

## Introduction to SDG 16 - Peace Justice and Strong Institutions and review of Regional specificities for Africa



A brief overview of the OER teaching materials developed for SDG 16 as part of the collaborative project funded by *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) – German Academic Exchange Service*

**Digital Introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education Teaching**  
**Regional Aspects in Implementing the SDGs from Latin America, Europe and Africa**



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## Development team:



Prof Rudi Pretorius



Prof Melanie Nicolau



Dr Zongho Kom



Dr Sanet Carow

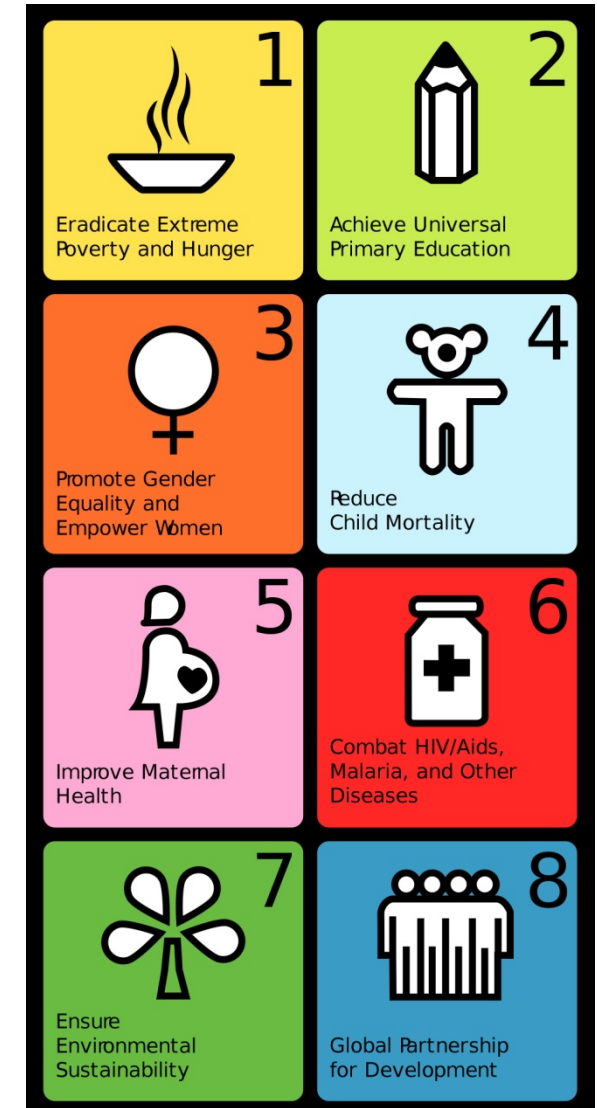


Prof Peter Schmitz

Department of Geography  
University of South Africa  
May 2024

## Introduction

- In 2001 the eight MDG's were launched, following pre-2000 concerns on several global issues
- Commitments for international cooperation to address these issues, 2001-2015
- Emphasized human capital, infrastructure and human rights
- Close to end of period: Uneven progress evident, some countries high achievers, others lagging behind





- MDG's were replaced with 17 SDGs in 2015
- SDG's link up with five critical areas: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace & Partnership
- They consist of Goals, Targets & Indicators
- Interaction between SDGs of prime importance
- This teacher's manual is about SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. (Area of Prosperity)
- SDG 16 highlights the effect of increased conflict and violent organized crime, combined with geopolitical issues worldwide on suffering, obstruction of sustainable development and widening the gap to access justice.



## Defining SDG 16




SDG 16 include 12 targets and 24 indicators

Ten outcome targets




Two means of implementation targets


Three interrelated thematic areas:


- Peace and the reduction of armed conflict, covering all forms of violence and abuse, at multiple scales, organised and un-organised
- Rule of law, accountability, transparency and access to justice
- Inclusiveness and participation



Target	Icon	To be achieved by 2030	Examples how to measure progress (Indicators)
16.1		Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Number of victims/deaths per 100,000 of population/proportion of population
16.2		End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	Number of children who are victims per 100,000 of population/proportion of population
16.3		Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Proportion of victims who reported their abuse or experienced a dispute and could access resolution mechanisms



Target	Icon	To be achieved by 2030	How to measure progress (Indicators)
16.4		Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	Total value of illicit financial flows and proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced/established
16.5		Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	Proportion of people/businesses who had contact with bribery
16.6		Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	Government expenditures as proportion of original approved budget and proportion of population satisfied with their experience of public services.

Target	Icon	To be achieved by 2030	Examples how to measure progress (Indicators)
16.7		Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	Proportion of positions in national and local institutions compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups
16.8		Broaden and strengthen participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations
16.9		By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

Target	Icon	To be achieved by 2030	Example how to measure progress (Indicators)
16.10		Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

Target	Icon	To be achieved by 2030	Example how to measure progress (Indicators)
16A		Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries	Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles
16B		Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.	Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months

## Significance of SDG 16 (1)

- The evidence that links development and peace is overwhelming, and it can be stated that sustainable development is not possible without peace and that no peace is possible without sustainable development.
- Alongside peace, SDG 16 recognises the need for just and inclusive societies, provision of equal access to justice, respect for human rights, the rule of law, good governance, and transparent, effective and accountable institutions.
- This signals that political goals as ensuring inclusion and good governance, and ending violent conflict are just as important as economic, social, and environmental goals.
- Without sustained peace, which includes the absence of violence and respect for human rights and the rule of law, development targets will be hard to achieve.
- In addition, without inclusion and access to justice, inequality in poverty levels and development will increase, and commitments of leaving no one behind will be hard to meet.



## Significance of SDG 16 (2)

Diagrammatic representation of some trends associated with SDG 16, serving to illustrate its significance.

<b>Violent conflicts around the world obstruct global peace and achievement of SDG 16</b>	<b>Globally displacement of people continues to be a problem, and is reaching alarming dimensions</b>
The number of civilian deaths related to 12 of the world's deadliest conflicts increased by 53% from 2021 to 2022.	By the end of 2022, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide reached 108.4 million, of which 41% are children.
<b>Globally the number of intentional homicides are unacceptably large and is continuing to increase</b>	<b>Globally injustices, inequalities and human rights challenges the achievement of peaceful and inclusive societies</b>
In 2021, there were approximately 458,000 intentional homicides, the highest number in the past two decades.	To meet SDG 16 progress is required to restore trust and to strengthen capacity to ensure justice for all and peaceful transitions to sustainable development.

## Interdependencies of SDG 16 (1)

- There is general agreement that SDG 16 cannot be understood in isolation and that it has strong interdependencies and links with all the other SDGs.
- The SDG 16 agenda also has strong linkages with a number of international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, to mention a few.
- In addition to the interdependencies between SDG 16 and the other SDGs on goal level, 36 of the 160 targets of the SDG framework relate directly to an aspect of peace, inclusion, or access to justice.
- While a third (or 12) of these targets are found in SDG 16, the broader set of 36 targets is referred to as the SDG16+ targets.

## Interdependencies of SDG 16 (2)

- The other 24 targets are associated with seven other SDGs, namely SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 17, and also directly measure an aspect of peace, inclusion or access.
- These additional 24 targets together with the 12 targets from SDG 16 collectively contribute directly to building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- As a framework, the SDG16+ targets provide the full picture of all the actions that are required to realize peace, inclusion and justice for all, especially for those furthest behind.



