 11 weeks each learner wrote his or her own story about a social issue they are confronted with in their own life. These stories and illustrations were then compiled into books for each grade and handed to each learner in the relevant grade.

**Changing the world
one initiative
at a time**

Innovative approach to battling tik abuse receives boost

The phenomenon of using photo storybooks (fotonovelas) to address health issues in South Africa has shown significant promise thanks to a grant Dr Burt Davis received from the Division for Social Impact. In 2019, Davis could embark on an empirical research project to further determine its effectiveness.

Davis, a Senior Lecturer at the Africa Centre for HIV/ Aids Management at Stellenbosch University, received his doctoral degree in 2017 by designing an Afrikaans photo storybook called *Spyt kom te laat* (*Regret comes too late*) which deals with the health risks of using tik (crystal meth).

Because he wanted to move away from a theoretical PhD and design a product that offered a direct benefit to the community, Davis decided to focus on the development of a photo storybook that could form part of awareness and prevention campaigns in schools and health clinics.

“In South Africa, many products that convey health messages are developed without being empirically and scientifically tested. This photo novel is one of few products that wasn’t only carefully thought out and planned, but also tested.”

Davis has since developed the photo storybook further by adding more information in a Q&A format to increase its efficiency and versatility.

He applied for the grant with the aim of expanding this innovative approach to battle tik use in the Witzenberg local municipality specifically, as well as affected communities in Malmesbury, Swellendam and Calvinia. To this end, the storybook was translated into English and isiXhosa.

“The expanded initiative combines an empirical research project with a social impact intervention. The approach entails testing the effectiveness of a health-related photo storybook to communicate dangers associated with tik

In South Africa, many products that convey health messages are developed without being empirically and scientifically tested

use, while also using it as an educational resource to disseminate prevention and health information about the drug.”

The empirical research component of the initiative entailed a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test the effects of the message while the social impact component included the presentation of general substance abuse awareness and information sessions to the participants of the RCT using the photo storybook.

Partners in this project include the Africa Centre for HIV/Aids Management, the Language Centre at SU, and representatives of the Department of Health and NGO sector.

“Feedback from the community led to my decision to expand the quantitative aspect of my research to include a qualitative element. We don’t only want to contribute to the body of knowledge on health communication methods related to tik/substance abuse, but also increase general awareness about and knowledge levels related to substance abuse and enable access to tik prevention information.”

Project owner: Dr Burt Davis
E-mail: burt@sun.ac.za

Kayamandi River Partnership wants to keep Stellenbosch rivers healthy

Rivers connect communities, and if the rivers are sick, the whole community suffers.

The level of pollution in Stellenbosch’s Krom and Plankenbrug rivers led to the formation of the Kayamandi River Partnership (KRP) – a collaboration between the Stellenbosch University Water Institute (SUWI), the Stellenbosch River Collaborative, the Department of Human Settlements, Water Affairs and Sanitation, Stellenbosch Municipality, the Plankenbrug business community and Kayamandi schools.

The Plankenbrug river in Enkanini, an informal settlement, is probably the most polluted river in Stellenbosch, with wastewater running directly into the river.

“It’s basically a sewer,” says Dr Leanne Seeliger, Project Leader at SUWI.

The Plankenbrug River meets up with the Krom River, which in turn flows into Stellenbosch’s well-known Eerste River.

“If the rivers are contaminated, it could contaminate fruit farms and vineyards. There is also the risk of water-borne disease, which could shut down tourism. If ‘Plankie’ (the Plankenbrug river) is sick, the whole town is sick.”

SUWI was called in as a facilitator to assist the municipality with community engagement in the informal settlement. The KRP received funding from the Division for Social Impact for its work.

In 2019, the KRP focused on the Krom River as the initial site for awareness surveys and river clean ups, as the Plankenbrug river is too polluted for learners to approach. It hosted three river clean ups and several workshops at four schools in Kayamandi. Sites were allocated to each school and learners monitoring the river uploaded their data to the MiniSass website. MiniSass is a stream assessment scoring system to determine river health.

