



NEWSLETTER

DEAR MEMBERS OF SDSN SOUTH AFRICA

We are happy to share the first official newsletter of SDSN South Africa with you. From now on, you may expect these to show up in your inbox every 3 months. We will use the newsletter to disseminate information regarding projects and opportunities for collaboration. We are also eager to share news about the activities of our member institutions that address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or the Paris Climate Agreement. Please [complete this form](#) to share any content that you would like us to feature on the [SDSN South Africa website](#), the newsletter, [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and/or [YouTube](#).

INTRODUCING VIRTUAL MEMBER COFFEE CHATS

This year sees the launch of our online SDSN Member Coffee Chats. These are informal, online gatherings that will happen every other month, starting on 6 March 2023 (08:00–09:00). Each Coffee Chat will give a different member an opportunity to “spotlight” their initiatives on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement, and there will also be time for all members to share informally. Please [register here](#) for our first coffee chat.

Global Solutions Forum 2023: Congratulations to the NMU Team

Run as a global initiative by the SDSN in partnership with G-STIC, the GIZ, and PANORAMA, the annual Global Solutions Forum (GSF) elevates cutting-edge solutions for sustainable development to a global platform. Each year, a select number of SDSN networks are invited to participate, giving all member institutions in that network the opportunity to present



a solution and stand a chance of being selected as the winning solution of that network, being invited to the solution on an international stage. This year, SDSN South Africa was lucky to be one of the networks invited to participate, with Nelson Mandela University (NMU) representing South Africa during the G-STIC Rio Conference in Brazil on 15 February (15:30-17:00 SAST). Along with the other successful SDSN members who were invited to showcase their solutions in Rio de Janeiro, Prof. Darelle van Greunen from NMU presented their Swiss-South African KaziHealth Initiative, which aims to improve teacher health through multidisciplinary lifestyle interventions. You can watch their GSF presentation [here](#).

#GSF2023 invited solutions speaking to the theme of “Health and Well-being for a Sustainable Future” (SDG 3) – a choice influenced in no small part by the disruption we have witnessed by the pandemic in recent years. #GSF2023 aims to extract the many solutions to health challenges that exist around the world and provide the very best of them with a global platform to enable scaling and maximise their impact for SDG achievement. The G-STIC Rio conference where the solutions will be showcased is hosted by Fiocruz, the most prominent institution for science and technology in health in Latin America, and leading institution of SDSN’s thematic network, Health for all. Here, a group of five selected global innovators from SDSN’s national and regional networks will present their breakthrough efforts to a carefully chosen audience of fellow academics who can help translate projects to other contexts, business leaders who are able to deploy at scale, policymakers who can help shape regulatory foundations, as well as non-governmental actors including donors, civil society, and youth.

For a short videographic overview of all 5 solutions pitched at #GSF2023, click [here](#).

Save the date: Africa Week 2023 and our first in-person Member meeting



The biennial Africa Week event takes place from 22–26 May this year at [Future Africa](#), the University of Pretoria pan-African Platform for Transdisciplinary Research and Scholarship. Africa Week 2023 will combine a series of topical dialogues, uplifting cultural events and a convergence of African and global scientific networks under the theme ‘Open Africa, Open Science’.

This African science leadership summit will focus on exploring African and wider global responses to the imperatives of open access to the public record of science, open data, and openness to society, with transdisciplinarity as a powerful approach to addressing the most complex and contested global challenges. The event will also seek concrete action towards strengthening global scientific collaboration and building equitable global partnership models.

SDSN South Africa will capitalise on this strategic event, which will see leaders of Higher Education Institutions from Africa and across the world convene with key stakeholders from multiple sectors, to host our first in-person SDSN Member meeting, as well as our first in-person Local Leadership Council meeting. We are excited to state [Ms Eve de la Mothe Karoubi](#), head of the networks team at the SDSN Global Secretariat and secretarial focal point for SDSN South Africa, has confirmed that she will join us. We will also welcome Mr. Faustin Gasheja, senior manager at SDSN and coordinator for the African networks. Finally, we are inviting all the network managers of regional and national networks in Africa to join us at this event as well.

All in all, we urge you to join us at Future Africa from Wednesday afternoon until Friday (24–26 May, 2023). We are still waiting for the exact time of our in-person member meeting to be confirmed, but please save the date until we can confirm with more detail. Please [reach out to us](#) if you have any questions.

Transcultural Leadership Summit


As part of its workstream on culture and sustainable development, SDSN South Africa and the UP Centre for the Future of Work (CFOW) have partnered to form part of the Transcultural Caravan Network (TCN), which was born from the pioneering work in the field by the Leadership Excellence Institute Zeppelin in Germany. As part of this initiative, the 7th Transcultural Leadership Summit (TLS) took place on 10–11 November 2022 as a



hybrid event with several satellite events being held simultaneously in 4 different countries, including South Africa. The main event took place at Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen (Germany) while satellite TCN partners included the University of Lodz (Poland), the University of Pretoria (South Africa), Ho-Chi-Minh City (Vietnam), and Furtwangen University (also Germany). SDSN South Africa Head of Marketing and Communications, Elma Akob, was physically present in Germany to host the 'main' TLS alongside Tobias Grunfelder from Zeppelin University.

