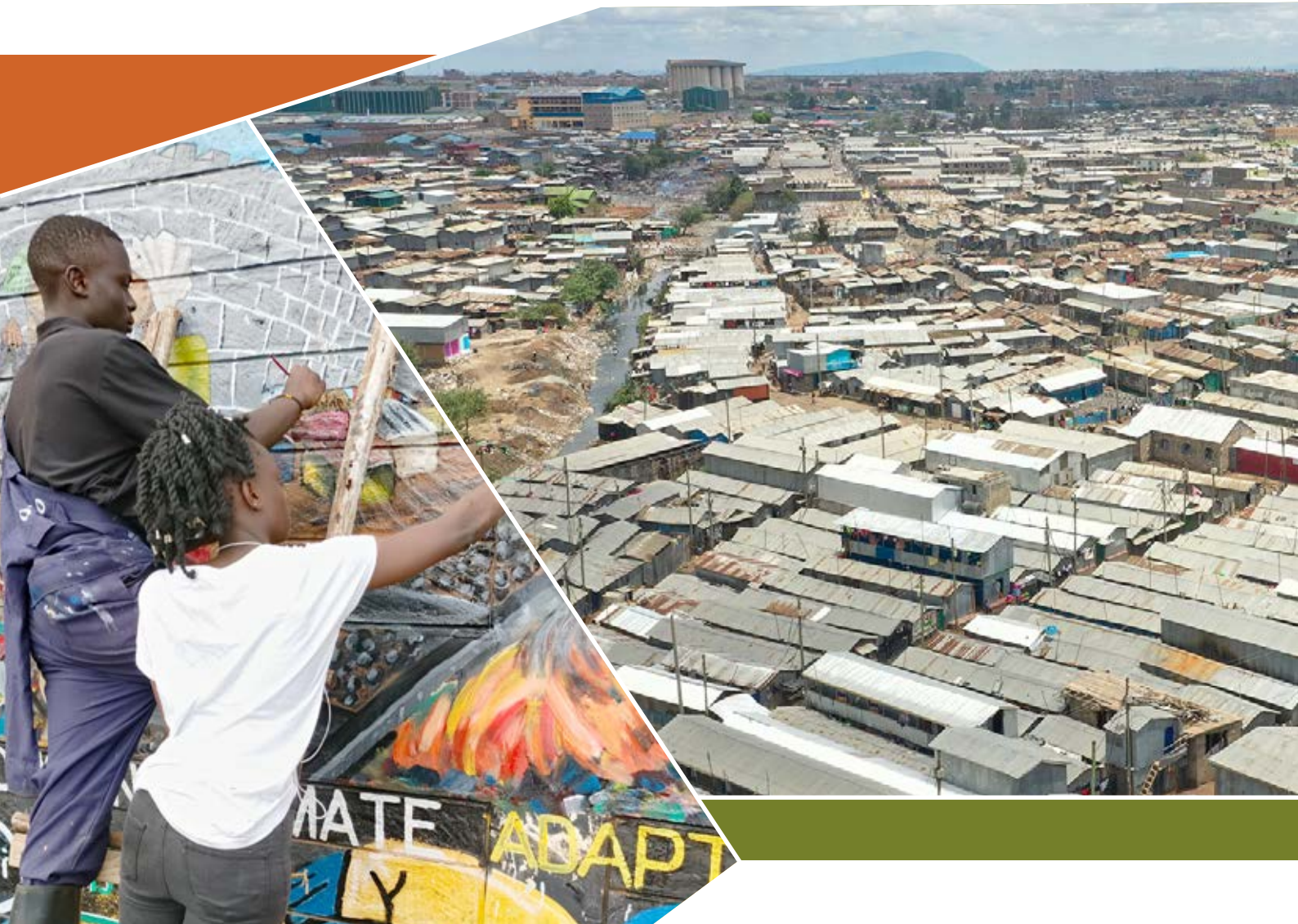




Shack Dwellers International Kenya

Annual Report 2024

Making Slums Visible





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Who is Shack Dwellers International Kenya?