The Partnership also hosted a parade through Enkanini and developed pamphlets that learners could distribute to their parents. The pamphlets included tips about dealing with night soil and other waste and encouraged residents to report broken toilets.

They launched a website to create awareness and want to give ‘Plankie’ a voice through a visual element like a signboard to give people information about the pollution level in the river. Any advertising revenue will be used to fund river clean-up actions and environmental education.

“The situation in Enkanini is not unique. It happens countrywide and across Africa. Africa is the fastest urbanising continent and existing cities and towns are not designed for the masses of people settling there.”

Previous attempts to address the pollution problems in the Krom and Plankenbrug rivers were hampered by sustainability and co-ordination issues: “The aim now is to develop a fund resourced by key stakeholders in water management in the area to ensure continued water monitoring and environmental education.”

Website: <http://www.kayariverpartners.org.za/new/>

Rivers connect communities, and if the rivers are sick, the whole community suffers

Living School Garden breaking new ground

Using as few resources as possible to produce good-quality, nutritious vegetables – this is the goal of the Living School Garden project run by Ms Thanja Allison, Social Impact Coordinator of the Department of Genetics.

The project, which is supported by the Division for Social Impact (DSI), started at the beginning of 2019 when Allison created vegetable gardens at the three campuses of Babin Pre-Primary School in Stellenbosch.

“My own children went to Babin and I see this as a way of paying it forward,” said Allison.

“At each campus, we took a piece of property that wasn’t utilised as playing space for the children and we turned it into a vegetable garden to grow nutritious vegetables to include in the school feeding programme. This means that every child receives at least one cooked, nutritious meal a day. The school provided a person at each campus to maintain the garden and the training of this person forms an integral part of the project.”

Vegetables that grow easily, like spinach, carrots, potatoes and butternut, were planted, as well as flowers to attract bees.

Anyone – even if they live somewhere without any soil or space – can have a garden

To supplement the vegetables grown on the school grounds, the project is supported by the Welgevallen Allotment Garden project, which also receives support from the DSI and is run by Dr Paul Hills of the Institute for Plant Biotechnology and Indren Govender from the Department of Maths.

“They plant the same vegetables to supplement the supply – we cannot produce enough on the school grounds,” added Allison, who is also studying gardening alternatives because of a lack of soil and sun at some of the campuses.



“We’re experimenting with straw-bale gardening as it is possible to create a garden in straw bale without having any soil. You treat a fresh straw bale with fertiliser and water it for 12 days until it becomes like an incubator. You then plant seedlings in holes in the straw. A straw bale can be used for three years before it disintegrates. This means anyone – even if they live somewhere without any soil or space – can have a garden.”

Allison is also experimenting with hydroponic gardening. She believes the knowledge gained by experimenting with different ways of gardening to produce nutritious vegetables for communities using as few resources as possible could be a huge asset in South Africa.

The project depends heavily on volunteers and international students from EARTH University in Costa Rica who became involved in the project in 2019.

“We started small, but we’re dreaming big,” said Allison. “The need for these kinds of projects is now.”



Entrepreneurship project gives young people new hope

In a country with a high unemployment rate, the Young Entrepreneurship Project (YEP) offers young people an alternative way of thinking about employment.

For the past two years the project, a joint initiative of Stellenbosch University (SU) and the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht in the Netherlands, presented an entrepreneurship workshop to high school learners from schools in the Stellenbosch region.

Working in teams, students from the two universities developed course material for the workshop. At the workshop, held during the July school holidays, start-up ideas and business plans are developed and presented to a panel of judges. The best ideas win start-up capital of R 4 000 per group to make their plans a reality.

In 2019, learners from Kayamandi, Makupula and Lückhoff high schools attended the workshop. The winning idea, called Siblam Bracelets, came from Lückhoff High School. The learners presented an idea to recycle plastic and other waste and turn it into bracelets, which can be used to store information of those wearing it, especially young children, to help track them if they were lost or became separated from their loved ones.