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## Examples of SDG 16 interdependencies



Research indicates that accountable, transparent institutions increase the poverty-reduction effects of GDP growth by enabling economic, property and other rights, including respect for contracts, which, in turn, provides security and predictability in government decision-making



The achievement of SDG 2 is related to peace, political stability, just and inclusive societies and strong institutions (effective accountable and inclusive). Hunger and food insecurity can be a cause of political instability, conflict and war, but can also be the result of such activities, while strong governmental institutions need to support SDG 2 initiatives at all levels



Increasing accountability is expected to be associated with improved health system performance and to enable increased access to healthcare



Two targets of SDG 16 are directly related to education, namely 16.10, which relates to public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms, and 16a, which relates to building capacity at all levels



Participation of women on equal terms with men at all levels of decision-making and political involvement is essential to achieve equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy and the inclusion of the perspectives and experiences of women in decision-making processes



Social participation and accountability is expected to contribute to and facilitate durable universal access to water and sanitation services specifically for vulnerable populations

## Examples of SDG 16 interdependencies



Corruption risks undermine the transition to clean energy in various ways, i.e. by hindering good business practices, which makes it more expensive to operate and reduces competition. Powerful lobbying groups may actively work behind the scenes to hamper the transition



Effective and transparent institutions are key to creating an enabling environment for investment, job creation and economic development



Infrastructure development is essential for establishing strong and resilient institutions, ensuring access to justice and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies



It can be anticipated that inequality is less persistent in countries with inclusive institutions, and that social policy instruments and social spending are more effective in countries with inclusive institutions



Rapid urbanisation in developing countries necessitates that urban planning should consider implications for poverty reduction (SDG 1), international partnerships (SDG 17) and peace and justice systems (SDG 16), besides their global environmental impact



Without good governance, resources can be mismanaged and responsible production and consumption compromised, leading to overexploitation, environmental degradation and social inequalities



## Examples of SDG 16 interdependencies



Climate change can exacerbate resource scarcity, which can trigger conflict and instability. Strong institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution are necessary to mitigate such conflicts



Successful ocean governance relies on effective, accountable and transparent institutions and representative decision-making and can help to establish peace, justice and strong institutions in the ocean realm



Many conflicts, ranging from international to regional to community level, are intensified through environmental degradation and/or disputes over natural resources, but in turn can have a multitude of causes



Peace and stability are necessary for fostering global partnerships. In conflict-affected regions, instability can disrupt international collaboration, limit investment and hinder progress towards development goals.

## Advantages of SDG 16

- Working towards achievement of SDG 16 holds several advantages focussed on the fostering of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, and building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.
- The primary advantage of SDG 16 lies in the reduction of violence, which is essential for the creation of safe and stable communities.
- This implies that the root causes of violence, including poverty and inequality, have to be addressed.
- Working towards the achievement of SDG 16 thus helps to ensure that individuals can live without fear, which is fundamental for social and economic development.

## Other advantages associated with SDG 16

Advantage	Short description
Reduction in violence and crime	Implementing SDG 16 helps to reduce violence, crime and conflict through promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.
Access to justice for all	Ensuring equal access to justice for all individuals helps to protect human rights and to ensure fairness.
Strengthened institutions	Developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions enhances governance and public trust.
Inclusive decision-making	Promoting responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making ensures that all voices are heard, thus leading to more equitable policies.
Protection of fundamental freedoms	Ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms supports democracy and human rights.
Conflict prevention and resolution	Strengthening the rule of law and promoting non-discriminatory laws and policies help to prevent conflicts and support post-conflict reconstruction.

Source: United Nations (2024)

## Challenges in the implementation of SDG 16 (1)

- Inadequate capacity still hampers SDG 16 in many countries. This contributes to the overall weakness of institutions, their inability to implement policies and programs, either in total or in a timely manner, and to influence progress in meeting SDG 16.
- While data is essential for planning, funding and evaluation of sustainable development activities, the available data in many countries, especially in Africa and Asia, does not comply with this requirement, thus presenting a big constraint in the implementation of SDG 16.
- Further challenges to the implementation of SDG 16 are associated with inadequate service delivery, lack of financing and lack of political will and leadership

## Summary - Peace Justice and Strong Institutions and the need for SDG 16





# Crisis and the achievement of SDG 16





## Global crises and SDG 16 Focus on Africa



CLIMATE CHANGE



COVID-19



Conflict

## Climate change

Climate change impacts the achievement of SDG 16 significantly. It increases the conflict and instability in a country as it is a threat multiplier that increases the existing social, economic and political tensions.

Extreme weather patterns and events also result in the displacement and migration of population,

Place more pressure on governments' capacity to provide essential services and to maintain law and order

The economic impact of climate change ranges from damage to infrastructure and related loss of livelihoods and this increases poverty and inequality and thus the potential to trigger social unrest and weaken the rule of law

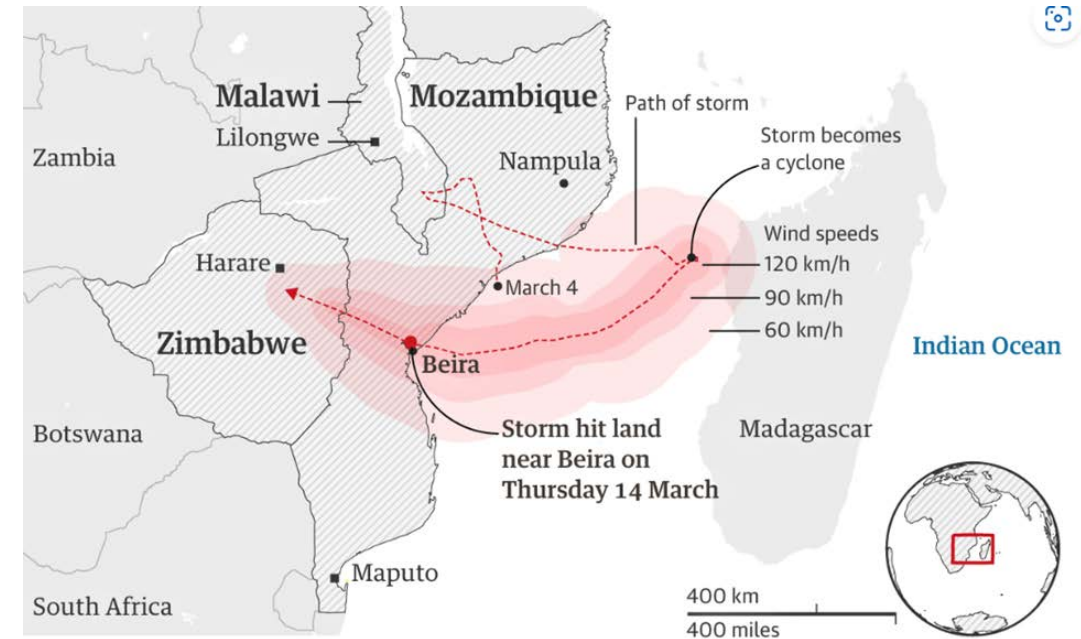
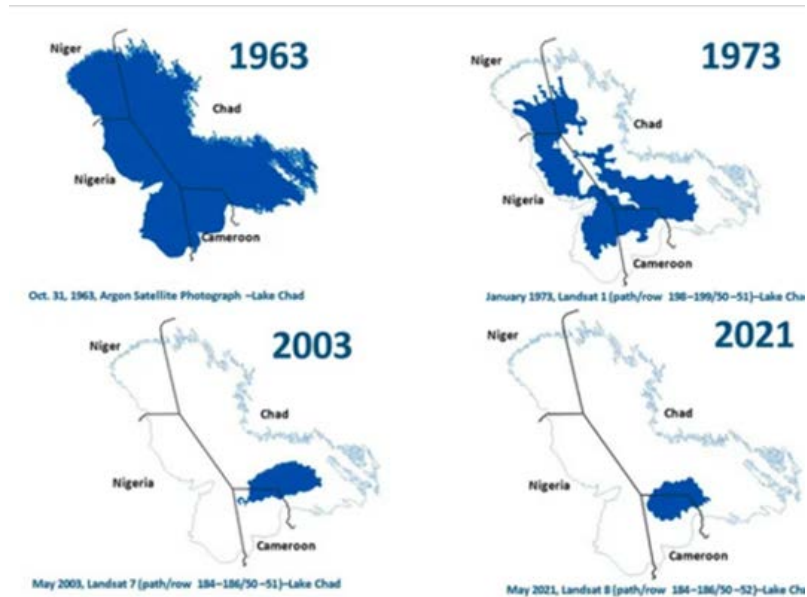


Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, exacerbating inequalities and making it harder to achieve justice for all, as fair access to resources and justice is made very challenging by climate-induced disruptions.





