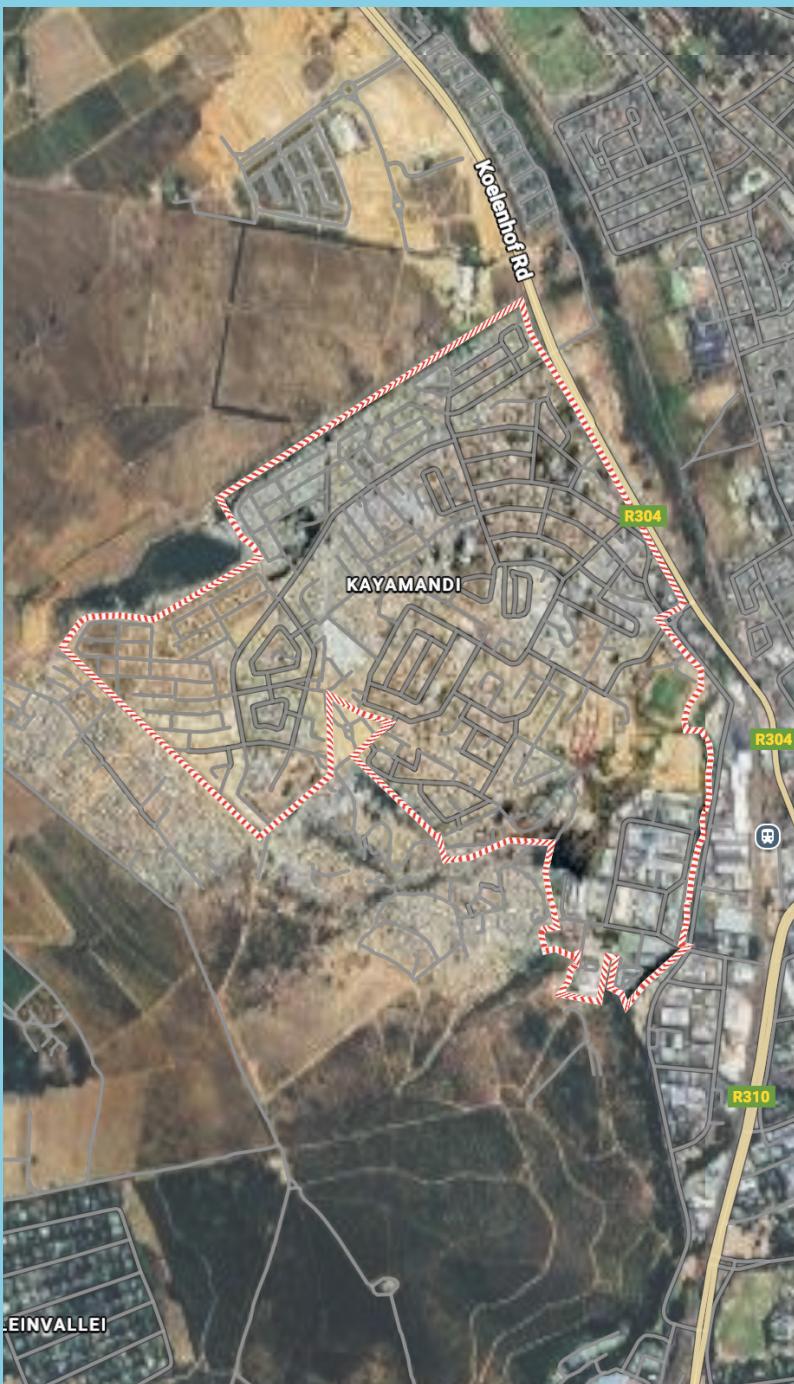
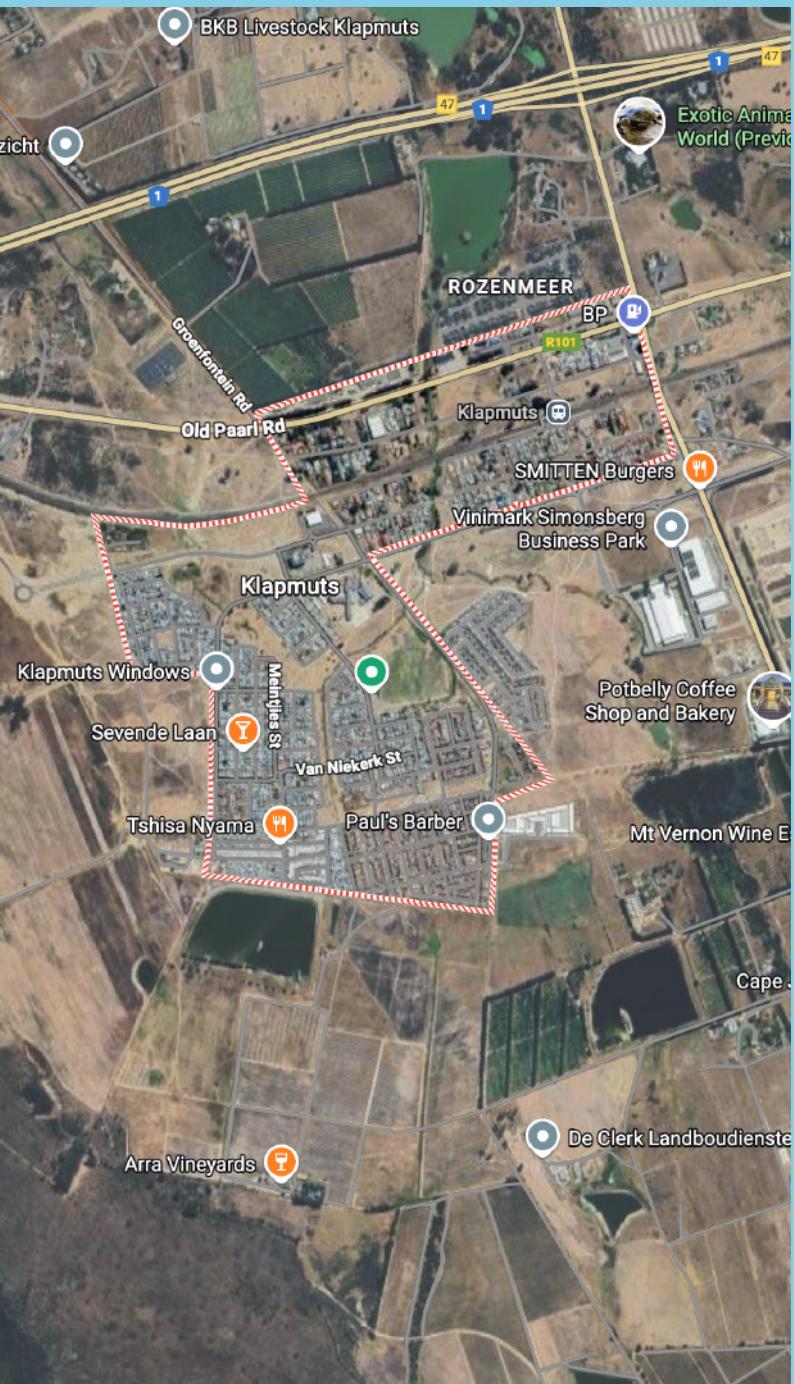


Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Klapmuts & Kayamandi Townships: Stellenbosch Municipality, South Africa

Charles Kaye-Essien, Fred Bidandi



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This report presents the findings from the research project “Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Klapmuts & Kayamandi Townships: Stellenbosch Municipality, South Africa”. Sponsored by the Swedish International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD) and executed by the Association Research and Analysis ZMAI. It is implemented in the period October 2023 – June 2024.

Frontpage Photo: Kayamandi Township on the right; Klapmuts township on the left.

Photo credit: Google Maps

All subsequent photos in this report are credited to Fred Bidandi and Salome Mankaah Fuh

ISBN: 978-91-86725-74-7

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List of Abbreviations

CBO	Community based organisation
CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
CORC	Community Organisation Resource Centre
Covid-19	Coronavirus disease
CPF	Community policing forum
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FDG	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender based violence
ICLD	International Centre for Local Democracy
ID	Identification document
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
MTRREF	Medium term revenue and expenditure Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PSP	Provincial Strategic Plan
RA	Research assistant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	Slum Dwellers International
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review

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Acknowledgements

The preparation of this Stellenbosch Municipality Voluntary Local Review has been made successful thanks to a generous grant and technical support from the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD). We extend our sincerest gratitude to the Stellenbosch Municipality, the Kayamandi and Klapmuts Townships and the respective Councillors for their administrative and research support throughout the VLR exercise. Special thanks go to Keezhia Pasquallie and Johru Robyn of the Informal Settlements Department of the Stellenbosch Municipality as well as Salome Mankaah Fuh, for their sustained commitment towards the realization of this report. Finally, we'd like to thank all Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that supported this study with their rich insights.

Preface (ICLD)



By **Johan Lilja, Secretary General, Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy**

The Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) has a strong mission: to reduce poverty by strengthening local democracy. We believe that real change begins at the local level – where decisions touch people's everyday lives. To achieve this, we foster decentralized cooperation through our Municipal Partnerships Programme, empower leaders through capacity-building and training, and invest in cutting-edge research and networks that shape democratic policy and practice.

This Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is part of a dynamic series of impact-driven reviews commissioned by ICLD to accelerate local development through inclusive, democratic participation. It reflects our commitment to bridging research and practice – ensuring decisions are grounded in evidence and informed by global knowledge, while academia advances debates rooted in local realities. This particular VLR has been reviewed and enriched by global actors in SDG localization, including UN-Habitat, UNDESA, and leading international scholars. We are deeply grateful for their insights and the value they bring to the evolving VLR landscape.

True to its name, this VLR focuses on the local – two informal settlements within a thriving municipality. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the leadership and staff of Stellenbosch Municipality for their unwavering dedication to dismantling historical and present-day inequalities and for their commitment to leaving no one behind. This review, and the actions it inspires, are a testament to that resolve.

The recommendations emphasize participation – governing hand-in-hand with the communities most affected by policy decisions. Strengthening partnerships with civil society, engaging grassroots actors, and ensuring clear, accessible communication can amplify the progress already underway in Stellenbosch. This report reinforces our belief that local democracy – built on participation, equity, transparency, and accountability – is a powerful force for change. Together, we can make the world better, locally and globally.

Visby, Sweden

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Johan Lilja".

Johan Lilja,
Secretary General, ICLD

November 2025

Preface (Stellenbosch Municipality)



The success of any community is measured by the quality of its collaboration. At Stellenbosch Municipality, our mission has always been clear: to ensure public participation is not merely a box to check, but the vibrant, beating heart of our governance. We deeply value and actively seek the constructive inputs from all strata of the Stellenbosch community.

Over the years, we have relentlessly explored and broadened the platforms through which our community can communicate with us. Yet, to truly align our local efforts with the global blueprint for a sustainable future, a new, more rigorous mechanism was required.

This document marks that significant evolution. We found it prudent to develop and implement this Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process, as prescribed by the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is not just a reporting requirement; it is a commitment to a higher standard.

Crucially, the VLR is designed to add a powerful new layer of accountability. It allows us to obtain genuine, grassroots inputs from representatives from the Klapmuts and Kayamandi communities, through an independent and objective source. Our partnership with the International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) ensures this crucial perspective, validating our progress and highlighting the areas where our focus must sharpen.

This document is the result of that commitment—a collective promise to build a more sustainable, participatory, and equitable Stellenbosch for everyone.