It aims to empower learners and give them the support and confidence they need

The project offers mentorship for up to six months after the workshop.

According to Mr Adolph Neethling, YEP Programme Coordinator and Lecturer in the Department of

Business Management at SU, some of the teachers at schools report a high degree of despondence and lack of motivation to study among learners.

“Many of the learners don’t see the point of matriculating because of the high unemployment rate in the country. This project exposes them to an alternative way of thinking – that they should perhaps create their own opportunities.”

“It aims to empower learners and give them the support and confidence they need to convert their ideas into practical products.”

Neethling is also passionate about the project’s second goal, which is to introduce university students to communities that they might not have been exposed to before. Participation is voluntary and students go on a township tour and speak to small business owners in these areas, among other things.

“We go to these communities to learn. We see people who make a living regardless of their circumstances. We might think that we don’t have resources, and then we see people who have even less but still manage to make something out of the little they have.”

The students’ participation in the project is very important.

“These schools are on our doorstep. If we can assist in a small way to stimulate learners to be more positive about the future, students who pass through SU have the unique opportunity to contribute to the upliftment of society.”

Project owner: Mr Adolph Neethling
E-pos: acn@sun.ac.za

Financial Literacy Project aims to inform and empower

The Stellenbosch University Law Clinic's Financial Literacy Project (FLP) seeks to empower local communities by sharing knowledge about financial matters and informing people about their rights as consumers.

This entails teaching farmworkers and high school learners basic financial literacy skills like how to prepare a budget, why a savings plan is important, and the difference between good and bad debt. The long-term goal is to strive towards sustainable social change and to provide a way for individuals to migrate out of poverty.

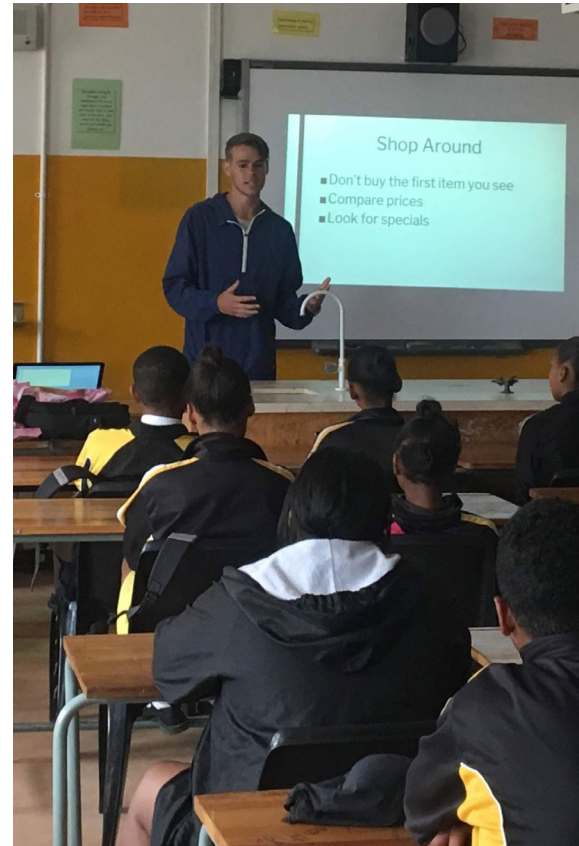
Through collaborative relationships fostered between the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the SU Language Centre, the offices of the National Credit Regulator, the Western Cape Consumer Protector, the Department of Social Development, and the Law Clinic, the project aims to educate, broaden access to justice, uplift and support local communities.

The Law Clinic also provides professional legal advice and representation in civil matters to members of the community who qualify for legal aid. According to the FLP's project manager, Mrs Susann Louw, the FLP was envisaged when legal professionals at the Law Clinic noticed that many of their walk-in clients experienced financial difficulties.

The FLP offers an opportunity to combine service learning and community engagement and serves both the student volunteers and the greater community. Students who study Law of Civil Procedure 371 and Financial Planning 378 serve as presenters at empowerment workshops.