# Impact of CLIMATE CHANGE in Africa



Climate change increases the conflict and instability in a country or region as it is a threat multiplier that increases the existing social, economic, and political tensions.

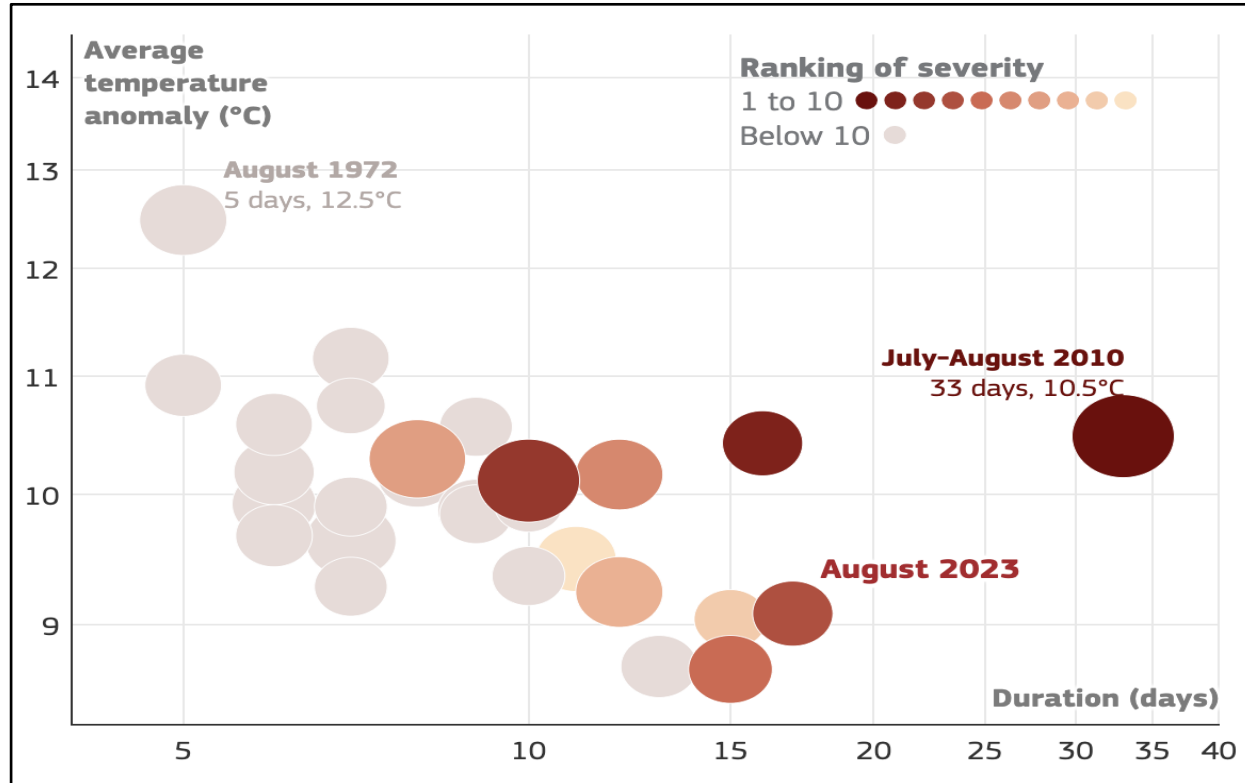
## Impact of CLIMATE CHANGE in Latin America



The lack of comprehensive policies addressing climate-induced migration leads to increased marginalisation, poverty and human rights violations, and, in some cases, displaced populations become vulnerable to recruitment by organised crime groups, worsening violence and insecurity.

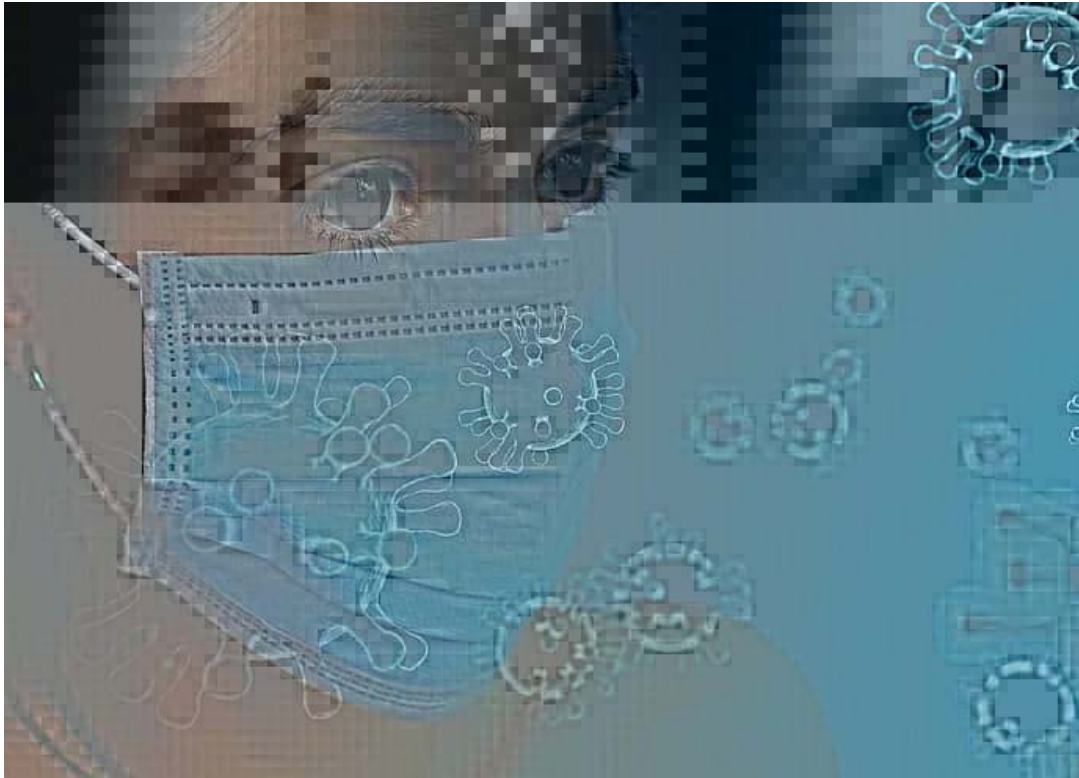


# Impact of CLIMATE CHANGE in Europe



Addressing the impact of climate change on SDG 16 requires urgent reforms to strengthen legal frameworks, improve transparency and foster inclusive governance.

## COVID-19 Pandemic



Major challenge to the impact on delivery linked to peace, justice and sound governance, generating a great deal of uncertainty precisely when and where more effort should be focused on strategic plans to achieve the related targets and indicators.

Interrupted or slowed down advancements in inclusive government, increased domestic and gender violence. Reduced the rule of law and equal access to justice for all, and peaceful societies.

Highlighted the need for more resilient and equitable healthcare systems

The year 2020 was intended to be the starting point of the Decade of Action for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

COVID-19 impeded the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for good governance and the rule of law.