SDI Kenya shares Muungano wa Wanavijiji's vision of creating inclusive cities, where low-income communities have access to adequate housing and services, enabling them to live with dignity. As an affiliate of Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a global network operating in over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, SDI Kenya mobilizes thousands of the most vulnerable women, men, and youth. These communities are brought together through dynamic savings schemes, creating a network at the settlement, city, and national levels. This network aims to drive a collective, bottom-up change agenda for inclusive and resilient cities, influencing global development agendas.

With its expertise and experience, SDI-Kenya is well-positioned to champion the cause of inclusive cities in Kenya.

Institutional Statements



Vision

Creating inclusive cities, where low-income communities have access to adequate housing and services, and can live with dignity



Mission

To support the urban poor through movement building, agenda setting, and setting precedents in redefining how society thinks about community-led urban development



Advocacy Goal

Making slums visible



Tagline

Inclusive Cities for the Urban Poor



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Highlights of 2024/25



President William Ruto acknowledges community efforts in river restoration at Kombgreen Solutions, Korogocho.

SDI Kenya and Muungano Wa Wanavijiji were recognized by H.E. President William Samoei Ruto, PhD, at the launch of the Nairobi River Regeneration Project, which took place at Komb Green Solutions, one of Muungano wa Wanavijiji's climate groups, in Korogocho.

The President acknowledged Muungano wa Wanavijiji's efforts to support youth from informal settlements in restoring Nairobi's rivers.

Emergency Response to the April – May 2024 Floods

When the April–May 2024 floods swept through Kenya, thousands of families lost their homes and belongings overnight. In Mathare, the devastation was compounded by demolitions along the riverbanks, leaving already vulnerable households with nowhere to turn.

Through a rapid needs assessment, NLGF identified urgent priorities and quickly mobilized KES 3.6 million to support affected families. Food packages, blankets, and sanitary supplies were distributed to over 2,200 households across Nairobi, Kisumu, Homa Bay, Garissa, and Nakuru. In Nairobi alone, 1,650 families in Mathare, Huruma, Mukuru, and Kibera received lifesaving assistance. Beyond providing relief, the response reflected the resilience and solidarity of communities facing disaster side by side.



SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji leaders offload emergency relief supplies for Mathare families affected by the April–May 2024 floods

Turning Ideas into Action



Joseph Kimani presents SDI Kenya's people-centered approach to inclusive urban transformation at Cornell University.

In April 2024, Joseph Kimani, Executive Director of SDI Kenya, spent three enriching weeks at Cornell University's College of Architecture, Art,

and Planning, hosted by the Mui Ho Center for Cities. During his time there, Kimani shared SDI Kenya's powerful, people-centered approach to urban transformation anchored in inclusivity, movement building, and equity.

He emphasized that the heart of SDI's work is its engagement with individuals and communities: SDI Kenya offers technical support, while Muungano wa Wanavijiji (the Federation of Slum Dwellers) grows from within communities, sets the agenda. This approach ensures that the movement, not the NGO, drives the change, maximizing impact and authenticity.

Kimani described the collaboration with Cornell as an opportunity to "deposit our experience within the university," creating a bridge between grassroots knowledge and academic insight. Through this platform, academic knowledge meets lived experience, sparking practical solutions and shared growth.



Letter from the ED

As I take this moment to reflect on 2024, first, we must appreciate the resilience that communities have shown. This year was not an easy one for the communities we stand with; there were evictions, floods, and a range of social justice challenges that tested us all.

In times of crisis, it is always the most vulnerable who bear the brunt, particularly women and children. Many women continue to be excluded from social and economic opportunities simply because of their gender, compounding the daily struggles they face as urban residents.

Despite these challenges, SDI Kenya reaffirmed our commitment to building inclusive cities where slum dwellers and the urban poor have access to land, secure housing, and essential services.

I want to thank my dedicated team at SDI Kenya for facing these challenges head-on, rising to the occasion, and often working overtime to ensure that we could stand with as many communities as possible, including taking steps to strengthen our own mental well-being and capacity to care for others.