Stellenbosch, South Africa

GEREALDINE METTLER
MUNICIPAL MANAGER STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY

About the authors



Charles Kaye-Essien is an Associate Professor of Public Policy & Administration at the McGeorge Law School - University of the Pacific, California. He specializes in institutional effectiveness (local government level) as well as the co-governance of resilience (climate, infrastructure, food, water and energy) and sustainability. This includes examining the organizational and institutional capacity challenges associated with local food, energy and water resilience; citizen engagement in the construction of resilience; the roles that state and non-state actors collaboratively play in enhancing sustainability at the local level and equity considerations in co-governance arrangements. His research has been published in a variety of international journals.



Fred Bidandi is currently a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Children, Family and Society, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. His research focuses on public policy analysis, social policy, urban studies, higher education, and migration—particularly refugee policy, advocacy, and skills development. He also engages in research on social cohesion, water and sanitation, housing, citizen participation and geopolitics. With a strong interdisciplinary orientation, he contributes to the development of inclusive and responsive policy frameworks. His work has been published in several internationally peer-reviewed journals, and he actively serves as a peer reviewer for leading international publications.

Executive Summary

This report responds to the growing need for voluntary local reviews (VLRs) of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) progress at the municipal level. It presents the findings of a community-based assessment conducted in the informal townships of Klapmuts and Kayamandi, both located within the Stellenbosch Municipality of the Western Cape Province, South Africa.

In line with South Africa's Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), municipalities are required to outline their development priorities and strategies through an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and to ensure extensive consultation with local communities and stakeholders. The Stellenbosch Municipality has chosen to align its local SDG priorities with its IDP and related reporting instruments—such as annual reports, departmental reviews, and oversight documents.

Consequently, there are no standalone monitoring or evaluation structures dedicated exclusively to tracking progress on specific SDG goals.

To operationalize the participatory principles of the SDGs, this VLR adopted a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach. Data collection relied on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), interviews and Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCM) exercises to facilitate citizen engagement and co-production of knowledge on SDG localization. A total of 39 participants took part in the focus groups and interviews, including residents of Klapmuts (a predominantly Coloured settlement), Kayamandi (a predominantly Black settlement), and representatives from two local non-governmental organizations. While these participants provided valuable insights, their views do not represent the general opinions of all residents of Stellenbosch Municipality. Rather, the findings offer a snapshot of local perceptions and experiences regarding SDG progress and community participation.

The focus of the review was on the municipality's five priority SDGs—Goals 5, 6, 7, 11, and 17—as identified in its development plans. The findings indicate

that Stellenbosch Municipality has made notable progress in the two communities in certain SDG areas, particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), through initiatives to curb gender-based violence and strengthen collaborations with external partners. However, significant structural challenges persist, including rapid population growth, inadequate housing, and limited access to water and sanitation services, especially within informal settlements. A key insight from the discussions is the need for the municipality to shift from consultative engagement toward genuine co-creation of knowledge and decision-making. While residents are engaged through community forums, online meetings, social media platforms, and ward councilors, these channels largely facilitate one-way communication rather than collaborative problem-solving. As a result, most participants reported limited awareness of the SDGs and the municipality's specific priorities.

To advance meaningful participation and inclusive development, stakeholder sensitization and capacity-building should become central to local SDG implementation. Building a shared understanding of the SDGs among community members can strengthen co-decision-making, foster trust, and enhance collective ownership of local sustainability initiatives.

Most importantly, the municipality needs to shift its engagement strategy from public consultations to knowledge co-creation by deepening the involvement of residents in informal townships. Community members are involved in local development processes via community forums, zoom meetings, social media and direct contact with ward councilors. However, these modes of engagement do not provide opportunities for citizens to share their local knowledge. The result is that most participants of the study remain unaware of the meaning of the SDGs and the municipality's SDG priorities. Stakeholder dialogue could be an important entry point in the process for meaningful inclusion, co-decision-making, and shared ownership in local processes.

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, adopted on September 25, 2015, represent a global commitment to ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all. This ambitious agenda outlines 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at addressing significant global challenges such as poverty, hunger, health, education, and climate change.

While the agenda emphasizes national implementation, it equally highlights the significance of local contexts in goal-setting, target determination, implementation and progress measurement. As the level of government closest to citizens, municipalities have a vital role to play in achieving SDG outcomes. Advancing SDG localization, by “implementing, and monitoring strategies at the local level,”¹ are essential for translating the global goals into practical actions that address local priorities such as housing, basic services, and employment.

This process is most effective when top-down policy frameworks that provide strategic direction and resources are combined with bottom-up engagement strategies and coordination across all levels of governance.²

For Stellenbosch Municipality, the VLR process offers a dual benefit: technical and democratic. On the technical side, it allows the municipality to evaluate local progress toward the SDGs in the two areas, highlights challenges and innovations. On the democratic side, it offers opportunity to advance participatory governance as a foundation for sustainable development. By systematically aligning the municipality’s Integrated Development Plan (IDP) with the SDG framework, Stellenbosch can strengthen accountability, foster public trust, and mobilize partnerships with civil society, academia, and the private sector.

Historical Context

South Africa’s development trajectory is deeply shaped by its history of apartheid-era spatial and socioeconomic segregation.³ Under apartheid, cities and towns were designed to separate racial groups and control access to land, employment, and public services. Black communities were confined to peripheral townships, often without adequate housing, infrastructure, or basic amenities. The spatial legacies of this period remain visible today in unequal access to services, land, and economic opportunities.

Following the democratic transition in 1994, South Africa adopted a rights-based and participatory approach to development aimed at addressing these entrenched inequalities.⁴ Policies such as the *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP) and *Breaking New Ground* (BNG) housing initiatives sought to redress spatial injustices, while the *Integrated Development Planning* (IDP) framework institutionalized collaborative local governance. The IDP process emphasizes alignment between community priorities, municipal budgets, and national development objectives – laying an early foundation for what would later be recognized globally as *SDG localization*. Policies and their implementation at all levels emphasize partnerships, collaboration among various stakeholders, including government, civil society, citizens, and international organizations, leveraging of diverse strengths and effective information sharing.⁵

Despite these efforts, disparities in access to land, services, and economic opportunities persist, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities. Poverty, unemployment, and service delivery backlogs are concentrated in peri-urban and township areas, where access to quality housing, education, and health services remains limited. These enduring gaps and a fast

1 Jonga, M. (2022). The Roles of Local and Regional Governments in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *International Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(1), 130-132. p. 130

2 Bilsky, E., Moreno, A. C., & Fernández Tortosa, A. (2021). Local governments and SDG localisation: Reshaping multilevel governance from the bottom up. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 22(4), 713-724.

3 Bell, J. F. (2025). Uneven urban-industrial development in apartheid South Africa: a geographical political economy perspective. *African Geographical Review*, 1-22.

4 Wafer, A. (2012, June). Discourses of infrastructure and citizenship in post-apartheid Soweto. In *Urban forum* (Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 233-243).

Nkhabu, M. F. (2021). *The role of local government in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals: A case of Tshwane Municipality* (Master’s thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa).

5 Mamokhere, J., & Meyer, D. F. (2023). The Integrated Development Planning Process’s Impact as a Tool for Increasing Community Participation in South Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 13(2).

urbanization rate (68 percent)⁶ make South Africa an important case for examining how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be localized to promote equity, resilience, and inclusion at the municipal level.

The Stellenbosch Municipality

Stellenbosch Municipality, located in the Western Cape Province about 50 km east of Cape Town, is part of the Cape Winelands District. It is the second oldest town established (1679) by the Dutch colonists after Franschhoek. Stellenbosch is classified as a Category B municipality under the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998). It covers an area of about 831 square kilometres, encompassing urban, peri-urban, and rural settlements. According to the 2022 Socio-Economic Profile, Stellenbosch has an estimated population of approximately 199,325 residents, with a growth rate of around 2% per annum.⁷ It has 50,792 households and 37,826 formal main dwellings.⁸ The municipality is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, wine production, agriculture, tourism and tertiary education institutions.

While these sectors contribute significantly to local GDP, they also reinforce stark inequalities between high-income and low-income residents. The municipality's 2021 Gini coefficient of 0.63 and poverty head-count ratio of 58.9 percent are among the highest in the province. Similarly, its unemployment rate, estimated at 16.1 per cent in 2021, is the second highest in the Cape Winelands District (15.4 per cent) rate, although it is significantly below the provincial figure of 25.1 per cent. These economic conditions, coupled with rural-to-urban migration and unaffordability of formal housing have contributed to the growth of informal settlements at the periphery, challenging the municipality's capacity to provide equitable access to basic services – core areas of the SDG agenda.

Kayamandi and Klapmuts: Community Profiles

Kayamandi, meaning “pleasant home” in isiXhosa, is a township located on the western edge of Stellenbosch off route R304. The township was originally established in 1941 as a labour compound to accommodate black migrant workers who worked on local farms and in factories.⁹ According to the non-profit organization, Love to Give, Kayamandi accommodates approximately 50,000 residents, with an estimated unemployment rate of around 40 percent.¹⁰ The settlement is characterized by a mix of formal and informal dwellings, high population density, and limited access to affordable housing and public space. Despite these structural challenges, Kayamandi has a strong civic network, with numerous community-based organizations, youth groups, and NGOs active in education, arts, and urban upgrading.

Klapmuts is a small settlement located north of Stellenbosch just off the R45 road between Kraaifontein and Paarl and adjacent to the N1 highway. Klapmuts¹¹ population, estimated at over 7700 residents, is linguistically diverse, with Afrikaans as the dominant language. Klapmuts faces challenges related to unemployment, inadequate transport, and underdeveloped social infrastructure. However, recent government and donor-funded projects in housing, early childhood development, and public facilities have begun to improve living conditions.

Both townships (see illustration in Figure 1) illustrate the municipality's dual character: globally competitive economic sectors juxtaposed with persistent local poverty and service deficits. They therefore provide critical lenses for understanding the opportunities and constraints of localizing the SDGs in contexts marked by historical inequality and contemporary urban growth pressures.

6 Stat SA (2023). Media Release: Census 2022 Population Count Results 10 October 2023. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=16716>

7 Department of Cooperative Governance and Trade Affairs (2023). #KnowYourMunicipality: The 2022 Socio-Economic Profile. Stellenbosch Municipality. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Stellenbosch-Municipality-SEP-LG-2022.pdf

8 Stellenbosch Municipality (2022). #KnowYourMunicipality: The 2022 Socio-Economic Profile. Accessed on 11/10/2025 from https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Stellenbosch-Municipality-SEP-LG-2022.pdf

9 Swilling, M., & Sebitosi, B. (2012). Sustainable Stellenbosch, opening dialogues, Stellenbosch, Sun press.

10 Love to Give (undated). Impact. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from <https://lovetogive.org.za/the-impact/>

11 Stellenbosch Municipality (2007). Klapmuts Spatial Development Framework. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from <https://www.stellenboschheritage.co.za/wp-content/uploads/KSDF-2010.pdf>

Purpose of the Report

This VLR plays a crucial role in assessing progress on the SDGs in the two townships. It identifies specific municipal priorities and examines the performance of these priorities through the lens of residents' lived experiences within the two townships. By evaluating local performance, the VLR helps determine where resources, expertise, and partnerships are needed to effectively improve outcomes. It also promotes active engagement with citizens and civil society organizations and most importantly helps Stellenbosch identify shortfalls and align their IDP goals with the SDGs.

Through structured engagements between Stellenbosch Municipal Officials, civil society organizations and the local community members, this report:

1. tracks the current SDG priorities being monitored and the data collected so far.

2. examines the extent to which Stellenbosch Municipality has engaged different sections of local residents in the two study sites in their SDG implementation and monitoring efforts.
3. Understand how residents of the two study sites and other social actors perceive their role in the implementation of the SDGs.

Scope

South Africa conducted its first voluntary national review (VNR) in 2019¹² and has since 2024 set up a consultative group to undertake a second national review.¹³ Across the continent, South African municipalities are leaders in local SDG reporting, having published 9 VLRs since 2024, including two from the city of Cape Town.