At the local satellite TLS in Pretoria (see our highlights video), SDSN South Africa and the CFOW hosted a local morning programme, complemented by the afternoon hybrid programme that saw all the 5 events join online in a hybrid format. Leaders from other SDSN South Africa Member Institutions, business, academia, NGOs and the student population were invited to experience a day filled with the sounds, taste, sights and moves (yes!) of South Africa's many cultures while they engaged in workshops, panel discussions, and plenaries.





The theme of the 2022 TLS was “Perspectives from the Future(s)”, and on the second day of the summit participants engaged in an online Futures Literacy Laboratory to reimagine the future of Transcultural Leadership. With the Future being unpredictable amidst the increased complexity to global value creation brought about by climate change, pandemics, wars, and many other factors that radically challenge our way of living and cooperating, the participants found the theme particularly topical. The need to actively shape our future(s) by establishing new connections, transforming leadership, and developing commonalities across different cultures, became more clear than ever. One of the many highlights was when Dr. Thelse Godewerth Chief People Officer of our main sponsor Rolls-Royce Power Systems AG, reminded us about the importance of self- leadership: ‘if it is to be, it’s up to me’. The ability to engage in deeper and more fruitful collaboration across cultures thus begins with us and the willingness to confront our perceptions and implicit biases, and to unlearn and relearn new concepts.

The work of the TCN continues this year with an international student research trip, a transcultural lecture series and winter school, and another TLS in November, all in partnership with the TCN members around the globe.

Watch this space for the call for participation in the student research projects that will be released soon. We urge all our SDSN South Africa members to join in these initiatives.

Another round of Universities for Goal 13



In 2022, SIEMENS Gamesa partnered with SDSN (Global) to launch the first installment of the 'Universities for Goal 13' student competition, which saw multidisciplinary student teams from five global SDSN Member Institutions compete with each other to develop climate solutions. As host of SDSN South

Africa, the University of Pretoria (UP) was invited to participate, along with Arizona State University (United States), Göttingen University (Germany), Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), and Tsinghua University (China). You may remember that the UP Team Tujenge (meaning 'let's build' in Swahili) took second place for their solar powered plasma water treatment unit ([read more](#) or [watch the video](#)), while Tsinghua University took the 10 000 USD first prize for their digital solution, "[Byte Rainforest: A new pathway to realize the intangible value of tropical rainforest.](#)"

This year, the partnership has launched the second round of the competition, and we are very excited that Nelson Mandela University has accepted the invitation to represent SDSN South Africa on the international stage. There will be several rounds of evaluation before the winners will be announced during the virtual International Conference on Sustainable Development conference in September, and we will keep you updated so that you may support the South Africa team.

COVID-19 and Implications for Development Cooperation with Religious Communities in Southern Africa



On the 22nd of August 2022, religious leaders, multilateral representatives, academics and government representatives from Southern Africa met at the University of Pretoria to discuss lessons learnt from the region's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This Regional Forum on Religion and Covid-19 in Southern Africa focused on understanding the role of religious actors in dealing with the pandemic, the role of information and resource availability and the general impact of decisions made by the government on the development of communities. The event was organised as a partnership between SDSN South Africa, Humboldt University, World Vision, the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria, the International Network for Religious Communities and Sustainable Development (IN//RCSD), and the international Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). Read more [here](#).

We're working on our two-year plan

SDSN South Africa is planning ahead, and we invite all our member institutions to send us news about SDG-related activities you are planning for 2023-2024. We would love to support your initiatives by creating publicity and, where appropriate, possibilities for partnership. Please send anything you would like included in our two-year plan before the end of February.

South Africa SDG Hub launches innovative research tool



South African SDG Hub

The South African SDG Hub hosted by the University of Pretoria, is revolutionizing the way policy makers access essential research. With a new cutting-edge feature, called Intelligent Search, finding the information needed to inform policy decisions is becoming significantly easier.

The Intelligent Search tool can be accessed here: <https://sasdgghub.up.ac.za/>. You begin by uploading any PDF file, the machine then reads it and recommends all the articles that are relevant to it.

The South African SDG Hub hosts more than 150 000 research articles, and uses machine learning to classify these articles in terms of one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Hub's founder, Associate Professor Willem Fourie, said: "Users get to the most relevant research on our site by entering a search term. But it's not always easy to know which search terms are relevant. We realised that many of our users are busy writing something, be it a policy, or be it reviewing legislation. So we thought instead of them deciding what the most relevant keywords are, let them give us the PDF they are working on, and our machine-learning algorithm will scan it, and suggest relevant articles. We want as many people as possible to use the site – NGOs, individuals, anybody. It gives them access to research for free – and it is to the benefit of both researchers and users of their research".

Reassuringly, any PDF that users provide is not saved and thus does not remain on the platform's servers. The system is set up in such a way that the information is not visible to anybody except the user, and only on their computer. Here is a link that explains how Intelligent Search works: <https://youtu.be/2arEu68bqPQ>

Meet the Network Chair



Prof Tawana Kupe
Network Chair
Vice-Chancellor and Principal: University of Pretoria

Local Leadership Council



Mr Akum Fonteh
Executive Director: Institute for
Security Studies



Prof Teboho Moja
Clinical Professor of Higher
Education, New York University



Dr Lindiwe Sibanda
Director: ARUA Centre of Excellence
in Sustainable Food Systems



Dr Anja Hallacker
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