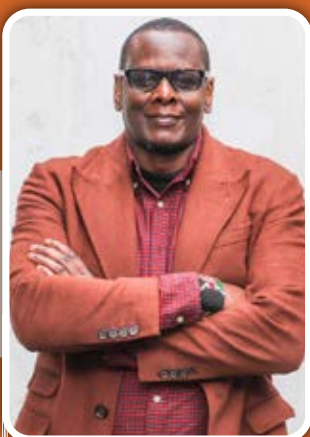
We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners fellow civil society organizations, academia, county governments, and all allies who continue to believe in the power of community-led change. Your commitment and collaboration remind us that transforming cities is not the work of one actor alone but a collective responsibility.

As we look ahead to 2025, we are excited about turning our vision for resilience hubs into a reality, safe, community-owned spaces where residents can access information on disaster preparedness, share data, learn new skills, and organize to address the challenges they face together.

In addition, we are placing a renewed focus on housing improvement as one of our flagship areas for 2025. Safe, dignified housing is the foundation for thriving communities, and we will continue to work alongside communities and partners to push for solutions that secure this basic right for all.

Thank you for walking this journey with us for your partnership, your solidarity, and your unwavering belief that communities must always be at the center, at all costs. We look forward to continuing this important work together as we build cities that leave no one behind.

Joseph Kimani, SDI Kenya ED



Letter from SDI President

As President of Slum Dwellers International, it is my honour to reflect on the past year and share my gratitude for the resilience, determination, and solidarity that continue to define our global federation.

Across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, SDI federations and their communities faced profound challenges from forced evictions and climate disasters to deepening inequalities that push the urban poor to the margins. Yet through it all, the courage and self-organization of slum dwellers remind the world that real change begins and endures at the community level.

In every city and settlement where SDI is present, communities continue to organize savings groups, collect vital settlement data, negotiate with authorities, and push for secure tenure, adequate housing, and access to basic services. These collective actions show the power of federated networks to influence urban policies and hold institutions accountable.

I want to thank our national affiliates, community leaders, partners, donors, and allies who make this work possible. Your collaboration and trust allow us to scale local solutions, amplify our voices globally, and demonstrate that people living in informal settlements are not passive recipients of aid but active agents of change.

As we look to the future, SDI remains committed to deepening grassroots organizing, strengthening partnerships, and expanding innovative solutions that put people first, from building resilience hubs to improving housing, livelihoods, and access to essential services. Together, we can transform our cities from the ground up and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you for standing in solidarity with us. We look forward to another year of collective action, hope, and progress.

Joe Muturi, President, Slum Dwellers International (SDI)



SDI Kenya Strategic Plan 2023-2027

SDI Kenya and Muungano Wa Wanavijiji are committed to taking a programmatic approach, guided by our Strategic Plan and Theory of Change, to drive transformation in Kenya's informal settlements. In our programs and partnerships, our goal is to contribute to as many outcomes as possible. Rather than being implementers of discrete projects, we aspire to be drivers of long-term, multi-sectoral programs and initiatives that substantially improve the lives of the urban poor at scale.

Drawing on our extensive experience in the informal settlement sector, our Strategic Plan 2022-2027

embodies our collective knowledge on affecting real change in the lives of impoverished communities. We firmly believe that the residents of Kenya's slums and informal settlements are best positioned to formulate strategies for scalable, bottom-up change. We encourage both state and non-state development partners to read our strategy and collaborate with us in developing programs that enable us to achieve our goals.

In partnership with you, we are confident that we can create a meaningful and lasting impact in the communities of the urban poor.

SDI Kenya Theory of Change

Our overall intended impact is that SDI-Kenya's work is the creation of inclusive cities and towns where slum dwellers and the urban poor have adequate access to land, Housing, and basic services.

Muungano wa Wanavijiji and SDI Kenya Theory of Change

The overall intended impact of Muungano and SDI-Kenya's work is for a social movement of slum dwellers to drive the creation of inclusive and climate-friendly cities where the lives of the urban poor are substantively improved.

Impacts

Good economic livelihoods

Safety and security in settlements

Upgraded, climate-friendly settlements and housing

Improved health and well being

Outcomes

Quality education

Pro-poor data driven development

Institutionalized collaboration between the urban poor and government

Secure land tenure for the urban poor

What SDI Kenya does at the Settlement, City, Global, and Organizational levels

Settlement Level Pathway

Community-Led Evidence in Times of Crisis



Community members in Mathare navigate the aftermath of devastating April 2024 floods, which left widespread destruction and displaced thousands of families.