While the 2019 VNR and subsequent local reviews highlight progress in many SDG subgoals, they equally

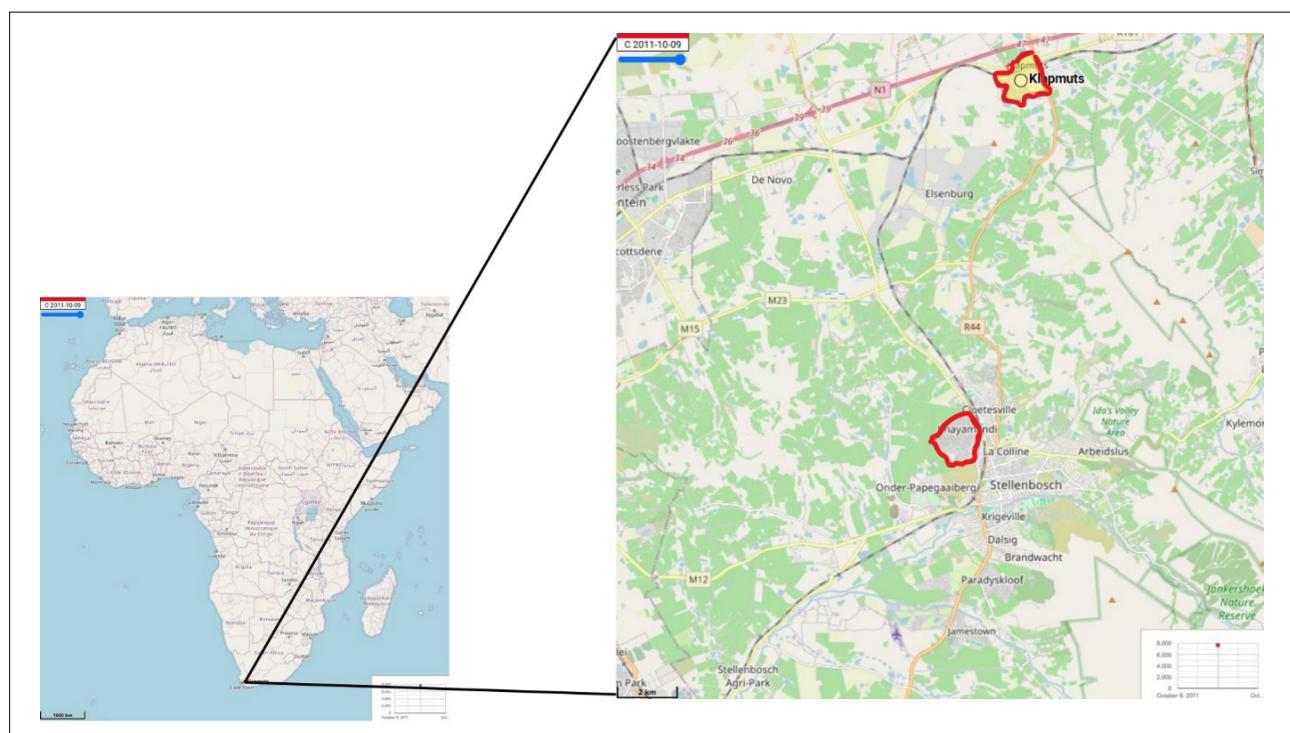


Figure 1. Location of Study Sites

Source: City Population (https://www.citypopulation.de/en/southafrica/westerncape/_/167001001_klapmuts/)

12 Republic of South Africa (2019). South Africa's Voluntary National Review. Accessed on 6/11/2025 from:

13 African Monitor (2024). The South African Working CSO Group on SDGs (SAWG) Consultative Workshop on CSO Planned Activities for the South Africa National Voluntary Review (VNR) 2024 Workshop Report. Accessed on 6/11/2025 from: <https://www.africanmonitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/VNR-Consultative-Workshop-Report.pdf>

stress the need to increase data collection efforts and promote citizen and private sector involvement. In line with this call, this study focuses on understanding how Stellenbosch municipality's SDG priorities are influencing the lived experiences of residents in Kayamandi and Klapmuts. Out of the 17 goals, the municipality has prioritized five for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This VLR therefore covers the five (5) SDG priority areas as follows:

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Goal 5: address systemic inequalities, promoting women's rights, and empowering women in all spheres of life.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation, ensuring access to water and sanitation for all.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Goal 7: affordable and clean energy, ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Structure of Report

The report is structured as follows: Section one defines the context of the report by exploring the justification for the study, the historical contexts of the study areas and the scope of the study. Section two explains the study methodology, highlighting its qualitative nature, process design, participants and the study limitations. Section three explores the policy and regulatory landscape for SDG implementation and community engagement in South Africa and Stellenbosch Municipality. Section four discusses the state of SDG Implementation in Stellenbosch based on current municipal data and through the eyes of study participants. Based on the findings section five provides recommendations for municipal action.

Methodology

The VLR was conducted primarily using qualitative research approaches. Specific methods include document analyses, semi-structured interviews with municipal leaders and civil society leaders as well as focus group discussions with local residents of the two study sites. The study commenced after ethical approval had been obtained from the Department of Informal Settlements Directorate of the Stellenbosch municipality and informed consent had been sought from all participants.

Details of the study process and how they address each research question are explained in the following steps:

Step 1 (document analysis) focused on understanding the current development priorities of Stellenbosch and how they relate to South Africa's SDG priorities. It involved a desk review of national, provincial and municipal policy documents to identify policy alignment between Stellenbosch's local policies and national SDG policies. Relevant sources included South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, the Western Cape Provincial Strategic Plan 2019-2024 and the Stellenbosch 5-Generation Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2022-2027.¹⁴

¹⁴ Stellenbosch Municipality (2019). Stellenbosch Municipality Annual Report 2017/2018 Financial Year, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch Municipality. Stellenbosch Municipality. (2022). 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2022–2027. Accessed on 11/10/2025 from <https://stellenbosch.gov.za/do-load/5th-generation-integrated-development-plan-2022-2027-v12>

Step 2 (interviews with municipal leaders) focused on tracking current municipal SDG priorities and data collected so far. It also examined the extent to which Stellenbosch has engaged different sections of local residents in their SDG implementation and monitoring efforts. This step involved semi-structured interviews with municipal leadership triangulated with document analyses. We asked municipal respondents to indicate their SDG priorities and triangulated this information with existing reports to verify what progress has been made, what data is available and what gaps in data exist.

Interview questions (see annex 3) for municipal leaders also examined citizen involvement in the SDG implementation. This information was triangulated with feedback from participants in the focus group discussions (FGDs) (explained below)

Step 3 (FGDs with citizens) of the methodology focused on using participatory approaches to coproduce knowledge together with local citizens. It examined how study participants perceive their level of engagement in the monitoring and evaluation of SDGs as well as how local citizens and other social actors perceive their role in the implementation of the SDGs.



Image 1: FGDs with Participants from Kayamandi



Image 2: FGDs with the Klapmuts Community

FGDs were held at community centres. These locations and study participants were identified through the help of local councillors and officials from the Stellenbosch municipality. Participant identification strategies were informed by ward structures stipulated by the Municipal Structures Act (1998) provisions for public participation. Participants included community representatives, the elderly, and the youth.

Thirty participants were invited from each study location to participate in the focus group discussions. However, only 37 individuals (19 from Kayamandi and 18 from Klapmuts) representing a little over 62 percent participated in the study. Due to this small sample size, generalizations should be made with caution as views from the 37 study participants do not necessarily reflect the general perceptions in the municipality. Whilst the composition of participants in Kayamandi was a 70:30 female to male split, Klapmuts was represented by 100 percent females (see figures 2-7 and Table 1 for the socio-demographic breakdown of study participants).

To ensure effective discussions and inputs, participants were split into groups of five or six. The FGDs involved storytelling about personal experiences and collective experiences. Participants shared their stories about how the municipality has engaged them in efforts to achieve the five key

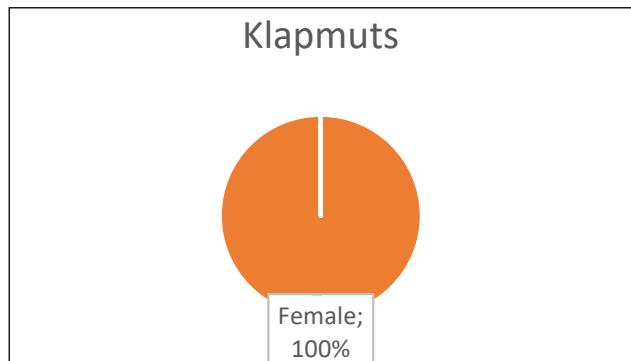


Figure 2. Sex Composition of Klapmuts Participants

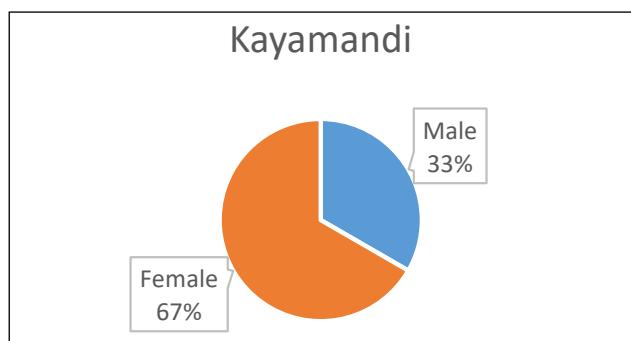


Figure 3. Sex Composition of Kayamandi Participants

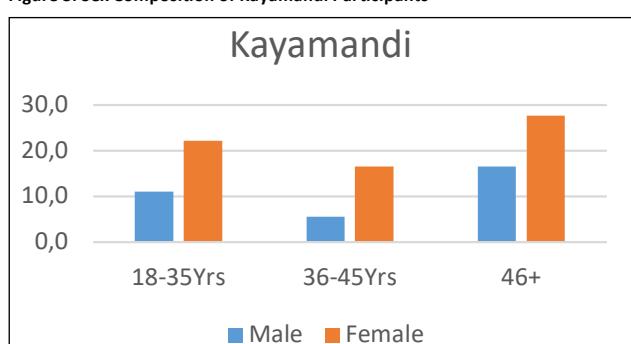


Figure 4. Composition of Kayamandi Participants by Age

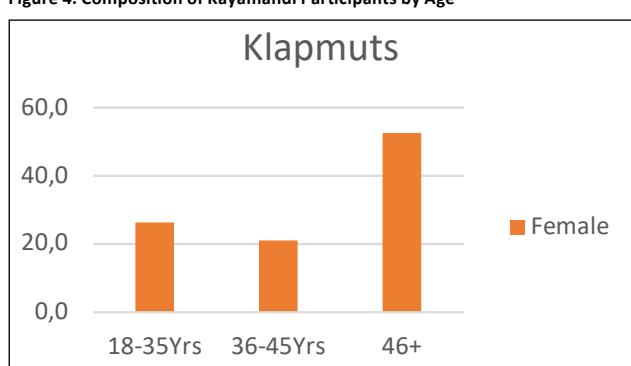


Figure 5. Composition of Klapmuts Participants by Age

to SDG outcomes in their communities in a Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCM) exercise. The FCM allowed study participants to connect their understanding of SDGs with evidence of implementation and perceived their benefits.

The final step of this study involved triangulating evidence gathered so far with civil society expert interviews. Participants from two civil society organizations (Directors of Isandla Institute and the Community Organisation Resource Centre) were interviewed via telephone.