## Impact of COVID-19 in Africa

The pandemic's aftermath is particularly tough on women. The crises have resulted in an upsurge in gender-based violence in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic has eroded the framework of democracy, reduced freedom of movement, restricted fundamental liberties, compromised transparency and ethics, and raised potential for illicit activities and corruption throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Many African countries experienced delays in judicial processes due to COVID-19 restrictions. Courts were closed or operated at reduced capacity, leading to a backlog of cases. In South Africa, the suspension of court activities delayed justice for many, particularly affecting vulnerable populations

The COVID-19 had an impact on election procedures. Only a few of the more than 20 African nations that were scheduled to hold elections in 2020 actually did so; several local and national elections were postponed



COVID-19's direct and indirect effects on the achievement of peace, justice, and strong institutions by 2030, differ with sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean witnessing the worst of the crisis

## Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America

Most Latin American countries were severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis

Smaller companies suffered the highest economic impact.

Led to rising unemployment and poverty, increasing social unrest and crime rates

Organised crime and drug cartels expanded.

increase in vulnerability and more groups being involved in crime and violence.

National reports also mention the repercussions of the pandemic on gender-based violence



Latin America and the Caribbean experienced the longest interruption of face-to-face classes among the regions, increasing the gap in learning opportunities and skills development.

# Impact of COVID-19 in Europe

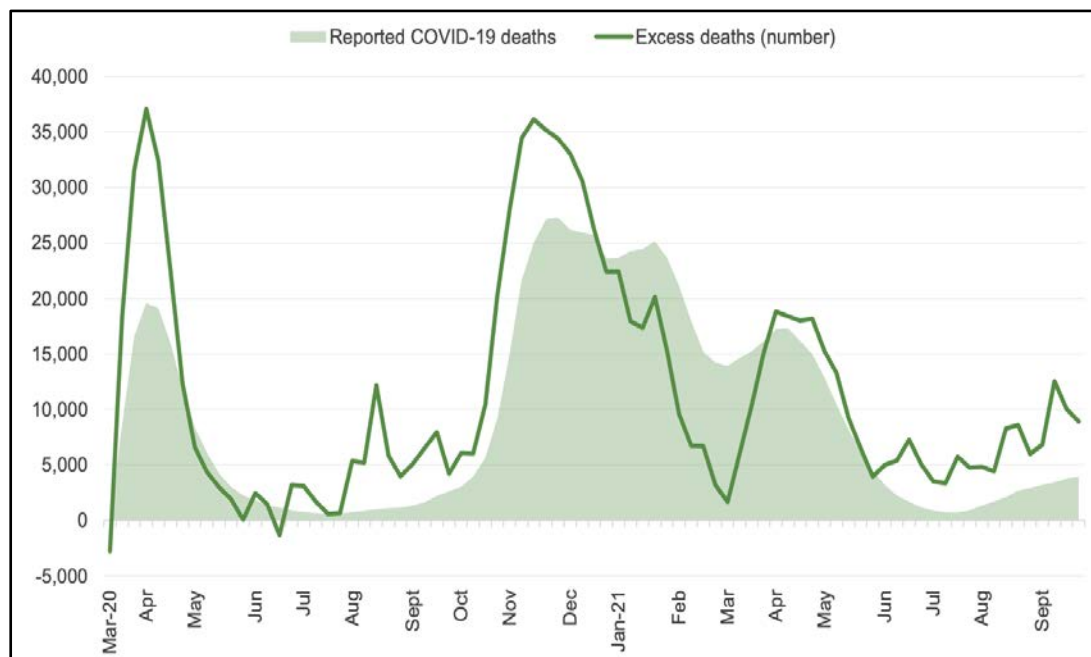
## Key insights:

Courts faced delays and backlogs, highlighting the need for adaptable, technology-supported judicial systems for timely legal recourse.

Emergency powers raised concerns over democratic backsliding, but digital platforms enhanced public engagement and information sharing, rebuilding trust.

Health systems and public institutions were overwhelmed, revealing the need to strengthen institutional frameworks for crisis adaptability and digitalisation.

Marginalised groups faced increased risks and limited access to services, emphasising the need for inclusive social policies to ensure equitable access during crises.



Moving forward, Europe will need to integrate these lessons into their governance models, fostering transparency, inclusivity and adaptability to better prepare for future global challenges and ensure the realisation of SDG 16.



## Conflict

SDG 16 covers all forms of organised and unorganised violence and abuse at all scales and expresses the need for a people-centred agenda.

In recent years, a new global challenge to peace has emerged: how to build and sustain peace within societies rather than only peace at the global level.

Significant attempts have been made by UN member states, non-governmental organisations, multilateral institutions, donor agencies and academic research institutions to track progress towards reaching SDG 16.

The achievement of SDG 16 requires a significant change in mindsets and approaches, coupled with global and local actions



One has to take cognisance of the fact that global and local peace forms the base for achieving the SDGs and is needed for the world's future



# Conflict in Africa

The median SDG Index score for sub-Saharan African countries is 54%, which means that the countries in these regions are 46% behind in reaching the SDGs

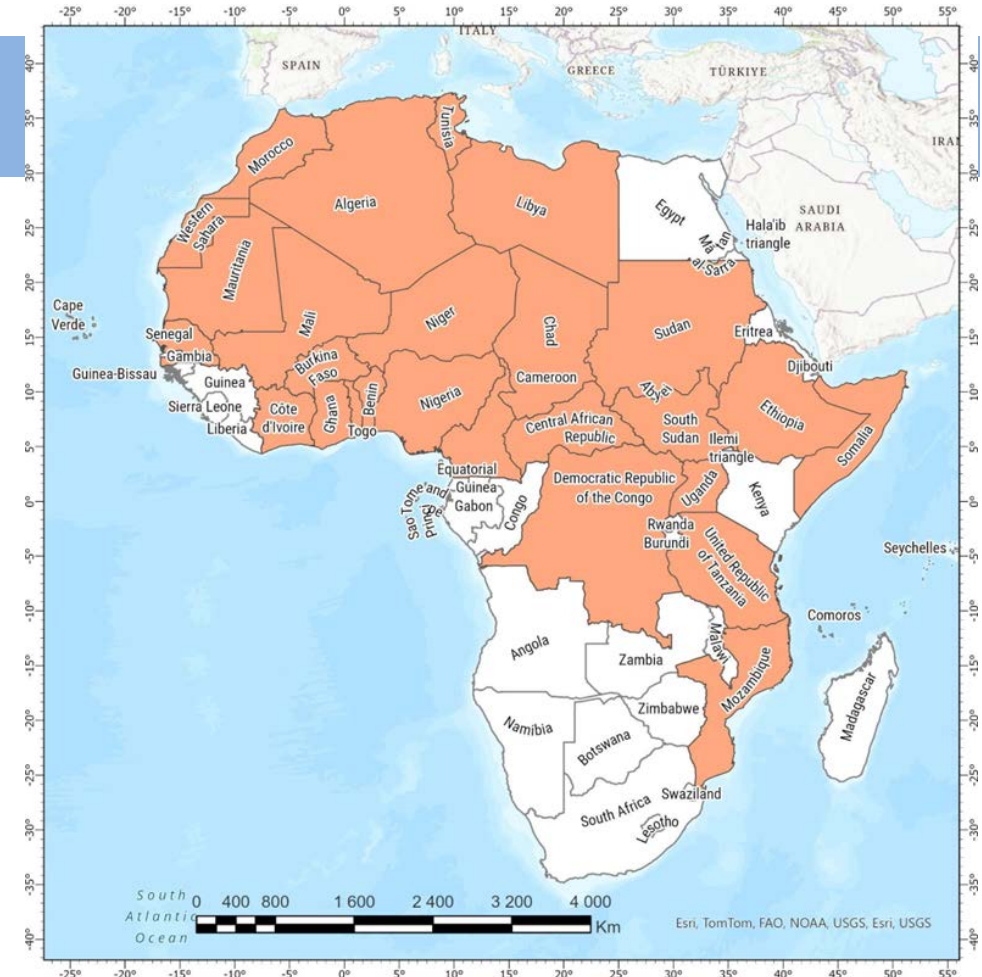
African leaders are in support of SDG 16

Championed the development of SDG16

Widespread conflict in Africa

The conflicts in Africa impact almost every aspect of life, such as underdevelopment and poverty, loss of life and property, human rights abuses and violations

Conflicts also force displacement of people in Africa, leading to current conflict situations and mental distress such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder



High levels of violence affect economic development: reducing economic investments – poverty, economic development, life expectancy and education outcomes

## Conflict in Latin America

Series of worrying data on conflicts in the region:

- Homicide rates have remained alarmingly high since the 1990s, making Latin America and the Caribbean one of the most violent regions in the world
- struggle with structural challenges like ineffective judicial systems, corruption and high levels of firearm possession, alongside short-term issues such as drug trafficking
- The influx of internally displaced persons from regional conflicts exacerbates housing shortages and places pressure on social services, which can lead to more local conflicts.