In April 2024, Kenya endured one of its most devastating flood seasons in recent memory. Relentless rains swept through urban neighborhoods and rural regions alike, displacing hundreds of thousands of people and leaving widespread destruction in their wake.

In response, President Ruto issued a mandatory 48-hour evacuation order on April 30, targeting communities along riparian zones in Nairobi, including the densely inhabited Mathare Valley. While government assurances promised shelter, enumeration, and prioritized social housing, implementation was erratic and uneven.

As bulldozers tore into homes, community members, supported by Muungano and SDI Kenya, documented the



Bulldozers demolish homes along Nairobi's riparian zones in April 2024, as residents and Muungano members document the evictions to hold authorities accountable.

destruction through real-time mapping and enumeration. The objective was to generate credible, community-owned data to hold duty bearers accountable, inform humanitarian response, and ensure that the voices of affected residents were not erased.

The process revealed the true scale of losses: 5,076 structures demolished, displacing 6,443 households across Mathare and neighboring

settlements. The demolitions also destroyed vital infrastructure, 33 water points, 58 toilets, 8 schools, 2 health facilities, 6 market spaces, and 8 community halls, further compounding vulnerability.

While Mathare residents were uprooted overnight, nearby affluent neighborhoods on similar riparian land remained untouched, exposing the systemic inequities that shape urban governance in Nairobi.



Students and community members engage during the "Informal Futures: Housing in Mathare" studio.

Rethinking Housing in Mathare: A Collaborative Studio for Change

For over a decade, Kenya's housing enablement strategy has struggled to provide the transformative solutions needed for a functional housing sector. Instead of increasing access to affordable homes, it has led to an oversupply of formal options that remain out of reach for the urban poor. As a result, low-income communities continue to seek housing solutions through informal means.

In response to this challenge, SDI Kenya, in collaboration with Cornell University (USA), the University of Nairobi, and the Mathare 4B community, launched the Informal Futures: Housing in Mathare, Kenya studio. Held from September 24th to 27th, 2024, the five-day initiative brought together students and faculty from Cornell's Departments of Architecture and City and Regional Planning, alongside local experts, to explore innovative, community-driven housing solutions for Mathare.

Immersing in Mathare's Reality

The studio began with an introduction by the Muungano wa Wanavijiji federation,

offering critical insights into the settlement's housing struggles. Participants also learned about the "Roof Over Our Heads" campaign, an initiative aimed at improving living conditions in informal housing.

To deepen their understanding, students visited the Kibera Railway Housing Project and the Start Somewhere project, which utilizes twisted blocks made from locally sourced materials a potential game-changer for low-cost housing.

A Multi-Sensory Experience

On the second day, students engaged all five senses to experience Mathare firsthand, observing its diverse housing types and topography, smelling the waste and smoke from firewood, hearing the community's vibrant sounds, and touching the materials used in construction.

The day culminated in an eye-opening discussion with representatives from Women in Real Estate (WIRE), the Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK), the Kenya Institute of Planners (KIP), the Town and County Planners Association of Kenya (TCPAK), local government officials, and the State Department of Housing and Urban Development (SDHUD). Facilitated by Dr. Mbathi (University of Nairobi) and Joseph Kimani (ED, SDI Kenya), the conversation challenged participants to consider how to balance informality with regulatory standards, a crucial debate in shaping inclusive urban policies.

Co-Creating Solutions with the Community



Cornell students discussing with Mathare 4B residents for their studio to look at and design housing typologies.

On the third day of the Mathare design studio, the focus shifted from observation to collaboration. Residents of Mathare 4B sat side by side with students to tackle three fundamental questions: What are the key housing challenges? What interventions could work? And how can the community and government collaborate to make change possible?

The conversations were brought to life through field visits. At Kambi Moto, participants witnessed an inspiring example of in-situ upgrading, where cooperatives and savings groups enabled residents to secure housing within their community. In Mukuru's Special Planning Area, they saw how community-led data collection and advocacy had influenced formal planning processes, demonstrating that organized communities can shape policy.