Isandla

The Isandla Institute is recognized as a key actor in the local governance sector and an important analytical voice on urban development in South Africa. It serves as a convener of dialogue spaces on issues of urban citizenship and a producer of high-quality research, while also positioning itself as a thought leader in fields such as informal settlement upgrading, urban governance, and local-level planning systems.¹⁵ Over the years, the Institute has significantly contributed to shaping progressive urban policy and practice, either directly influencing the uptake of innovative ideas by government or, in collaboration with partners, contributing to a broader shift in discourse towards inclusive and equitable solutions. Its work is strongly grounded in addressing urban poverty, inequality, and vulnerability, while fostering network-building and partnership-driven approaches to development.¹⁶

The Isandla Institute has collaborated with the municipality for over five years, focusing particularly on the informal backyard housing sector. This partnership combines research, community engagement, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and advocacy efforts aimed at achieving recognition and institutional support for backyard housing. The initiative highlights the role of backyard housing in alleviating the affordable housing crisis, contributing to household livelihoods, and supporting township economic development. Importantly, this collaboration has also

¹⁵ Isandla Institute (2019). *Urban Land Governance: A Review of Policy and Practice in South Africa*. Cape Town: Isandla Institute.

¹⁶ Cirolia, L.R. (2014). Community upgrading finance: A critical examination of the Community Upgrading Finance Facility (CUFF) in South Africa. *Environment and Urbanization*, 26(1):307–325.

identified policy and programmatic interventions that municipalities can adopt to support the sector in more sustainable and inclusive ways.¹⁷

CORC

The Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC), by contrast, is a South African non-governmental organization (NGO) that works directly with community-based organizations (CBOs), particularly in informal settlements. CORC provides technical, financial, and organizational support for community-led initiatives, while also facilitating constructive engagement between communities and formal actors such as local and national government (Smit, 2016).¹⁸ CORC has partnered with Stellenbosch Municipality since 2010/2011, making it a long-standing collaborator of over 14 years. This partnership has focused primarily on informal settlement upgrading and improving living conditions for marginalized residents.¹⁹ CORC has played a crucial role in mobilizing communities, supporting data collection processes, and strengthening trust between residents and the municipality key factors in successful upgrading interventions.²⁰

Interview questions covered their awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), community priorities, experiences, contributions to these goals, methods of inclusion in community issues, and ways the municipality can improve its engagement with citizens.

Respondent	Agency	No.
Municipal Officials	Department of Informal Settlements	2
NGOs officials	Isandla Institute Community	1
	Organisation Resource Centre	1
Klapmuts Residents		18
Kayamandi residents		19

Table 1: Study Participants

17 Isandla Institute (2021). Backyard Matters: Unlocking the Potential of Backyard Rental Housing in South Africa. Cape Town: Isandla Institute.

18 Smit, W. (2016). Urban governance in Africa: An overview. *Development Southern Africa*, 33(1), 5–25.

19 SDI (Slum Dwellers International) (2012). Upgrading Informal Settlements in South Africa: A Partnership Approach. Cape Town: Shack/Slum Dwellers International.

20 Mitlin, D. & Patel, S. (2014). Informal Urbanisation: Community and Governmental Contributions to City Development in the Global South*. In: Parnell, S. & Oldfield, S. (eds.) The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South. Routledge.

Study Limitations

The study provides a highly localized perspective, limited to views from 37 participants and therefore offers a partial view of the municipal context. This small sample size limits the generalizability of findings. The views expressed by participants do not necessarily reflect the general views of residents in the entire municipality.

Moreover, the approach of engaging municipal leaders separately from the study participants did not create opportunity for cross-level communication. The limitation here is the risk of turning into a collection of debating statements from two sides. Future studies should use discussion forums that ensure enhanced cross-level communication between residents and municipal leaders.

While the focus of this study was to gather qualitative insights from residents, the output could have been strengthened by integrating more quantitative indicators to measure progress against SDG targets more systematically (what has been implemented and their results). Analysis related to issues like spatial justice, urban inequality, and the politics of service delivery, among others, which are central to South Africa's urban development challenges could have also enhanced the study.

These drawbacks were partly due to the absence of an integrated SDG reporting system at the municipality, making it challenging to ascertain numerically what has been implemented in respective thematic areas. As a result of these limitations, readers and users of this report should be careful not to overgeneralize from the findings.

Policy and Institutional Environments for SDG Implementation

Policy Environment

Stellenbosch Municipality's SDG implementation efforts occur within 3 broad policy frameworks – the South Africa National Development Plan (NDP) 2030;²¹ the Western Cape Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) 2025-2030²² and Stellenbosch's 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2022-2027.²³ The NDP (2030) was initiated in 2012 and formally adopted by the government in 2013 as a long-term strategy to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030.

The NDP provides a broad vision for the country's development, through six core pillars: mobilising all South Africans; fostering active citizen engagement; creating an inclusive, labour-absorbing economy; building capabilities in people and institutions; establishing a capable and developmental state; and strengthening accountability and leadership across all sectors of society. It places a strong emphasis on job creation, education, infrastructure development, health, and spatial transformation as pathways to a better standard of living for all South Africans. In addition, the NDP is closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to integrate global development targets into the national context.

The Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) is a comprehensive roadmap developed by the Western Cape Government to guide policy direction, resource allocation, and service delivery across the province over a five-year period. The plan is built around five key priorities: creating safer and more cohesive communities; enabling economic growth and job creation; empowering people through education and health; improving mobility and spatial transformation; and promoting innovation and a culture of good governance. Each priority is supported by targeted interventions aimed at addressing the province's most pressing challenges, such as crime, unemployment, inequality, and inefficient service delivery.

The PSP serves as a framework to align government departments, municipalities, and partners in delivering measurable outcomes that improve the quality of life for all residents of the Western Cape. The priorities also reflect a "Whole-of-Society" approach, encouraging collaboration between government, communities, and the private sector. The PSP aligns closely with both the NDP and the SDGs by promoting safety, inclusive economic growth, youth development, education, health, infrastructure resilience, and spatial equity. For example, the province focuses on reducing youth unemployment, improving safety in public spaces, investing in early childhood development, and promoting citizen-centric governance all of which are echoed in the national and global development agendas.

The South African government acknowledges that the goals of the National Development Agenda 2030, cannot be accomplished without significant municipal involvement, as many activities and objectives are at the local level. Consequently, it expects municipalities to play a crucial role in all national development efforts, including ensuring that the SDGs are achieved.²⁴

Municipalities are expected to prioritize and localize the SDGs within their Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes via a process of policy alignment.²⁵ The aim of this approach is to achieve the SDGs by utilizing the existing planning framework for municipal IDPs. Stellenbosch's IDP addresses these expectations by serving as a guide for all development and service delivery activities within the municipality over a five-year period. The document is reviewed and updated annually to include inputs received via a local review process. The latest version was adopted in May 2022 and sets out key local priorities in areas such as spatial transformation, economic development, basic service delivery, community safety, environmental sustainability, and social development.

21 National Planning Commission (15 August 2012). National Development Plan 2030: Our Future-make it work. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf

22 Western Cape Government (2025). Provincial Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from www.westerncape.gov.za/files/wcg-blob-files?file=2025-03-psp-2025-30.pdf&type=file

23 Stellenbosch Municipality (2022). Fifth Generation IDP 2022 – 2027- May 2022. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from <https://stellenbosch.gov.za/download/fifth-generation-idp-2022-2027-may-2022/>

24 National Planning Commission. (2012). National Development Plan 2030: Our future – make it work. Pretoria: The Presidency.

25 Mamokhere, J., & Meyer, D. F. (2023). The Integrated Development Planning Process's Impact as a Tool for Increasing Community Participation in South Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 13(2).

Development Focus	National Themes (NDP)	Provincial Themes (PSP)	Local Themes (Stellenbosch IDP)
Economic growth and jobs	Inclusive economy, job creation	Growth for jobs, competitiveness	Support SMMEs, tourism, agriculture
Education and skills	Universal access to quality education	Education excellence, youth employability	Training initiatives, youth empowerment
Infrastructure and services	Improved transport, energy, housing	Expand and modernise infrastructure	Roads, housing, electricity, sanitation
Social inclusion and cohesion	Reduce inequality, social protection	Address inequalities, improve safety	Social housing, community development
Health and wellbeing	Universal health coverage	Strengthen health systems	Accessible clinics, emergency services
Sustainability and environment	Sustainable resource use, resilience	Environmental sustainability, water security	Local climate adaptation, waste management
Governance and participation	Capable, accountable state	Improve governance, reduce corruption	Community participation, municipal efficiency

Table 2. Alignment between the NDP, PSP and Stellenbosch Municipality's IDP

Source: Authors' construct

While Stellenbosch's IDP supports five core SDG priorities within youth development, food security, and sustainable infrastructure, the plan also addresses broader developmental themes consistent with the NDP and the Western Cape PSP. These include improving local governance and enhancing public engagement. Furthermore, Stellenbosch's development strategy contributes to several other Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). These alignments ensure that **local development is not pursued in isolation, but forms part of an integrated policy landscape aimed at fostering resilience, equity, and sustainability across South Africa**. This interconnectedness between local, provincial, and national plans lays a critical foundation for identifying challenges and opportunities in achieving the SDGs within the South African context.

Table 2 shows the alignment between the NDP, the Western Cape PSP, and the Stellenbosch IDP, in terms of overarching development goals and strategic focus areas (see Table 2).

The national NDP sets the long-term vision; the PSP adapts that vision to the provincial context; supporting small businesses, providing adequate housing, and creating employment opportunities, especially for youth and vulnerable communities and the Stellenbosch IDP localises these principles through practical, community-based programmes and spatial development frameworks. For example, Stellenbosch's focus on upgrading informal settlements and promoting inclusive local economic development directly supports the NDP's goals of spatial justice and job creation, while also addressing the PSP's emphasis on spatial transformation and economic growth. Likewise, initiatives around early childhood development, youth mentorship, and community safety in the IDP reflect both provincial priorities (e.g. Safe Communities and Empowering People) and national targets for social inclusion and capability-building (Stellenbosch Municipality, 2022).

National SDG Progress

While there is progress in SDG implementation at the national level, South Africa equally faces significant

challenges.²⁶ A 2023 joint study by the World Bank and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) noted that SDG implementation gaps in South Africa will require significant infrastructure and related spending, informed by the right objectives and relevant metrics (World Bank, 2024).²⁷ The same report shows that while the country is on track with gender equality (Goal 5) and responsible consumption and production (Goal 12), it continues to struggle with affordable and clean water, sustainable cities and communities, peace, justice, strong institutions, and sanitation.

The study notes that South Africa needs to invest between R4.8 trillion and R6.2 trillion (\$254 billion to \$329 billion) in transport, water and sanitation, basic education, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) from 2022 to 2030 to close the SDG gap in these sectors.

Citizen Engagement

Citizen engagement in South Africa is a constitutional requirement outlined in Section 152(1) of the 1994 Constitution. The provision encourages citizens and community organizations to participate in local government matters. The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 mandates municipalities to adopt an inclusive approach to fostering citizen engagement. This includes implementing strategies to eliminate barriers and actively promote the participation of marginalized groups within the local community. Additionally, the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) and its amendments in Chapter 4 stipulates that municipalities must cultivate a culture of representative government through participatory governance. Municipalities are therefore responsible for encouraging and creating conditions for local communities to engage in municipal affairs. Given this policy framework, one may view engagement of marginalized groups in the SDG process, particularly in the Stellenbosch municipality, as a constitutional obligation.

Aside from being a constitutional requirement, citizen engagement ensures that local development plans align with community needs and developmental aspirations.²⁸ An inclusive engagement approach that takes all voices into consideration, including those from marginalized communities, promotes democratic accountability, and leads to a more responsive local government.