The pressure on resources and services can exacerbate social tensions, increase crime rates, and weaken trust in authorities, making it more difficult to ensure inclusive and effective governance.

## Conflict in Europe

Conflict-affected region	Key challenges to SDG 16	Targets affected
Ukraine	War crimes, judicial backlogs, migration crisis	16.3 (rule of law) 16.5 (anti-corruption)
Western Balkans	Ethnic divisions, political corruption, weak institutions	16.6 (effective institutions) 16.10 (freedom of information)
Poland & Hungary	Rise of nationalist movements, democratic backsliding	16.1 (reduce violence) 16.10 (freedom of expression)



The pressure on resources and services can exacerbate social tensions, increase crime rates, and weaken trust in authorities, making it more difficult to ensure inclusive and effective governance.



# Progress towards achieving SDG 16

Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies

STEEP RISE IN  
**CONFLICT-RELATED  
CIVILIAN DEATHS**

WITH AN OVER **50% SURGE** IN 2022,  
FUELED BY THE **WAR IN UKRAINE**

MORE THAN  
**108.4 MILLION PEOPLE**  
HAD BEEN FORCIBLY DISPLACED  
WORLDWIDE **AS OF END-2022**  
**2.5X THE NUMBER A DECADE AGO**

NEARLY  
**200,000**  
**TRAFFICKING VICTIMS**  
WERE DETECTED WORLDWIDE  
BETWEEN 2017 AND 2020  
BUT MANY MORE LIKELY  
REMAINED **UNDETECTED**

2021 SAW  
**THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF  
INTENTIONAL HOMICIDES**  
IN 20 YEARS  
**458,000 LIVES LOST**  
**9 IN 10 VICTIMS WERE MALE**

**YOUTH FACE UNDERREPRESENTATION IN POLITICS,**  
HINDERING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

**30** GLOBAL MEDIAN AGE

**51** AVERAGE AGE OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

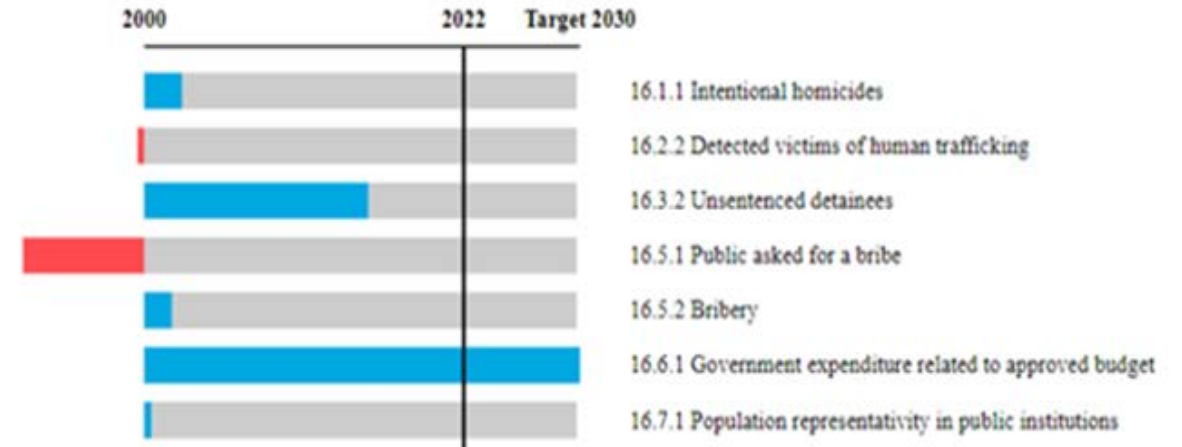
## Regional progress in Africa

- Africa has made some strides towards achieving SDG 16 by focusing on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, extending to providing access to justice for all and building more effective and accountable institutions at all levels.
- It was recorded in 2020 that most of the African states experienced major and significant challenges in achieving SDG 16.
- The states that experienced major challenges are located mainly in the sub-Saharan region, and those that experienced significant challenges are in northern and western Africa.
- The island states of Africa still experienced challenges, albeit less than their mainland counterparts in achieving SDG 16, whereas in 2020, no state in Africa was on track to achieving the SDG by 2030.



## Regional progress in Africa

A closer evaluation of the various targets related to the achievement of SDG 16 shows uneven achievement of the targets



- Quality and consistency of the data remains a challenge
- Despite efforts, Africa still faces significant challenges:
  - including limited resources
  - weak enforcement of laws
  - Conflict exacerbate vulnerabilities to trafficking and exploitation.



## Regional progress in Latin America

Homicide rates in this region have remained high since.

Several persistent structural issues contribute to this climate of violence:

- Weak rule of law.
- Substantial social inequality.
- High levels of youth unemployment create environments where crime and violence thrive.
- Drug production and trafficking.
- Widespread possession and use of firearms, exacerbate these challenges.

Data on illicit financial flows, arms seizures and the formal surrender or legalisation of illicit arms remains scarce.

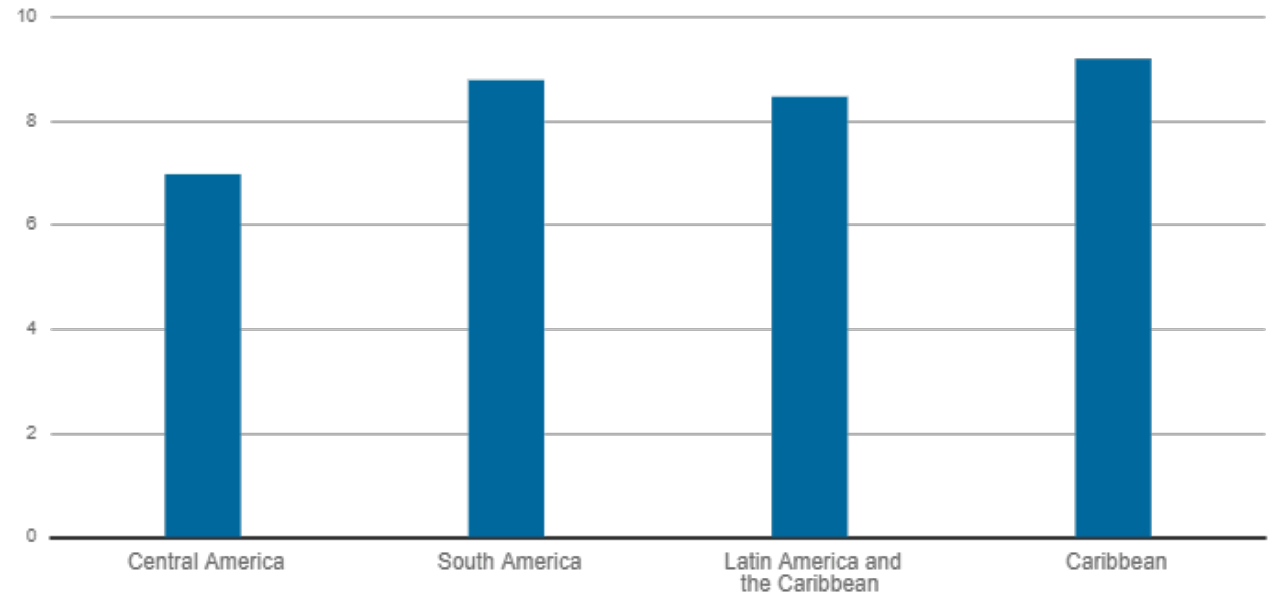


## Regional progress in Latin America

Human trafficking



Bribery incidence



## Regional progress in Europe

### Examples of regional progress in European countries

Norway: Achieved one of the lowest crime rates in Europe through comprehensive crime prevention and rehabilitation programmes