Before they start, the prospective presenters attend three training sessions. The first is with the National Credit Regulator and the Office of the Western Cape Consumer Protector. This enables them to inform people about their rights as consumers and useful tools such as the National Credit Act.

The second is a session about presentation skills offered by the Language Centre.



"The students learn how to adapt their presentations to their audience, and how to convey information to people who might be older or younger than they are, or come from different backgrounds," explains Louw.

In their third session they share their planned presentation with Louw. The students and Louw then discuss possible examples that can be used to share the presenters' message and knowledge with their audience in a way that will make sense to the listener.

In 2019, the students presented workshops at 10 farms and four schools in the Stellenbosch area.

We aim to visit and support new communities each year and see opportunities for expansion into urban settings

"We aim to visit and support new communities each year and see opportunities for expansion into urban settings. Furthermore, we are placing strong emphasis on the development of training material that can be used to conduct the training, taking into account audiences' literacy levels and language preferences."

Project owner: Mrs Susann Louw
E-mail: maraiss@sun.ac.za



Tackling the issues of retirement for members of the DoD

Empowering members of the Department of Defence (DoD) financially is the core purpose of the social impact initiative 'Pre-retirement intervention within the Department of Defence (DoD)'.

Led by Lt.Col (Dr) Bernard van Nieuwenhuyzen, a senior lecturer in Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Military Science at the Military Academy in Saldanha, the project focuses specifically on the financial implications of early retirement from the South African Defence Force (SANDF) and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF).

"During conversations held in 2018, this was mentioned as a huge concern for top management. Members resign, take lump sums from the GEPF, and a few years later they have nothing left," explains Van Nieuwenhuyzen.

He has been interested in personal finance since his undergraduate years at SU.

In 2003, Van Nieuwenhuyzen developed a book for soldiers called *Randwif: The soldier's guide to personal financial management* which was published by SunMedia and made available mainly to members of the SANDF.

"In 2009, I completed my PhD entitled Financial literacy as core competency of South African military officers: A measurement instrument, and in 2011 we started a financial literacy module for all first-year students studying at the South African Military Academy."

"In 2018, I decided that the first book was outdated. I discussed the development with many people, and one of them was our unit chaplain who indicated that most of the issues that they have to deal with as chaplains were personal financial issues, for which they are not prepared."

His initiative was registered with the Division for Social Impact and developed to empower DoD members financially. Its main goal is to prepare employees of the DoD for retirement by involving various stakeholders to develop interventions and utilising quality education to ensure the achievement of the following objectives: prevent poverty, economic growth of individuals, sustainable communities, and the responsible use of resources.

The plan is to roll out this initiative across the DoD and then to expand it to the SAPS and Correctional Services.

Empowering members of the DoD is the core purpose of the social impact initiative

In 2019, two Financial Literacy Programme short courses were developed and registered at SU by Van Nieuwenhuyzen, with 40 people completing the courses. He also developed a personal finance workbook and a peer-reviewed research-output book – *Rands to Riches: A Guide to Personal Finance* (African SunMedia). Monthly articles will be published in the magazine *SA Soldier* in 2020.

"Every course and every interaction are learning opportunities. I gained a lot of insight on the real-life financial experiences of soldiers, chaplains, and civilians, and many of the inputs were used to develop the book and workbook."

Project owner: Lt.Col (Dr) Bernard van Nieuwenhuyzen
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Smart investments lead to huge electricity savings

A passion for the environment and a belief that quality education can address the injustices of South Africa's past led to the creation of a social impact project that uses technology and encourages behavioural change to help local schools reduce their electricity costs.

According to Prof Thinus Booysen of Stellenbosch University's Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, they are using their skills to try and save the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) some money, while also focusing on schools' carbon footprint.

With support from the Division for Social Impact and the WCED, the project is running energy-efficiency and behavioural interventions at 17 schools in the Stellenbosch region.

"Although there are large variations, the average school's electricity costs more than R500 per school per day, which results in a daily carbon footprint of 250kg. Just over half of a school's energy usage is due to lights since schools still tend to use fluorescent lights."