Box 1. Channels for Local Engagement in Stellenbosch

The municipality employs several modes of citizen engagement in its IDP process to achieve different results. Regular scheduled meetings are used to gather public opinion and provide feedback on development priorities. Similarly, online surveys, workshops, and public hearings are used to discuss draft IDPs and budgets. Public notices and local newspaper advertisements inform citizens about engagement opportunities, while ward councillors and social media help expand outreach. To reach residents with limited connectivity, officials use 'loud hailing' vehicles fitted with speakers that announce meetings and invite public feedback. Community spaces like town halls serve as accessible engagement points where residents can submit documents for staff support. The central library offers an additional access point for those with tight schedules. Citizens can submit written or electronic requests directly to the municipality. Periodic surveys are also used to assess project progress and identify areas for further support.

The engagement efforts of Stellenbosch Municipality have had several positive outcomes. **For instance, citizen inputs have led to revised tariff increases, reduction of property rates from 7.0 percent to 6.5 percent and lowering of electricity tariff from 17 percent to 15.1 percent.** Community feedback has also helped strengthen the welfare policy for disadvantaged groups, ensuring that

²⁶ Haywood, L. K., Funke, N., Audouin, M., Musvoto, C., & Nahman, A. (2019). The Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa: Investigating the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships. *Development Southern Africa*, 36(5), 555-569.

Govender, D. (2019). Delivering on infrastructure maintenance for socio-economic growth: Exploration of South African infrastructure for a sustained maintenance strategy. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*, 238, 495-506.

²⁷ The World Bank / Development Bank of Southern Africa (2023). *Going Beyond the Infrastructure Funding Gap: A South African Perspective*. Johannesburg, World Bank Group. Accessed on 11/6/2025 from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/01/31/closing-south-africa-s-sdgs-gap-requires-improving-the-quality-afe-124>

²⁸ Mamokhere, J., & Meyer, D. F. (2023). The Integrated Development Planning Process's Impact as a Tool for Increasing Community Participation in South Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 13(2).

low income and vulnerable households receive subsidies.

These efforts at community engagement have not gone unnoticed. For the 2023/24 financial year the municipality received a Clean Audit Opinion from the Auditor-General of South Africa, demonstrating its commitment to financial transparency and good governance.

Community Awareness of SDGs and Municipal Priorities
While institutional feedback suggests Stellenbosch's SDG engagement strategy align with national (NDP) local policy frameworks, perceptions from study participants suggest gaps in alignment. Based on the focus group activities, it is apparent that participants from Kayamandi and Klapmuts lack awareness of what the SDGs represent and the specific SDG priorities the municipality is pursuing. Out of the 19 study participants from Kayamandi, eight (8) expressed awareness of the SDG priorities set by the Stellenbosch municipality. Similarly, three (3) out of 18 participants from Klapmuts indicated awareness. Thus, 22 percent of the 37 people who participated in the study were aware of the municipality's SDG priorities (fig. 1).

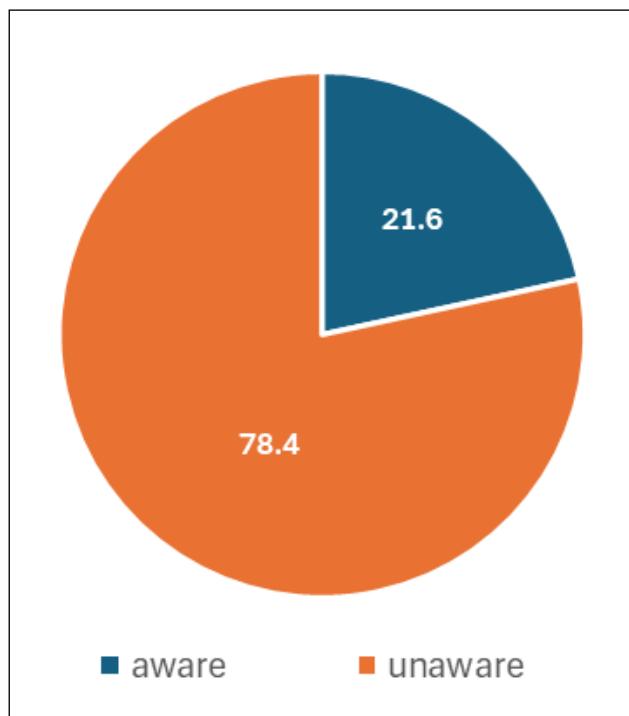


Figure 6: Citizen Awareness of UN SDGs

While the views of the 37 study participants may be skewed and not representative of the entire municipal population, it does provide information suggesting a need for SDG messaging particularly within informal settlements. While the municipality maintains internal commitment to five SDG priorities, it does not maintain dedicated monitoring and evaluation frameworks for SDG assessment. What it does in practice is implementation of their IDP targets with the five SDG priorities in mind. Thus, citizens observe ongoing municipal activities not as SDG implementation but as part of the municipality's mandated service delivery responsibilities. A concerted effort by the municipality towards citizen sensitization can help speed up achievements as citizen become more aware of SDG benefits and coalesce around its achievement.

SDG Implementation

In this section, the report explores municipal efforts to implement the five SDG priorities, citizens perspectives on progress, and possible next steps to improve progress.

Gender Equality



Municipal Priorities

- 5.1** Address systemic inequalities and promote women's rights in all spheres
- 5.2** Reduce incidents of gender-based violence and improve support services
- 5.3** Increase women's empowerment
- 5.4** Ensure women are equally represented in governance and community decision making.

Municipal Strategies & Efforts

Implementation of SDG 5 targets is taking place within a gender mainstreaming framework that supports the equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of the public. Municipal

efforts are focused on ensuring that all programs and services are designed and executed with gender considerations in mind. So far, the municipality has integrated gender considerations into municipal planning and policy tools such as IDP community needs and priorities, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act and the Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF).

Gender-related funding is allocated to promote near-equal representation of women in designated positions within the municipality to ensure equitable participation. Women have been integrated into all levels of municipal governance operations. Women's representation continues to improve. 13 of the 23 elected councillors are women, underscoring the municipality's commitment to gender inclusivity.

Implementation of all projects are designed to be gender-neutral, and community consultations are conducted with careful attention to balanced gender representation. Other initiatives include gender-based budgeting; gender sensitivity to IDP reviews, deliverables and ward priorities, review of municipal master plans and prioritization of projects by the Community Policing Forum (CPF).

Additional SDG 5 efforts involve regular gender sensitivity and awareness training in governance and operational integration. There is ongoing municipal commitment to making governing documents, including policies related to gender equality, publicly accessible for review. Each department within the municipality has designated nominees to undergo training and act as gender consultants within their respective areas, particularly concerning GBV challenges.

Notwithstanding efforts by the municipality, data from the 2022 municipal socio-economic study casts a negative picture about the state of safety and security in the municipality. This situation has implications on the general safety of women in the municipality as local voices will unravel in later sections. Based on the study, the municipality's murder rate (per 100,000 people) increased from 36 in 2020/21 to 44 in 2021/22. This increase was a steep climb compared to that of the Cape Winelands District's which increased from 42 to 43 for the same period. Beside murder, as indicated in Table 2 the municipality trail behind the district in all metrics (sexual offenses, drug related offenses, driving under the influence and burglaries).

Per 100,000)	Municipal/ District	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Murder*	Stellenbosch	36	36	44
	District	41	42	43
Sexual Offences⁺	Stellenbosch	126	105	115
	District	110	84	84
Drug related offenses**	Stellenbosch	1163	826	575
	District	859	628	600
Under influence⁺⁺	Stellenbosch	136	80	128
	District	106	53	86
Burglaries[▲]	Stellenbosch	677	505	489
	District	599	519	448

Table 3. Safety and Security

Source: Stellenbosch Municipality

*Defined as the unlawful and intentional killing of another person.

* Includes rape, sex work, pornography, public indecency and human trafficking.

**Includes possession of, under the influence of, or selling illegal drugs.

++ Being over the legal blood alcohol limit.

Local Voices

Study participants acknowledged the efforts of the municipality to address SDG 5. In particular, they highlighted the noticeable increase in the number of women serving as councillors.

Notwithstanding these positive observations, they were also quick to express concern about the high level of gender-based violence and discrimination in their communities. They noted that the municipality's gender equality priorities do not reflect the lived experiences in communities, as women and children face abuse daily. Study participants were concerned that the municipality had left their security needs unmet. As one participant noted:

We provide our own security by escorting women and girls in groups when they want to use the toilet or go out late for shopping.

Highlighting the everyday fears that women confront in their communities, one participant from Klapmuts surmised that:

Women are afraid to use public toilets at night due to insufficient street lighting in certain informal settlements. As a result, they often refrain from going out alone because the community is deemed unsafe, particularly for women. It's commonplace for women to travel in pairs for safety.

To some, this lack of security existed because:

Discrimination is present at the local police station, where residents feel that their complaints are not taken seriously. Multiple families often share a single toilet, underscoring the inadequate living conditions they face.

The lived experiences regarding safety for women, as shared by study participants, reflect the general state of security in the municipality (see Table 2). As pointed out earlier, the municipality's rate of sexual offenses per 100,000 persons were higher than those of the Cape Winelands district from 2019 to 2022.

Next Steps

The municipality has made some progress regarding SDG 5. However, when it comes to safety within informal settlements, the lived experiences of citizens suggest more need to be done to improve general safety and security. Sexual offenses and other crimes remain a critical concern. Establishing local police stations and community policing initiatives can enhance safety. Lessons from other municipalities that have successfully reduced crime through neighbourhood policing and community partnerships should inform these interventions.

Clean Water and Sanitation



Municipal Priorities

- 6.1** universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water
- 6.2** access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene
- 6.3** reduce water pollution from various sources, including wastewater treatment and industrial discharge

Municipal Efforts

The municipality is recognized for being fully compliant with the national Green Drop (wastewater management) and Blue Drop (drinking water quality) standards.²⁹ The municipality continuously maps accessibility to taps and toilets and conducts regular assessments using three metrics: green, yellow, and red.

A green rating indicates that the water and sanitation situation in a locality is satisfactory, yellow means that it needs some attention, and red signifies that the number of taps or toilets per household do not meet the thresholds defined by national regulations. Based on these regular assessments the municipality carries out regular maintenance and inspections.

²⁹ Blue Drop and Green Drop are certifications administered by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) to ensure quality of drinking water and across municipalities. Blue Drop focuses on drinking water quality and management whilst Green Drop focuses on the management of wastewater systems. Both programs use a points-based system to award certification to municipalities that meet specific criteria. Furthermore, compliance is measured using the national norms and standards for ablution facilities and public toilets.



Image 3: A public standpipe at Kayamandi

Based on the 2022 municipal socio-economic report, access to piped water inside dwelling/yard or communal/neighbor's tap stood at 99.3 per cent, whilst access to a flush or chemical toilet stood at 96.4 per cent. The municipality also provides some basic services free of charge to financially vulnerable households and those struggling to pay for services. The number of households receiving free basic services rose from 5,686 in 2017 to 6817 in 2019. This number however declined sharply to 2291 in 2020.

Local Voices

Responses from participants in the study indicated positive efforts from the municipality to provide clean water and sanitation services, although they also noted not all areas are adequately supplied. Other concerns are related to quality and cost. Regarding the adequacy of clean water and sanitation, they pointed to limited sanitation facilities and high tap to resident ratios. A comment from one participant in Kayamandi encapsulates this issue:

You can't have more than 120 people using only 6 toilets; that is not clean sanitation.

The situation, according to some participants, is worst in Azania, a new settlement where there are no toilets and water available. Others lamented about water bills being too high. One participant explained that:

At our house, for example, we pay R2500³⁰ per month for water, and if you don't pay, they will cut off both water and electricity, ignoring the fact that we live in an informal settlement.

A significant number of participants noted variability in the quality of services. One main concern expressed was that not everyone receives the same quality of services. For instance, that while the Mandela City site in Kayamandi has access to tap water and toilets, they noted La Rochelle in Klapmuts has only two taps serving a community of 100-200 people.