As the week progressed, discussions turned into designs. Over the final two days, residents and students sketched housing

prototypes that reflected Mathare's realities: resilient structures that could withstand climate shocks, affordable solutions accessible to low-income families, and adaptable models that work at both household and neighborhood levels. These prototypes offered a glimpse of what inclusive and dignified housing could look like for Mathare.

The studio closed at the University of Nairobi, where students presented alternative scenarios for Mathare's redevelopment. These presentations were not just academic exercises; they were visions of possibility, informed by the lived experiences of residents who know the settlement best.

Although the studio has ended, its impact is only beginning. The ideas and aspirations shared over those five days now serve as a foundation for a people-centered approach to housing in Mathare. Through continued collaboration between communities, students, and government, Mathare is moving closer to turning dreams of dignified housing into reality — one home at a time.



University of Nairobi and Cornell University students unite for a design charrette for Mathare.



Community champions from Mathare, Mukuru, and Kahawa Soweto take part in a live talk show at Ghetto Radio FM, raising awareness on the intersection of climate change and mental health.

Climate Change and Mental Health – Mathare, Mukuru, and Kahawa Soweto

Communities living in informal settlements such as Mathare, Mukuru, and Kahawa Soweto face heightened vulnerability to climate change hazards, which disrupt livelihoods, undermine wellbeing, and strain mental health. In 2024, we worked with these communities to explore the link between climate change and mental health, beginning with awareness-creation meetings. These sessions provided space for residents to share their understanding of climate change, the hazards they experience, and the resulting economic, social, and psychological impacts. A needs assessment followed, guiding the design of interventions and a tailored training curriculum.

Recognizing the role of Community Health Promoters (CHPs) and youth leaders as first responders during crises, **90 community members were trained, 30 from each settlement. Out of that, 20 were selected as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs)** to facilitate peer-led group counseling. The initiative adopted the **Climate Café model**, establishing ten cafés across the three settlements. These safe community spaces, often located where youth are actively

engaged in climate action, have encouraged open conversations, reduced stigma around mental health, and strengthened referral pathways for professional care. To ensure quality and sustainability, mental health professionals participated in café sessions to mentor ToTs, while debriefing forums provided ToTs with space to reflect, raise challenges, and seek support.

The impact of these efforts has been significant. Trained mental health champions are now raising awareness through local radio and television stations such as K.U Radio and TV, Ghetto Radio, and Ruben FM, extending the reach of information on mental health care and services. Communities have gained a deeper understanding of how climate change affects mental well-being, learned to identify and avoid hazard-prone areas, and, most importantly, begun prioritizing their mental health. These steps are helping residents navigate climate-related trauma while fostering a culture of healing, resilience, and preparedness.



Radio talkshow together with Mukuru, Kahawa and Mathare Champions at Ghetto Radio FM

City Level Pathway

Collaborative Workshop Between Nairobi City County Department Of Green Nairobi & Sdi-Kenya



Engagement with county government departments of Environment and Planning on ecosystem management and ward-based adaptation planning

In August 2024, SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji convened a community-led workshop in Mathare to showcase grassroots initiatives that are shaping a cleaner, healthier, and more climate-resilient neighbourhood. From riverfront planning to ward-level adaptation strategies and innovative waste management systems, residents presented solutions they had designed and implemented to address the settlement's most pressing challenges.

The event brought together community leaders, Nairobi City County's Departments of Environment, Climate Change, and Built Environment, alongside the Green Nairobi Initiative team. Discussions centred on aligning county development plans with local priorities, strengthening household waste sorting, and improving air quality monitoring. SDI Kenya also shared a data-driven approach to urban development, reinforcing the value of evidence-based, community-led action.

By the close of the workshop, participants had developed a collaborative framework that placed residents at the centre, with county departments playing an enabling role. The framework sets out a community-driven waste management strategy for Mathare, a capacity-building programme to equip households with sustainable waste practices, and clear milestones to ensure accountability.