Although there are large variations, the average school's electricity costs more than R500 per school per day

Investing in good LED lights can lead to significant savings on schools' electricity bills. In 2019, the project invested R46 000 at Makupula High School in Kayamandi, Stellenbosch, to replace 237 of inefficient lights in classrooms. The savings were immediate, and the school saved R3 200 per month and reduced its carbon footprint by 21 400 kg/year.

"The replacement lights also substantially improved the light quality in the classrooms."

At Cloetesville High School in Stellenbosch, 282 lights were replaced at a cost of R64 000. The impact was even greater, with savings of more than R5 000 per month. "The investment will pay off in less than 13 months."

Booyesen emphasised the need to use good quality energy-efficient lights. At another school, where cheaper lights were used, the savings and load reduction were less and the light quality worse.

Booyesen has also performed a controlled behavioural experiment on electricity usage. Five schools took part. Existing municipal smart meter data was used to convert the complicated billing information into easy-to-understand reports. These reports were sent out as daily, weekly, and monthly summaries to three of the five schools, while the other two were used as control schools. Compared to the control schools, the three schools that received the report information reduced their usage and carbon footprint by between 11% and 14%, resulting in average monthly savings of R4 000 per month (at these schools' tariffs).

According to Booyesen, the entire experience has been rewarding.

"The principals and responsible teachers at the schools are extremely appreciative."

Future plans include setting up an energy campaign where participants can help schools convert to renewable sources.

"We are also working on making a Digital Twin for schools to help them simulate various interventions without having to invest or believe the claims of suppliers."

Project owner: Prof Thinus Booysen
E-mail: mjbooyesen@sun.ac.za



Creating rich resources for SA Sign Language

A social impact initiative in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences aims to address the lack of rich resources, such as poem and short stories, that could be used to enhance learning and teaching of South African Sign Language (SASL).

The project originated in the General Linguistics Department where the US Handlab, a Western Cape Education Department-funded curriculum material development unit, is situated. The US Handlab develops CAPS learning and teaching support material for the Home Language subject SASL from grades R to 12.

The objectives are to engage young adult storytellers in the Deaf community

"Vanessa (Reyneke) and her team at the US Handlab identified a need for recorded stories from more Deaf adults so that schoolchildren are exposed to a wider variety of signers and storytellers. Secondly, we have a Deaf lecturer in our department, Modiegi Njeyiyana, who teaches SASL as a second language to young hearing adults, but with very little teaching material," explained Dr Kate Huddleston, a lecturer in the department.

The objectives of the project are to engage young adult storytellers in the Deaf community of the Western Cape to assist in the creation of 12 stories in SASL that can be used in Sign Language Studies, and to create stories that are age-appropriate for young Deaf learners but, in

terms of vocabulary and grammatical complexity, simple enough to be understood and enjoyed by adult beginner SASL learners.

A pilot workshop was held in Worcester in 2019 and involved four Deaf storytellers, Njeyiyana and Reyneke, and SASL interpreter, Marsanne Neethling, from SU. The workshop was conducted in SASL and was aimed at producing the first set of curriculum material outlined in the proposal – stories suitable for Deaf Foundation Phase learners, of which some can be used in a university classroom with young, hearing adults.

"During the pilot workshop, Neethling, Njeyiyana and Reyneke "visually listened" to each of the participants' stories and assisted with improving the stories. Special attention was paid to visual imagery and techniques pertaining to SASL storytelling," said Huddleston.

"We will now create 12 stories in SASL by assisting the Deaf storytellers to increase the creativity of their stories, and to polish and structurally simplify the stories, after which we will record said stories at a second workshop."

"In terms of the impact of the project, the relationship between Stellenbosch University and the Deaf community of the Western Cape has already improved after the initial pilot workshop, and we anticipate that this will continue. We have also gone some way to granting opportunities for Deaf storytellers to apply their new skills to create outputs independently, and for their own purposes after the workshop."