Concerning the cost of services, some participants expressed concern that, while they receive clean water, they can barely afford the monthly bill. Residents without a stable income being unable to pay their bills leads to water disconnections.

Many of these findings were corroborated by the two NGO directors interviewed and also by prior studies. One director was of the view that the municipality can only do so much regarding clean water and sanitation, especially in informal settlements space where communal water points exist. She pointed out that while their collaboration with the municipality has led to increased access to services, challenges still remain regarding the adequacy of those services. Although there is some fairness in the maintenance of these services, they become hazardous when not properly maintained.

Other studies note significant service delivery failures, including insufficient and poorly maintained infrastructure, water quality concerns, and inconsistent sanitation services.³¹ A recent study by Nel et al. (2023) noted that in Kayamandi, residents primarily rely on communal taps, with 33% of households experiencing water interruptions in the past year, often lasting up to a day). Mo-

30 This is equivalent to US\$140

31 Madonsela, B., Koop, S., Van Leeuwen, K., & Carden, K. (2019). Evaluation of water governance processes required to transition towards water sensitive urban design—An indicator assessment approach for the City of Cape Town. *Water*, 11(2), 292.

bile communal sanitation units, called “Kayaloos,” each contain 10 toilets, serve 15–20 households, and residents are responsible for cleaning their designated facilities.³² In Klapmuts, water is supplied through the Farm Impact Project, a collaboration between Stellenbosch University and Babylonstoren promoting sustainable agricultural water use, although household-level sanitation data for the area is limited.³³

These examples illustrate disparities in water and sanitation access across communities, highlighting areas that may require attention to meet national standards.

Concerning the disparities noted above, municipal leaders highlighted two major challenges creating water and sanitation shortages – extending the water network to new developments, and curtailing the growth of informal settlements. As informal settlements expand, the ability of the municipality to address water access issues is severely affected. For instance, when a settlement is located on private property, it is a challenge for the municipality to provide water access, which leaves individuals in that area without clean drinking water. In 2021, ratios for water and sanitation services respectively stood at one tap for every 25 households and one toilet for every five households. These carrying capacities have however changed due to stricter provision requirements (i.e. 1:4 for toilets and 25 litres of water per person per day) and rapid growth of populations within informal settlements. Problems with sanitation are exacerbated especially when people settle far from existing infrastructure, making it more expensive for the municipality to extend services.

Next Steps

Despite these challenges, officials stressed the municipality’s commitment to meeting or exceeding national standards for basic service provision. Municipal leaders should consider other water sources such as boreholes to ensure uninterrupted water access, especially for vulnerable groups such as pensioners and the unemployed.

Affordable and Clean Energy



Municipal Priorities

- 7.1** universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- 7.2** increased share of renewable energy
- 7.3** minimize the impact of load shedding.

Municipal Efforts

Under the SDG 7 priorities, the municipality is exploring ways to complement the activities of the main utility agencies responsible for clean energy transition in the two settlements. One initiative by Eskom, South Africa’s major electric utility provider, is promoting sustainable electricity in townships like Kayamandi and Klapmuts by improving energy reliability, expanding renewables, and supporting socio-economic growth. Key actions include Free Basic Electricity expansion, grid strengthening, and community solar projects, aiming to end load reduction by 2027 (Eskom, 2025).

The municipality investigates clean energy alternatives, such as specific types of lighting that can be deployed in areas lacking connections to electrical points or bulk infrastructure services. Municipal leaders have acknowledged that physical challenges inhibit the delivery of services from one location to another. In some cases, providing services require relocating people, which end up being disruptive because of people’s refusal to move. Infrastructure maintenance is often contingent on available funding, and current financial resources do not always support independent energy solutions. While solar energy is on the agenda, it remains a costly option compared to traditional electric systems. Installing a conventional streetlight is generally cheaper than setting up a solar streetlight.

³² Nel, M., Simuyaba, M., Muchelenje, J., Chirwa, T., Simwinga, M., Speight, V., ... & Bond, V. (2023). Broad Brush Surveys: a rapid qualitative assessment approach for water and sanitation infrastructure in urban sub-Saharan cities. *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, 5, 1185747.

³³ Ibid.

As such, the municipality currently favours the existing conventional energy system over solar due to installation costs. This raises the question of whether to prioritize electrification or solar solutions. To make informed decisions about investment and safety, expertise and funding requirements must be considered. Presently, solar energy (green energy) is being assessed from these various perspectives before any implementation in areas like Kayamandi, Klapmuts, and potentially the broader Stellenbosch region.

Local Voices

Participants in the study expressed the view that energy costs in the municipality are high, and they often do not receive the minimum units they are paying for. Many residents living in shacks resort to the use of firewood which has adverse health effects. One participant from Klapmuts emphasized that:

Many people living in shacks lack access to electricity. While electricity is available on the Mandela side, those in La Rochelle are left without power, which poses significant challenges. This participant stressed that the municipality should improve its collaboration with the community to help reduce the burning of wood, which is difficult to obtain and detrimental to health.

Some participants acknowledged efforts from the municipality in community solar projects, but were concerned about the slow pace of progress.

These concerns were reiterated by the director of the Community Organising Resource Centre (CORC) who was mostly concerned about the harmful environmental and health risks of currently household energy sources.

Next Steps

The municipality should intensify efforts to provide sustainable energy solutions for informal settlements by leveraging the ongoing working relation with ESKOM to complete the implementation of

solar energy systems in informal settlements. Seeking potential support from international climate and development partners towards pilot projects can also provide reliable, affordable energy while advancing environmental sustainability.

Local partnerships like the ongoing efforts from CORC should also be explored. The director of CORC has expressed plans to consolidate partnership with communities to improve access to energy sources for informal settlements. CORC is already playing a central role in the Enkanini electrification project. This can be leveraged to consolidate local energy transition.

Sustainable Cities and Communities



Municipal Priorities

11.2 promote walking and cycling

11.6 provides accessible green and public spaces, particularly for vulnerable groups like women, children, older persons and people with disabilities

11.7 ensure integrated urban planning that supports inclusion, resource efficiency, climate change adaptation, and disaster resilience.

Municipal Efforts

The municipality is actively working to implement the three prioritised targets by exploring sustainable transport systems, managing waste and water resources, and fostering an overall green economy. Moreover, recycling programs like Bokhasi for food waste, and expanding landfill capacity are being explored. The municipality is focused on designing spaces that promote walkability and cycling, aiming to encourage cycling as a mode of transport and reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

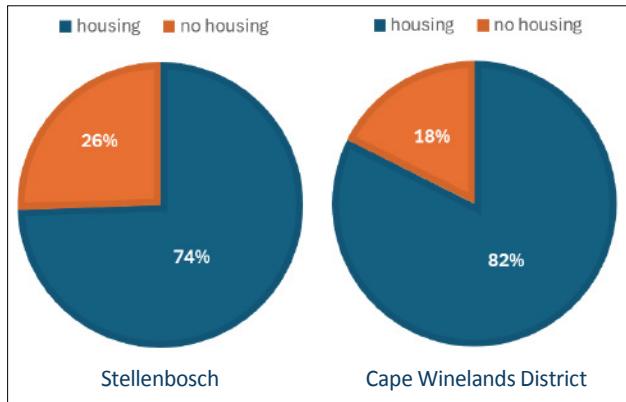


Figure 7. Households with Access to Main Dwellings
Source: Stellenbosch Municipality, 2022

Current data, as shown in Figure 2 shows that out of the 50,792 households in the municipality, 74 percent have access to formal main dwelling. This figure is 8 percentage points lower than that of the Cape Winelands District 82 per cent. The municipality also has a substantially higher proportion of informal dwellings (24.7 per cent) compared with the District's total of 16.9 per cent.

Local Voices

Municipal efforts to achieve Goal 11 are hampered by two main challenges: uncontrolled population growth and land availability. Uncontrolled population growth within informal settlements is driven primarily by search for local economic opportunities, access to education and health facilities. It has two forms – visible and invisible. Invisible growth occurs because of individuals who come to visit and never leave. For example, 'Azania,' a settlement on a hill in Kayamandi, began with about 2,600 well-planned houses. Yet, over time, the planned structure has been disrupted with unauthorized structures commonly referred to as "shacks." While the external boundary remains unchanged, internal growth has led to an additional 5,000 shacks. As at the writing of this report, a court order for eviction had been issued against occupants of the unauthorized structures.

To some study participants, the issue of invisible

growth stems from the municipality's delays in providing housing, as securing a house could take up to 20 years. As one participant noted:

I came from Gugulethu in 1989. At the time, there were hostels, and the residents were promised homes, but nothing has been done to fulfil that promise. It would be greatly appreciated if the municipality could start building houses for the people still living in those hostels, as they have been waiting for a long time. It is vital to help those who have been in hostels first.

Participants who have experience with Wendy³⁴ houses also expressed concern of living there for far too long, with limited intervention from the municipality. For example, one participant noted that:

I have been on the waiting list for proper accommodation for over 19 years. What was supposed to be a temporary structure has become permanent for my household. The municipality has not adequately responded to our concerns or taken appropriate action on our demands.

Similarly, another participant added:

I have a grandchild living in my Wendy house, which has many snakes inside. We have killed three snakes so far. There are also lots of moths and cockroaches. Not everyone is well-off; seven people have died in these Wendy houses due to fires. It breaks my heart to see the municipality's lack of assistance. The electricity is unreliable, the water quality is poor, and the sanitation facilities are inadequate. Safety is a major concern. There are cases where families want to extend their Wendy houses because they are growing, yet the municipality fails to provide adequate shelters and planned communities that include access to essential services like water, sanitation, and electricity.

According to some participants, such frustrations often force some individuals to engage in land grabbing by younger individuals who need homes for their families.

Beyond housing needs, participants also expressed frustration over the lack of transportation, and

³⁴ A Wendy house is a small, often wooden, single-room structure that is typically placed in the backyard of a home. They are commonly used as extra rooms sometimes rented out or used as informal living spaces for domestic workers or extended family members.

street lighting, poor school conditions, and lack of emergency services. An elderly participant from Klapmuts surmised that:

As a community, we have repeatedly communicated with municipal authorities about essential issues such as street lighting, a school for special needs children, and affordable public transportation, yet officials have not responded to our concerns. Community members report issues to the ward office, which is supposed to relay the information to the municipality, but action is not being taken as needed.

On their part, municipal officials have noted how uncontrolled population influx affect efforts to address service needs not only in the two study sites but across the 31 informal settlements under the municipality's jurisdiction. With each settlement varying in size and presenting unique challenges, including human resources, funding, and equipment needs, the municipality's ability to implement and monitor SDG priorities is often hampered. For example, there are residents located beyond the water reservoir at Langrug that require significant funds for relocation, which the municipality cannot provide. As the governing body, the municipality cannot gatekeep who stays or leaves or how.

Officials also noted that high population densities in these informal settlements often impede the pace of projects. Residents of informal settlements often have strong attachments to their family and neighbours which make it difficult to relocate them in order to complete community projects.

Land availability is another issue that complicates service provision. Limited access to land has contributed to the growth of informal settlements on hills, near dams, or in areas that are difficult to reach as far as service provision is concerned. One study participant from Kayamandi lamented in agreement with the municipality that: *"Land is a major concern."*

Her frustration was however based on equity concerns. To her:

The Stellenbosch municipality is failing the black community by taking their land and selling it to white residents at prices that black residents cannot afford. Furthermore, there are no cemeteries available, as the land has been sold for development projects that do not benefit the community.