Sweden: Implemented national child protection programmes, including anti-trafficking initiatives and comprehensive support systems

Netherlands: Reformed judicial systems to reduce court backlogs and improve access to justice through online legal services

United Kingdom: Implemented anti-money laundering regulations and led international efforts to combat organised crime, with a focus on global asset recovery

Finland: Regularly ranked as one of the least corrupt countries globally, Finland continues to innovate transparency measures, such as open government data platforms

Denmark: Known for its robust public sector reform, which emphasises accountability and transparency through open government initiatives



## Regional progress in Europe

Ireland: Introduced participatory budgeting and citizen consultations to ensure more inclusive decision-making processes

European Union: Through platforms like the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU has enhanced the participation of Eastern European and Mediterranean countries in regional governance

Portugal: Expanded its e-government platforms to facilitate birth registration and legal identification

France: Strengthened freedom of information laws, expanding media protection and transparency

United Kingdom: Enhanced counterterrorism legislation and cross-border security cooperation within the EUROPOL framework

Netherlands: Expanded LGBTQ+ legal protections and anti-discrimination policies in employment







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## Case studies and best practices

The purpose of the case studies is to provide students with actual examples of good case studies that have attempted to address the indicators of the SDG

Each case study provides suggestions on how the case study can be replicated in other communities

# Africa: Rwanda: programme to support Anti-Corruption effective application of SDG 16 and related targets 16.5 and 16.6

Rwanda is a small, landlocked country, located in East Africa.

It is referred to as the "land of a thousand hills"

It is home to more than 13 million people.

Rwanda is home to three ethnic groups: Hutu (84%), Tutsi (15%), and Twa (1%).





# Africa: Rwanda: Anti-Corruption programme for an effective application of SDG 16 and related targets 16.5 and 16.6

## The Programme

Rwanda's anti-corruption strategy is distinctly influenced by its recent past of 1994 genocide. This anti-corruption focuses on the paths that Rwanda made when it established a rule-based government and a public service with strong integrity standards, thereby decreasing prospects for corruption.

## Results and impact of the programme

- The goal of Rwanda's anti-corruption framework was to create a public sector, values and upholds integrity, acknowledges and accountability and help to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- Rwanda has improved significantly over the past ten years, going from a score of 20.0% in 1996 to 70.8% in 2010.
- Regarding the impact commonly acknowledged that corruption hinders and negatively impacts a country's ability to progress,
- Corruption destroys public trust in government agencies, erodes the authority and legitimacy of the state, and discredits the rule of law.

## Possible replication

The programme directly and indirectly supported SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 4 (Quality Education) SGD 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent works and Economy growthy), SDG 10 (Inequality) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and accommodation). This Anti-corruption and bribery model has a high potential for replication by sub-Saharan Africa and developing nations.

# Africa: South Sudan – Strengthening the rule of law

## South Sudan

The republic of South Sudan became independent in 2011, separating from Sudan in 2005. It is a Landlocked country in East Africa. South Sudan has been involved in conflicts for the past two decades.

## The Programme

The Access to Justice and Rule of Law (A2J/RoL) Project supports the RoL institutions in South Sudan through a sector-wide holistic approach designed to increase the availability, affordability, adaptability and acceptability of justice services in the country

The country is affected by protracted conflicts, although a peace agreement was agreed in 2018, with the help of the UNDP's Access to Justice, Security and Human Rights Strengthening Programme aims to strengthen the rule of law in South Sudan by 2040.

SDG 16 stresses the need for strong institutions that are built on respect for human rights, effective rule of law, and good governance at all levels. Hence, this project focuses on 16.3 that promote the rule of law at the national and ensure equal access to justice for all

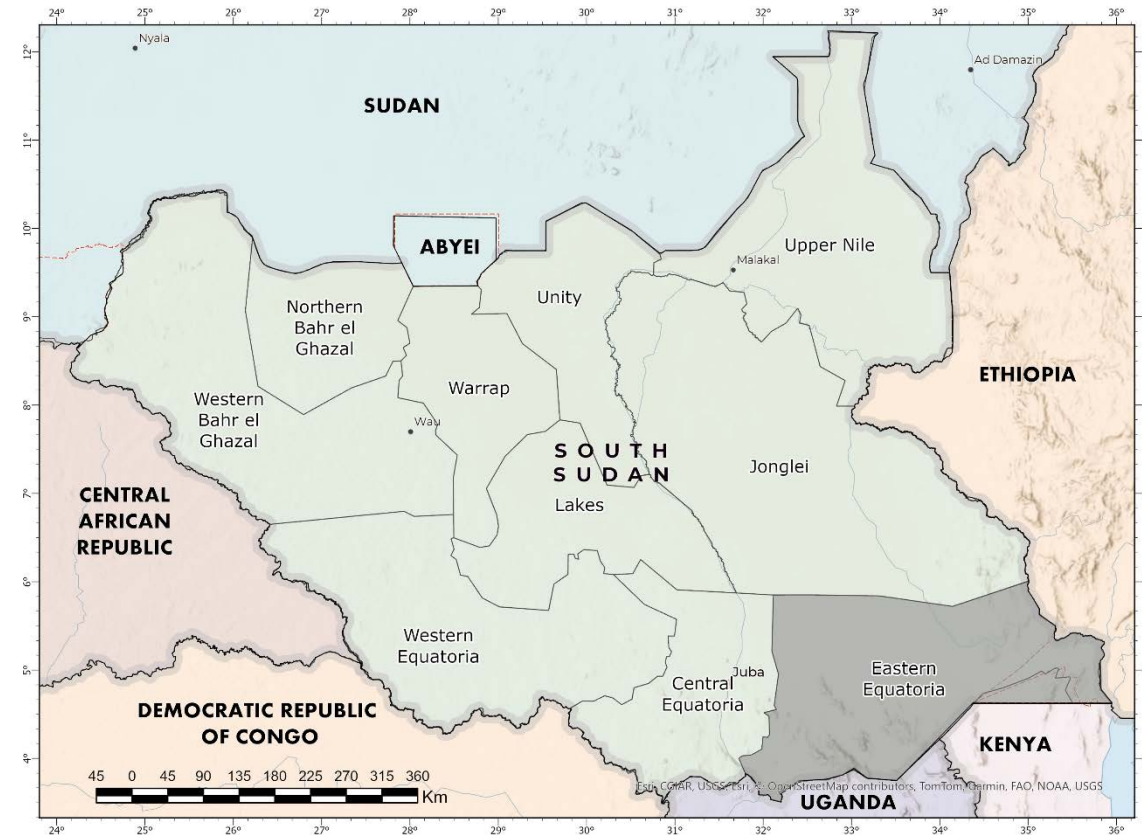


# Africa: South Sudan – Strengthening the rule of law

## Results and impact of the programme

The programme's implementation is ongoing, and results are reported per state and nationally. The programme's results and impact in South Sudan are discussed with reference to Eastern Equatoria as the results for this state focus on the challenges experienced due to the lack of rule of law.