Project owner: Dr Kate Huddleston (katevg@sun.ac.za)

Creating TB awareness through hip hop and rap

TB researchers at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences embarked on a social initiative project to increase awareness about TB in communities by using rap and hip hop.

Dr Taime Sylvester, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow, and Ms Dannielle Moore, Communication and Marketing Officer at the Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics (MBHG), are both very passionate about science communication – especially in the field of health research where their work has a direct impact on the well-being of society.

Inspired by the concept of the Hip Hop U programme, which creates an engagement space for young people, health experts and popular music artists to collaborate on health-related challenges affecting their lives, Sylvester and Moore met with Mr Robert Inglis, Director of Jive Media, giving birth to the #MBHGHipHop TB intervention.

This four-day intervention, which was aimed at raising TB awareness and inspiring the youth to follow careers in science, involved researchers and staff from MBHG and learners from Cedar High School of the Arts in Mitchells Plain.

On the first day, researchers taught learners in groups of 10 about specific aspects relating to TB, such as infection signs and symptoms, prevention, infection transmission or spread, diagnosis and treatment, as well as myths surrounding the disease. Each group was assigned a topic related to what they had learnt and were tasked with creating a chorus for a song that would deliver a key message centered around the topic.

On day two, Mr Goodman Makanda, a #TBchampion and disease advocate from TB Proof, shared his TB journey with the learners. They then engaged in hands-on activities to reflect on what they had learnt and discussed amongst each other and with the researchers to deepen their understanding of the various topics.

On days three and four the learners recorded their lyrics and developed choreography and short skits for the grand finale performance, which was attended by

members of their school and community. By the end of the programme, the learners had conceptualised, produced and performed five original rap and hip hop songs which conveyed key messages about TB that they felt were important for the community to know.



A short video was produced to showcase the level of engagement, project outputs and initial impact made through the initiative. A report reviewing the initial impact of the initiative on the knowledge and perception of the learners and researchers has also been compiled. Future plans include a follow-up visit to the school to assess any long-term impact that may have resulted from this engagement, which will enable an in-depth evaluation of the engagement methods used.

“Witnessing the joy and passion that resulted from this project really helped me realise why it is as important for scientists to engage with the public, as it is for the public to know about research,” said Moore.

The funders of this event included the Stellenbosch University Faculty of Medicine and Health Science Social Impact Fund and the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Tuberculosis Research.

Original article written by Susan Erasmus.
Project owners: Dr Taime Sylvester (tashnicao@sun.ac.za) and Ms Dannielle Moore (dannielle@sun.ac.za)
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Research showcases stories of church congregations reimagining queer belonging

The Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) is an interdisciplinary research unit based within the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University (SU). It takes a critical lens to issues of religion and violence and uses feminist methodologies to develop socially transformative theory from the ground up.

In 2018, Dr Selina Palm at the URDR carried out a research study to better understand how positive steps towards LGBTIQ+ inclusion can be taken by individual churches within traditional denominations. International ethical clearance was received from the SU Research Ethics Committee: Humanities. Five churches from diverse denominations and locations in Cape Town participated.

The empirical study included three partners. It was carried out by the Unit for Religion and Development Research with Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM) partnering with the Unit in the selection of churches and the provision of counselling support for interview participants. It received funding from The Other Foundation, an African trust focused on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The qualitative methodology offered a safer space for queer people's voices and documented practical alternatives to the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in faith spaces by showcasing alternative approaches being lived out in local congregations.

The research had two phases. Data collection and thematic analysis with a focus on semi-structured interviews took place through 2018. Funds were secured from the Social Impact committee in 2019 to enable a report to be designed and published in the same year. This was circulated at an Africa wide LGBTIQ+ conference in July 2019.