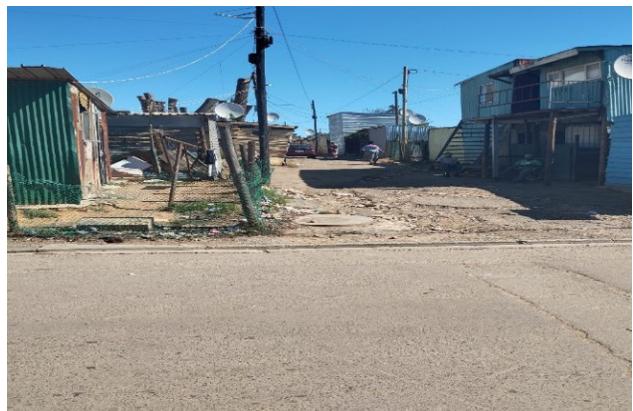


Image 4: Unchecked growth of shacks

Next Steps

Despite municipal efforts, housing inequities and lack of services persist. The municipality should explore innovative, community-driven approaches to address housing backlogs by adopting models that allow residents to access land and build their own homes, supported by technical guidance and micro-financing solutions. Partnerships with NGOs and international housing programs could offer expertise and resources to implement these solutions efficiently. For instance, the director of CORC shared their agency's experimental projects with formal shelter solutions that do not displace residents but instead improve the structural integrity of homes and address climate change concerns. CORC plans to engage with communities to ensure improved access to services like water, sanitation, and electricity, while also enhancing shelter quality. Leveraging such partnerships can allow residents to remain in their homes while improving the structural integrity and safety of their shelters, which also address climate change concerns.

Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions



Municipal Priorities

16.1 promote peaceful and inclusive societies, and access to justice for all

16.2 build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

16.5 ensuring that all citizens have access to legal remedies and that the justice system is fair and equitable.

16.7 encourages residents to participate in local governance by attending council meetings, engaging with their ward councillors, and raising awareness about issues impacting their communities.

Existing Partnerships with Civil Society

Under target 6.2, the study examined the level of civil society groups' involvement in SDG implementation. In this regard, the directors of two civil society organisations - CORC and Islandia Institute – were interviewed. Both NGO directors indicated having some working relation with the municipality. The director of Islandia confirmed their work with the municipality on policy and the IDPs but not directly on the SDG targets.

On her part, the director of CORC noted their collaborative work with the municipality in clean water and sanitation, clean energy, and sustainable cities and communities. Additionally, she noted their involvement in promoting participation and collaboration within communities. Based on her account, NGOs operating at Kayamandi and Klapmuts do not implement any project without engaging the community or working together to develop an agenda. Thus, NGOs act primarily as support organizations, particularly in facilitating access to essential services such as adequate shelter. She noted the level of progress that

has been made with the SDG priorities, particularly in the areas of clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, and the development of sustainable cities and communities.

Municipal Efforts

Comparatively, Stellenbosch Municipality has made more progress on target 16.7. As noted under the policy environment section, Stellenbosch municipality acknowledges that engaging the community is crucial for municipal development. An official from the municipality pointed to the IDP process as a key source of gathering public opinions. He noted that despite differing viewpoints among citizens, public participation has been instrumental in successfully implementing the IDP over the past two years. Municipal leaders emphasized a shift from holding large meetings led by municipal speakers to smaller, focused group discussions. These small group settings enable residents to engage directly about specific issues, allowing them to express concerns regarding justice, peace, and how municipal institutions and civil society can intervene on political and socio-economic matters.

Furthermore, since October 2024, the municipality has reformed how it collects information for the IDP, utilizing various communication platforms such as direct conversations, emails, and WhatsApp. In summary, while the municipality operates independently, it actively involves and collaborates with other stakeholders in its efforts to implement its programs aligned to SDGs.

Local Voices

Targets 16.1 – 16.6

One of the key issues raised by study participants concerns target 16.1. In particular, participants from Kayamandi expressed concern about the absence of a police mobile unit within the community which affects safety within the community. They decried the lack of police - community forums collectively discuss the nature of crime and violence in the community

and provide the needed support. The result of these lapses can be seen in the prevalence of substance abuse, and gang related robberies which make life difficult for most residents. A related concern expressed by study participants was the lack of institutional responsibility when it comes to Ambulance services. Many noted that emergency personnel show limited sense of urgency when cases arise which often leads to tragic outcomes.

On Target 16.5, participants highlighted bribery and corrupt practices amongst police personnel. They noted instances where residents who are extending their makeshift homes (Wendys) have been asked by the police to pay bribes before being allowed to rebuild.

Regarding target 16.6, participants in Kayamandi expressed frustration over the lack of accountability from the municipality. Community members voiced concern about high levels of nepotism and lack of procedural fairness when it comes to the justice system.

Some study participants also felt the municipality is not doing enough to help informal residents become good citizens as those without birth certificate or proof of address often do not receive the needed assistance to secure these documents at the Home Affairs office.

Target 16.7

While the municipality has several modes of citizen engagement, feedback from participants at the study sites indicated a limited awareness (explained earlier) and involvement in the SDG implementation and monitoring process.

In Kayamandi, two factors were highlighted as limitations in the municipality's engagement approach – digital media challenges, extent of community influence and retrogression in community-municipality relations. While acknowledging the efforts of the municipality to involve them in community activities, one group of participants also noted that the existing modes of engagement often inadvertently excludes

some citizens from the decision-making process. Many community members are not able to fully participate in virtual meetings either because they are too old and not tech savvy, not comfortable users of technology or they do not have access to digital media. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the municipality used to engage residents in person, allowing community members to ask questions and receive immediate feedback. Now that responses are primarily delivered through digital platforms or virtual meetings, some people see it as an inconvenience. Participants expressed a desire for a return to traditional in-person meetings where they can engage directly with officials, rather than waiting for responses that might take months to arrive.

Another group of participants expressed concern about the extent to which their inputs influence final decisions. They felt that their opinions only serve as rubber stamps for decisions that have already been taken by the municipality. This apparent lack of inclusion leaves them disillusioned, as they perceive no improvement in their community's situation because of this. They emphasized the need for more engagement with the community, as municipal officials may not fully understand the residents' issues or the challenges they face daily. In particular, they suggested having a designated community representative (ward councillor) who would present key points, allowing for more effective collective decision-making with municipal officials.

Kalpmuts participants expressed seeing a retrogression in municipal-citizens relations. They highlighted a noticeable lack of information updates and emphasized the need for the municipality to organize community meetings and provide regular updates about the discussions taking place. Additionally, they suggested that a new committee be elected to represent the La Rochelle neighbourhood in Kalpmuts.

Insights from Civil Society Groups

The call for deeper engagement was corroborated by the directors of the two civil society organizations

CORC and Islandia. One director noted that limited engagement has created a general lack of trust especially on the side of residents towards the municipality and further expressed concerns about the municipality's capacity to adequately achieve all SDG priorities within the two informal communities.

Another director surmised that whilst the municipality has many avenues for community involvement, oftentimes such mechanisms are used by the municipality as a checkbox exercise rather than a genuinely meaningful opportunity for the community to engage in decision-making. She acknowledged the importance of planning and community engagement but was equally uncertain about the methods employed, especially given that the municipality often struggles with the capacity to connect effectively with residents.

Next Steps

Despite the challenges highlighted, there are opportunities for improvement. The existing municipal stakeholder framework provides a good approach for promoting inclusive participation and ensuring that residents' voices are meaningfully integrated into local governance processes.

Moreover, the existing partnerships with NGOs, civil society, and international agencies like ICLD could be leveraged for technical expertise, resources, and platforms to strengthen community engagement and policy responsiveness. The director of CORC expressed optimism about working to support the municipality to develop a policy that includes informal settlement dwellers, allowing them to actively contribute to the growth of sustainable cities and communities through municipal upgrade projects in informal settlements. Such partnerships should be encouraged.

Moreover, there appears to be willingness on the side of citizens to support municipal efforts through knowledge sharing. Thus, citizen knowledge is one essential asset that can be tapped. In the fuzzy cognitive mapping (FCM) exercise, **participants from**

both research sites identified 19 factors they consider important for addressing community issues (see Figure 8). They noted that education and training play a central role in shaping access to job opportunities. Access to quality schooling and free training opportunities for youth increases employability, which in turn leads to greater chances of securing stable employment. Employment not only improves livelihoods but also creates the means for families to invest in adequate housing and access land. This link between education, jobs, and housing is particularly evident in Kayamandi, where overcrowding and unemployment remain major challenges, and in Klapmuts, where new housing developments require parallel investment in skills and economic opportunities.

They also identified infrastructure as another critical driver that connects with multiple sectors. Reliable transport, electricity, and safe waiting areas enable mobility, attract investment, and expand job opportunities. When infrastructure is weak, as seen in Klapmuts with its limited transport options, it restricts access to jobs, education, and social services. Improved infrastructure also strengthens the provision of water and sanitation, which directly improves health outcomes. Healthier communities perform better in workplaces, reinforcing the positive cycle between social services, education, and employment.

Good social services, such as welfare support, health care, and child protection, are closely tied to educational outcomes. Children with access to proper nutrition, health services, and safe environments are more likely to succeed in school, which feeds back into higher long-term employment prospects. Emergency services, including policing, fire services, and clinics, also stabilize communities, making them safer and more attractive for investment and growth. When emergency services are lacking, as sometimes reported in informal housing areas of Kayamandi, social instability and insecurity increase.

Community participation and feedback mechanisms

act as a bridge between residents and local authorities. When communities are included in planning and decision-making, municipal accountability improves, leading to more effective delivery of housing, services, and infrastructure. In both Kayamandi and Klapmuts, local NGOs and civil society groups strengthen this process by providing skills training, social support, and advocacy, helping to fill service gaps that government cannot always meet. Their involvement complements the role of the Stellenbosch Municipality and the national government.

Finally, residents noted that the National Development Plan offers a policy framework that, if effectively implemented, brings greater resources for

infrastructure development, housing, and service delivery. When municipal and national priorities align, communities benefit from improved social services, land reform, and sustainable development. However, unemployment and poor housing conditions continue to undermine social stability, often increasing vulnerability to crime, substance abuse, and unrest. This negative cycle shows that without interventions targeting jobs, education, and housing simultaneously, progress in Kayamandi and Klapmuts will remain uneven. This FCM exercise offered a glimpse of the local knowledge citizens can offer when engaged in knowledge co-production forum.