- Six rule of law clubs were set up in secondary schools to increase a culture of lawfulness among young people. A total of 1 246 (of which 1 064 were females) were involved in this project
- An 85% improvement in the delivery of judgements by traditional leaders was reported, which led to increased confidence by the community in the traditional justice system.
- Four women lead nine of the newly established police-community relations committees.
- Two modern police posts and two B courts were completed and handed over to increase access to services in remote areas. These facilities were also equipped with furniture.





# Africa: Birth registrations in South Africa - Reaching the hard to reach

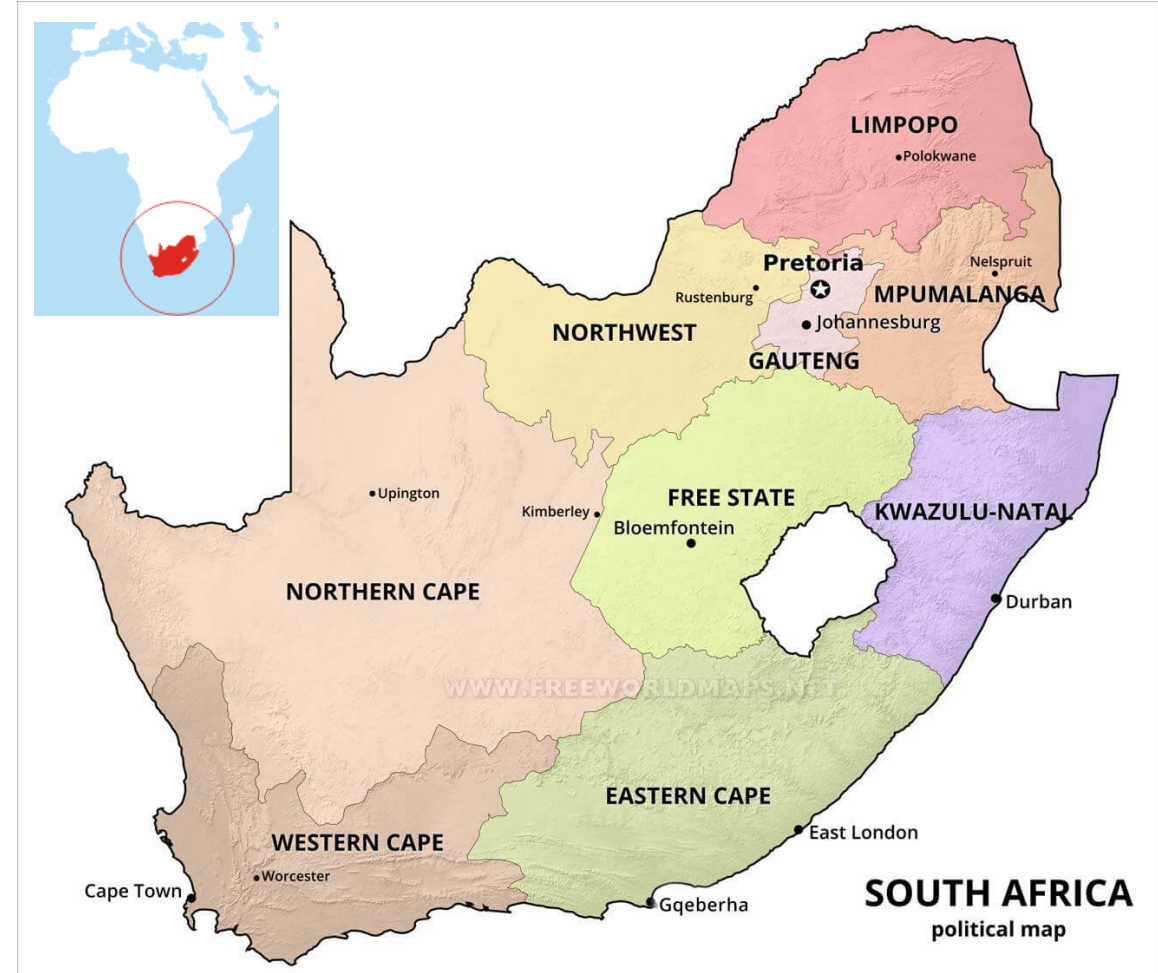
Although the history of the registration of births, deaths and marriages in South Africa dates back to the 1700s.

Population Register was implemented in 1972, but included only the White, Coloured and Indian groups at that stage, and Black South Africans were only included from 1986.

The distinction between population groups for registration of births, deaths and marriages was abolished and replaced by non-discriminatory legislation in 1992

The registration of Black South African children had many constraints, a major one being the lack of access to facilities to register a child's birth, especially in remote, rural and poorer areas.

- Negative implications of the non-registration of births:
- Limits development opportunities and future life chances of such children.
- They are unlikely to have a birth certificate, implying that they are legally not recognised.
- This makes it difficult for them to access health and education services and to obtain a passport.
- Such children are also vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking and other human rights violations.



# Africa: Birth registrations in South Africa - Reaching the hard to reach

## Results and impact of the programme:

- Improved access to the health system. This comprised construction of 1 300 new healthcare facilities from 1994 to 1999.
- Healthcare user fees were scrapped. This positively affected access to the health system, as Black South Africans had regarded user fees as a major obstacle to accessing the system
- The strengthening of antenatal and postnatal programmes increased awareness by families of the benefits of birth registration, thus making it easier for them to understand the benefits of participating in this process.
- The government implemented the child support grant scheme in 1998.
- Mobile programmes to make it easier for citizens to access social services, such as birth registration.
- The establishment of a fully democratic government during the early 1990s positively impacted civil registration, including birth registration.

## Sustainability and possibility for replication

There is general agreement that the success achieved by South Africa in increasing birth registration is remarkable, especially among those who are hard to reach.

The strategy followed by South Africa can be replicated and used as a model by countries in the Global South that are still struggling to improve their birth registration rate.



# Latin America: Mapping of the violence in the Amazon Region

The Amazon is a region of unparalleled ecological, cultural and economic significance, encompassing an extensive area of approximately 5.2 million km<sup>2</sup>, or 59% of Brazil's national territory.

The region continues to face socio-economic challenges, including limited access to infrastructure, education and healthcare for indigenous and riverine communities.

The increasing demand for agricultural expansion and resource extraction has intensified land conflicts

The Brazilian Forum on Public Safety (2021), in collaboration with the Institute for Climate and Society and researchers from the Research Group of Emerging Territories and Resistance Networks in the Amazon at the University of the State of Pará, developed the project entitled "Mapping of Violence in the Amazon Region".



# Latin America: Mapping of the violence in the Amazon Region

## Results and impact of the programme

- The project focuses on three core areas: land use, criminal activity and the role of public security.
- By analysing these aspects, the project provides insights into the overlap between environmental issues and public security.
- The aim is not to exhaust the subject but to highlight the intersections between unlawful actions and territorial disputes
- Environmental crimes in the Legal Amazon includes land grabbing, illegal fires, timber exploitation and the rise of illegal mining.
- link between organised crime and lethal violence, showing that homicide rates in these areas exceed national averages.
- Significant gaps in governance, such as a lack of coordination between state and federal agencies and insufficient training for those working with native populations.

## Sustainability and possibility for replication

The Mapping of Violence in the Amazon Region project contributes to sustainability by fostering social justice, strengthening governance and promoting the protection of human rights and environmental defenders. By systematically documenting conflicts, land disputes and violence, the initiative provides crucial data for policymakers, civil society and law enforcement, enabling evidence-based interventions that support peacebuilding and sustainable development.