The findings of the research report entitled *From Exclusion to Embrace: Reimagining LGBTIQ belonging in local church congregations* were showcased in The Conversation, which reached thousands around the world. Palm delivered an interview on Cape Talk and a series of dialogue sermons between her and a queer study participant in local churches. Congregants and ministers also shared stories of their own journeys towards embracement:

“We get caught up in doctrines, but we don't want to care about the people that we can see... we stick to these doctrines that kill and can do violence to people... So every time we exclude someone from the community of humankind we are spitting in the face of God (but we are doing it) in the name of God, the name of Jesus.” (Female faith leader interviewed)

The study explored a number of core themes: church ethos, leadership, theology, visibility, advocacy, challenges and opportunities, and identified 10 promising practices, which include:

- focusing on the talents of LGBTIQ+ people and positive contributions they make to churches,
- developing positive theologies that celebrate diversity and inclusion, in line with Jesus's teachings,
- using a social justice lens that doesn't see LGBTIQ+ issues in isolation,
- identifying courageous church leaders who can open up safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people, and
- avoiding “double talk” where LGBTIQ+ orientation is “accepted” but is not allowed to be practised.

A webinar and booklet containing stories from the interviews for congregations to work through in small groups is planned for 2020. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Dr Selina Palm on spalm@sun.ac.za.





Reciprocity at the heart of the

Genadendal Honeybush Knowledge Partnership

Advancing knowledge in service of society. This sentiment not only forms part of Stellenbosch University’s (SU) Vision 2040 but informs everything Ms Rhoda Malgas, a Lecturer in the Conservation Ecology and Entomology Department, embarks on in her teaching, research and social impact initiatives.

Malgas was one of the presenters at the 2019 Social Impact Symposium which focused on “Social Impact through learning and teaching and research: Enhancing ethical partnerships”. During her presentation, she discussed the value of participatory research and the knowledge available in land-user communities by referring to the Genadendal Honeybush Knowledge Partnership, created in 2012.

Under the supervision of Malgas, 11 postgraduate students have engaged with local residents about their knowledge and use of honeybush tea. Some of these residents have tried their hand at honeybush farming, harvesting these plants in the wild, while others aspire to growing honeybush as a cash crop.

Honeybush (*Cyclopia* spp.) is an endemic fynbos shrub named after the yellow, honey-scented flowers that cover the honeybush plants during spring. Honeybush forms part of the unique fynbos biome of South Africa and is naturally distributed across the Western and Eastern Cape provinces.

Several fourth-year projects, two Master’s theses and Malgas’ own PhD thesis, titled *Operationalising the social ecological systems framework for small-scale rooibos and honeybush sectors in South Africa*, originated from the research done in Genadendal and elsewhere.

From the start of the engagement the focus was on the co-creation of knowledge from farmer-led research. Participatory and inclusive research methodologies, said Malgas, lead to increased local ownership of findings. She also emphasised the need for reciprocity, knowledge dissemination and feedback to the communities where the research is done.

“Our funding and research questions are project-based, but our relationships with the people of Genadendal remain. I’ve been quite intentional in keeping student feet on the ground and building long-term relationships. Research projects shouldn’t be touch-and-go.”

In the case of the Genadendal Honeybush Knowledge Partnership, local farmers’ networks improved, and a sense of agency developed.

“This kind of engagement offers research participants a window on the world of science and the opportunity to think about an existing problem in a new way.”

Malgas makes no distinction between academic and social impact endeavours, and the dissemination of information to the community was built into the research methodology of her PhD. The project has also been registered with the Division for Social Impact.

“Research with a social impact imperative offers Stellenbosch University an opportunity to offer a service, give back to the community and contribute to nation-building and restitution. I have every confidence in this way of teaching.”

Project owner: Ms Rhoda Malgas (rmalgas@sun.ac.za)

The Division for Social Impact (DSI) would not be able to fulfil its goal to “advance knowledge in service of society” at Stellenbosch University without the support of and collaborations with a number of stakeholders. These stakeholders include the offices of the Vice Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, and Social Impact and Transformation; academics and professional, administrative and support staff; Matie Community Service; students; non-governmental organisations; government departments; community leaders; and various individuals within the communities we work with. While we are able to only highlight a few collaborations in this publication, we do hope the ones we are sharing with you demonstrate how, by working together, we can effect positive, long lasting and sustainable change for all in this country.