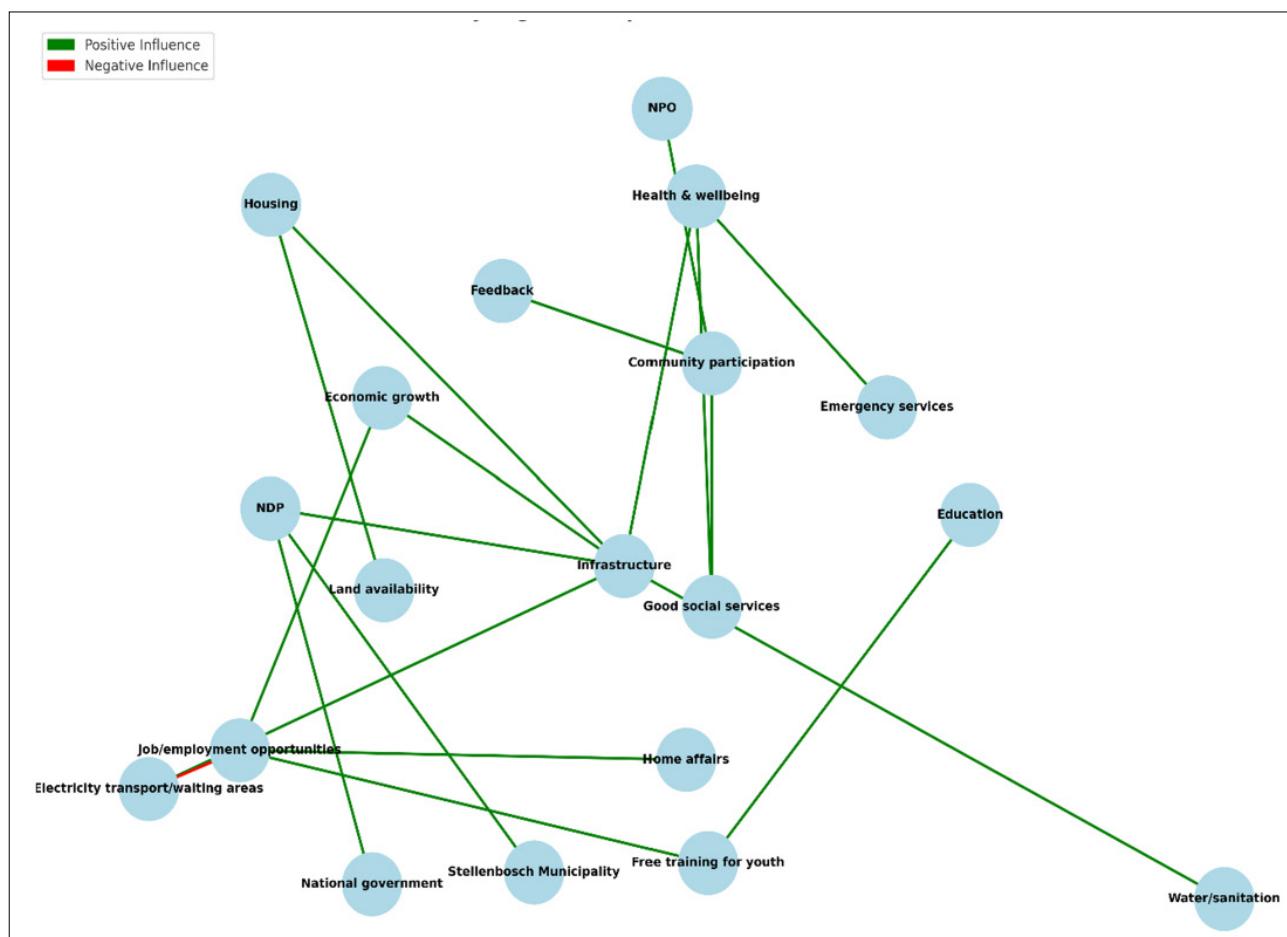


Figure 8. Fuzzy Cognitive Map of Citizens' Perception of How Municipal Priorities Can be Achieved

Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this qualitative Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Kayamandi and Klapmuts, it is evident that while Stellenbosch Municipality has taken meaningful steps toward localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), persistent implementation gaps remain between existing municipal policy instruments, community priorities, and SDG-aligned service outcomes. To bridge these divides, the following recommendations identify specific responsible actors, potential resources, and phased actions (short-, medium-, and long-term).

1. Strengthen SDG awareness and civic education

This action responds to limited SDG literacy and aligns with national SDG coordination strategies emphasizing public ownership of Agenda 2030. Actions involve developing a localized SDG awareness strategy using community radio, schools, and ward-based dialogues to explain the relevance of SDGs to issues such as housing, water, and youth unemployment. The municipality can leverage the Western Cape Government's *Public Participation Programme*, and explore partnerships with local universities (e.g., Stellenbosch University's Sustainability Institute) and UNESCO education networks for content and facilitation. The Municipal Communications Office and the Planning and Economic Development Department (informal settlements unit) can lead this charge in collaboration with NGOs and local schools.



The anticipated timeframe is short-term (1-2 years).

2. Institutionalize participatory governance and inclusive decision-making on the SDGs

This recommendation directly addresses the VLR finding that existing participatory mechanisms remain consultative rather than co-productive, limiting local ownership of outcomes.

The municipality should shift its focus of consultation to a knowledge co-production platform for enhanced cross-level communication. This means formalizing avenues where both sides (municipal officials and residents) can meet to dialogue and achieve a shared agenda. **Such a *Community SDG Forum* should integrate ward committees, youth councils, and civil society organizations into municipal planning processes**, using the "hailing method" and digital feedback platforms. Partnership and technical support could be sought from the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A).

The Municipal Communications Office, Planning and Economic Development Department (informal settlements unit), and Ward Committees can lead this effort with support from Civil Society groups.



Anticipated timeframe:
Medium-term (2-4 years).

3. Establish an integrated SDG Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting System

This responds to gaps in SDG awareness, data coordination and transparency, and strengthens evidence-based governance. While municipal actions are situated within national, provincial and local plans, it is not always clear what has been implemented in the respective SDG priority areas. For this reason, it is not easy to see the relationships between what has been done and the lived realities of residents as a result. The municipality could develop a digital dashboard for SDG tracking, integrating spatial and performance data across departments in respective thematic areas. Simple and easy-to-track monitoring indicators should be integrated into municipal performance systems to help citizens monitor how they have contributed to targets and objectives of SDGs, IDPs, NDP. The municipality can seek technical support by utilizing UNDP's *SDG Localisation Toolkit* and partnering with local universities (e.g UCT, Stellenbosch, UWC, CPUT)

for data analytics. The corporate services department (Individual Performance Management Information and Communication Technology unit) can lead this action, with support from the Western Cape Department of Local Government.



The timeframe is short-term (1–2 years).

4. Enhance community safety through localized policing partnerships

The VLR highlights crime as a major deterrent to SDG progress. Community-police partnerships have demonstrated success in Cape Town and can be adapted to local contexts. Specifically, the municipality should pilot community policing hubs in Kayamandi and Klapmuts, integrating SAPS and local volunteers. The *Community Safety Partnership Fund* under the Western Cape Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety can be a useful resource. Other partnerships may be sought through collaboration with NGOs experienced in violence prevention, such as the *Community Safety Innovation Lab*. Responsible actors for this recommendation include the Community and Protection Services department, South African Police Service (SAPS), and existing local community policing forums.



The estimated timeframe is short- to medium-term (1–3 years).

5. Promote local employment and skills development through SDG-linked community projects

To address SDG 8 (Decent Work) and VLR findings on high youth unemployment and underutilized local labour, the municipality could mandate local hiring for municipal infrastructure and environmental projects, paired with accredited training in renewable energy, con-

struction, and maintenance. They can do this by leveraging the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and partnering with local TVET colleges. The Planning and Economic Development Department (Local Economic Development and Tourism Unit), and the Infrastructure Service Department can lead this initiative with support from private sector partners.



Anticipated timeframe: short- to medium-term (1–3 years).

6. Accelerate housing delivery through community-led and incremental approaches

This addresses spatial inequality and the housing backlog identified in the VLR, while promoting co-production in urban upgrading. The municipality should implement a *Community Self-Build and Serviced Sites Programme*, enabling residents to access land, technical guidance, and microfinance for incremental housing. This initiative can be rolled out by aligning with DHS's *Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme* (UISP) and mobilizing resources through the *Cities Alliance* or UN-Habitat partnerships. The Municipal Planning and Economic Development Department (Informal settlements unit) can lead this effort with support from the National Department of Human Settlements (DHS) and NGOs such as *Habitat for Humanity SA*.



The anticipated timeframe is Medium- to long-term (3–6 years).

7. Advance sustainable energy access in informal settlements

This action responds to the VLR's identification of energy poverty and supports the municipality's Climate Change Response Strategy. It involves piloting solar mini-grid installations in Kayamandi and Klapmuts,

starting with community facilities (schools, clinics, community halls). Funding resources may be accessed from the *Green Climate Fund* (GCF) and the *South African Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme* (REIPPPP). Responsible actors for this programme include the Municipal Infrastructure Services Department, assistance from Eskom and renewable energy social enterprises.



Anticipated timeframe: medium-term (2–4 years).

8. Improve water security and service reliability through community-managed systems

This recommendation builds on successful community water schemes in the Western Cape and addresses SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). The municipality should introduce a *Community Water Stewardship Model* where local cooperatives manage boreholes and monitor water use. This can be achieved through technical support from the *Department of Water and Sanitation* and the *Water Research Commission*. The municipal Infrastructure Services Department can lead this action with support from the Ward Committees, and community cooperatives.



The estimated timeframe for realizing this action is short- to medium-term (1–3 years).

Conclusion

The successful implementation of the SDGs and their localization at the community level is of paramount importance. This endeavour necessitates the prioritization of initiatives based on the specific needs of the citizens. The alignment of SDG prioritization with these needs, as well as the strategic allocation of available financial

and human resources, is essential for effective implementation. Insufficient resources create inefficiencies and suboptimal outcomes. The Stellenbosch municipality can cultivate an environment that promotes collective engagement among citizens, civil society, and other stakeholders, thereby facilitating a developmental and transformative trajectory within its informal settlements. Although the municipality has made noteworthy progress in the implementation of the SDGs, prevailing conditions on the ground shows there is more room for improvement. In particular, there is a critical need for a comprehensive and collaborative action plan that actively engages the local knowledge of citizens in the SDG process. The existing approach of consulting citizens is insufficient in delivering tangible benefits to the citizenry; thus, the municipality should prioritize establishing direct, face-to-face engagements rather than relying predominantly on bureaucratic processes or online methodologies. Such participatory and inclusive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will empower local individuals within informal settlements to actively engage in the assessment of SDG progress. While SDG data is accessible online, the municipality should prioritize town hall meetings to foster greater understanding and facilitate informed decision-making through collaborative engagement.

To achieve these, the municipality can mobilize funding and technical support through a blended approach combining domestic public resources, external partnerships and private and civil society co-financing. The first approach will involve integrating SDG priorities into the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and annual budget allocations. External partnerships can be developed by leveraging existing ones³⁵ or aligning with the National SDG Coordination Mechanism, GIZ's *Inclusive Urban Development Programme*, and UN-Habitat's *SDG Cities Initiative*. Finally, the private sector and civil society can be viable sources of co-financing local projects. By leveraging corporate social responsibility funds and NGO project grants for targeted SDG actions, the municipality can reduce budgetary pressures while supporting residents at the same time.

³⁵ Such as the ICLD municipal partnership between Stellenbosch and Jönköping.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Are you aware of the UN sustainable development Goals?
2. Are you aware of the SDG priorities of the Stellenbosch Municipality?
3. According to the Stellenbosch Municipality, the following are their SDG priorities:

- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Affordable and Clean Energy
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

What have been your experience so far with these priorities. Tell us in what ways you have contributed to these goals?

4. In what ways have you been included in issues concerning this community? In what ways can the city improve its engagement with residents
5. Working together with others in this forum, help us understand what factors will help achieve the above priorities (Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping Technique)

Annex 2: NGO Interview Guide

1. Are you aware of the UN sustainable development Goals?
2. Are you aware of the SDG priorities of the Stellenbosch Municipality?
3. According to the Stellenbosch Municipality, the following are their SDG priorities:

- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Affordable and Clean Energy
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

What have been your experience so far with these priorities. Tell us in what ways you have contributed to these goals?

4. In what ways have you been included in issues concerning this community? In what ways can the city improve its engagement with residents

Annex 3: Stellenbosch City Manager's Interview Guide

1. According to what we've learnt so far, the following are your SDG priorities:

- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Affordable and Clean Energy
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

2. To what extent has Stellenbosch engaged different sections of local citizens in their efforts towards SDG implementation and monitoring in each of these priorities?

3. What Participatory approaches do you use for citizen engagement?

4. What is your Gender Mainstreaming Strategy?

5. What is the current state of community access to clean drinking water?

6. What would you say are the challenges to implementing and monitoring these priorities?

7. What would you say are the achievements so far?

8. What in your view would help consolidate the gains you have made so far on these priorities?



THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development