The possibility of replication depends on adapting the methodology to different regional contexts.

## Latin America: *The Escazú Agreement*

The Escazú Agreement is the first legally binding treaty globally to address environmental human rights defenders specifically.

It is also the first regional environmental agreement for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This historic treaty safeguards and upholds the rights of environmental defenders, including civil society organisations, NGOs and individual environmental human rights advocates.

It places special emphasis on groups leading climate action, such as women, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities





## Latin America: *The Escazú Agreement*

### Results and Impact of the programme

First agreement globally to include specific protections for environmental human rights defenders.

24 countries have enacted freedom of information laws

76% of these countries have adopted provisions within their environmental legislation to promote public participation in decision-making processes

20 countries allow individuals or groups to bring legal actions in defence of the environment, empowering citizens to advocate for environmental protection.

7 countries have implemented specific legal measures aimed at safeguarding environmental defenders, ensuring greater protection for those advocating environmental rights.

### Sustainability and possibility for replication

The Escazú Agreement promotes sustainability by establishing rights to access environmental information, public participation and justice, which are essential for ensuring long-term environmental governance and human rights protection. It emphasises transparency, accountability and citizen empowerment, fostering sustainable practices in environmental decision-making.

The agreement's focus on protecting human rights defenders and promoting inclusive participation provides a model for replication in other regions with similar environmental and human rights challenges.



## Latin America: Justice 4.0, Brazil

Brazil is known for having one of the highest volumes of lawsuits globally, with

- 31.5 million new cases,
- 30.3 million closed cases and
- 81.4 million pending cases in 2022.

The Brazilian judiciary manages some of the heaviest caseloads in the world, with 6 747 cases per judge.

E-justice in Brazil has occurred in stages:

- 2004 to 2013, the country shifted from paper-based processes to digital court proceedings.
- 2014 to 2020, this transitioned to the automation of judicial workflows
- 2021, courts have integrated artificial intelligence to improve efficiency.

The creation of Justice 4.0 Centres further expanded judges' reach, overcoming geographic limitations.

By 2022, only 1% of new cases were paper-based, marking a significant shift towards a fully digital judicial system that has helped reduce the backlog.



# Latin America: Justice 4.0, Brazil

## Results and Impact of the programme

- Digital Platform of the Judiciary (PDPJ-BR)
- Codex: Unifying Court Case Data
- Single Service Portal
- AI: Empowering informed decision-making
- Digital solutions in the Brazilian judiciary
- Judiciary policies in Brazil



## Sustainability and possibility for replication

Brazil's judicial digital transformation demonstrates significant sustainability potential and offers opportunities for replication in other countries.

## Europe: Decidim, Barcelona – a participatory democracy platform

Barcelona has long been a hub of civic activism, with strong grassroots movements advocating political transparency and citizen participation. Spanish political landscape has been marked by periods of political instability, corruption scandals and low trust in government institutions. Citizens sought greater control over decision-making processes, particularly regarding urban planning, budget allocations and social policies.

In response to these demands, the Barcelona City Council launched Decidim, a digital platform designed to enhance participatory democracy.

The initiative emerged as part of a broader movement towards open government, seeking to leverage technology to bridge the gap between institutions and citizens.

By providing a transparent and inclusive space for civic engagement, Decidim aimed to combat political disengagement and restore trust in democratic processes.





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## Europe: Decidim, Barcelona – a participatory democracy platform

### Results and Impact of the programme

The platform has led to a measurable increase in citizen participation, with thousands of proposals submitted and deliberated.

Participation rates among younger demographics and traditionally marginalised groups have risen, demonstrating the platform's ability to engage previously disengaged sectors of the population.

By making decision-making processes publicly accessible, the platform has reduced opportunities for corruption and backroom deals.

The initiative has empowered citizens by fostering a culture of co-governance.

### Sustainability and possibility for replication

One of the key strengths of Decidim lies in its potential for replication in diverse political and cultural contexts. As an open-source platform, it can be adapted to different governance models, allowing cities and institutions worldwide to tailor its functionalities according to their needs.



# Europe: Helsinki's Open Government Initiative

Helsinki, the capital of Finland, operates within a strong democratic framework characterised by high levels of institutional trust, low corruption and a commitment to open governance.

Ranks among the world's least corrupt countries.

This political culture has provided a solid foundation for implementing open government initiatives aimed at strengthening public participation and accountability.

Finland is a highly developed country with one of the highest internet penetration rates in Europe, making it well equipped to implement digital transparency tools.

Finland has faced challenges related to bureaucratic opacity in certain administrative sectors, prompting calls for greater accessibility to government data.

Helsinki launched a comprehensive open government initiative to enhance public participation, transparency and access to information.





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## Europe: Helsinki's Open Government Initiative

### Results and Impact of the programme

The initiative has empowered citizens to monitor public expenditures, assess policy decisions, and participate in governance processes more effectively.

A reduction in administrative secrecy, as public officials are now expected to provide clear justifications for their decisions, fostering a culture of accountability.

The creation of interactive online platforms where citizens can track municipal projects, access real-time budgetary information and contribute to policy discussions.

communities that were previously underrepresented in governance — such as immigrants and young people — now have structured opportunities to influence policies that affect their lives.

Municipal authorities have been able to streamline bureaucratic processes, reducing inefficiencies and improving service delivery.

### Sustainability and possibility for replication

Helsinki's open government initiative offers a highly replicable model for cities aiming to enhance transparency, accountability and public engagement in governance. The initiative's foundation is its strong open data policy, which allows public access to government documents, budgets and decision-making processes

# Europe: Umeå's Gender-Responsive Urban Planning

Umeå, a city in northern Sweden, is widely recognised for its progressive policies on gender.

Strong political commitment to gender equity, embedded in both national legislation and municipal governance structures.

Umeå has taken a pioneering role in integrating gender perspectives into urban development to create public spaces that are safe, accessible and welcoming for all citizens.

The city has experienced rapid demographic growth, with increasing numbers of students, migrants and elderly residents shaping urban dynamics.

Traditional urban planning models often failed to consider gender-specific mobility patterns, safety concerns and access to public services, disproportionately affecting women and other marginalised groups.

Recognising these gaps, Umeå launched an innovative gender-responsive urban planning initiative to ensure that urban design promotes equity, safety and inclusivity.





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## Europe: Umeå's Gender-Responsive Urban Planning

### Results and Impact of the programme

Tangible improvements in urban safety, accessibility and social inclusion.

Redesign of public spaces based on gender-sensitive data collection. By analysing how different demographic groups navigate the city — especially at night — Umeå has introduced better lighting, increased public transport accessibility and redesigned pedestrian pathways to enhance safety.

More participatory approach to urban development, where diverse community groups, including women's organisations and disability advocacy groups, are actively involved in planning processes.

Urban spaces that reflect the needs of a broader population, reducing social inequalities and fostering a stronger sense of community ownership.

Economic benefits, as inclusive urban planning has made Umeå a more attractive city for investment, tourism and new residents.

By ensuring that public infrastructure caters to the needs of all citizens, the city has strengthened its reputation as a model for sustainable and inclusive urban development.

### Sustainability and possibility for replication

The gender-responsive urban planning initiative in Umeå has significant potential for replication in other cities, particularly those with a commitment to gender equality and inclusive urban development.





## **Prof. Dr. Luciana Brandli**

Titular professor at the University of Passo Fundo /  
College of Engineering and Architecture  
brandli@upf.br



## **Prof. Dr. Rudi Pretorius**

College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences,  
University of South Africa  
pretorw@unisa.ac.za



## **Prof. Dr. Dr. Walter Leal**

Head of Research & Transfer Center Sustainability &  
Climate Change Management at HAW Hamburg  
walter.leal2@haw-hamburg.de

# Thank you!



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