The workshop highlighted the power of partnership when communities set the agenda. By combining local knowledge with

institutional support, Mathare is taking decisive steps toward a sustainable, pollution-free environment

Kiamaiko Ward Adaptation Planning

In 2024, Kiamaiko Ward embarked on a transformative journey to shape its future in the face of climate change. This comprehensive, community-driven adaptation planning process was designed to strengthen resilience in both formal and informal areas of the ward, ensuring that local solutions guide sustainable development and service delivery. At its heart, the initiative placed communities in the driver's seat—recognising that residents hold the lived experience and local knowledge essential for crafting effective and relevant climate adaptation strategies.

From the outset, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, SDI Kenya, local organisations, County Assembly representatives, and multiple Nairobi

City County departments worked alongside residents to co-create a plan that reflects their priorities, realities, and aspirations. The main objective was to co-develop a ward-based adaptation plan that enhances community resilience and supports locally relevant climate change adaptation measures. This involved carrying out a detailed situation analysis and inventory of existing resources, co-developing alternative adaptation models for Kiamaiko, formulating preferred strategies with designs and budgets, and developing an implementation, site management, monitoring, and evaluation framework.

The planning process unfolded in six phases: settlement profiling, project inception, situation analysis and vulnerability assessment, community visioning exercises, scenario development, and drafting of strategies and models. Community visioning sessions were central to the process, ensuring that decisions were informed by local perspectives. Over 25 meetings were held across different clusters, facilitated by community mobilisers. Representatives chosen by residents brought diverse voices to the table, ensuring inclusivity and gender balance throughout.

Both secondary and primary data informed the plan. Secondary data was drawn from

existing reports, policies, and previous studies, providing a strong foundation for context-specific solutions. Primary data was gathered through direct observations in partnership with residents, alongside focus group discussions that examined six priority issues identified during a prior vulnerability assessment: solid waste management, water supply, education, health services, drainage and roads, and liquid waste management. This participatory methodology combined qualitative insights with technical expertise, ensuring the final plan was both evidence-based and owned by the community.

The Kiamaiko Ward Adaptation Plan seeks to achieve transformative outcomes that will inform future development and enhance resilience to emerging challenges. It identifies and prioritises projects that address the ward's unique needs, while providing a strategic roadmap for sustainable solutions supported by actionable and budgeted interventions. It also strengthens policy advocacy by embedding community priorities into county frameworks, enhances collaboration among residents, local authorities, and technical experts, and improves service delivery by addressing critical infrastructure gaps. The ultimate aim is to create a more equitable and climate-resilient environment for all residents.

This initiative exemplifies SDI Kenya and Muungano's principle of community-led development. By centring the voices of residents and co-designing solutions with local government, the process bridges the gap between policy frameworks and the everyday realities of those most affected by climate change. As it moves into detailed design and implementation, continued collaboration between communities, technical experts, and county government will be key. Kiamaiko's model offers a blueprint for other wards and informal settlements, demonstrating that when people lead, change follows.



Community members proposing interventions for resilience and climate adaptation



A New Chapter: Muungano wa Wanavijiji & WIRE Join Forces to Uplift Women in Informal Settlements

For decades, Muungano wa Wanavijiji has championed the cause of women in informal settlements, recognizing that when women thrive, entire communities flourish. On October 22, 2024, this commitment took a historic step forward as SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Women in Real Estate (WIRE) at Muungano House. This partnership promises to transform the landscape of housing and urban development for women.

WIRE, a leading women-led association in the built environment, brings a wealth of expertise in business growth, leadership empowerment, research, and career development. Together, we are setting out to bridge knowledge gaps, amplify women's voices in housing advocacy, and co-design sustainable and affordable housing solutions tailored to the realities of informal settlements.

The partnership will also focus on training women in green and climate-resilient housing practices, connecting them to technical and professional opportunities in the real estate sector, and mobilizing resources for women-led housing initiatives. Central to this collaboration is support for the Roof Over Our Heads campaign, which seeks to deliver affordable, low-carbon, and resilient homes across informal settlements.

This MoU marks the beginning of a transformative journey—one where women's leadership in housing and urban development is not just recognized but actively nurtured. By aligning the

strengths of grassroots organizing with technical expertise, Muungano, SDI Kenya, and WIRE are laying the foundation for lasting, community-driven change. Together, we are building a future where dignity, opportunity, and resilience are woven into every home and every community, one empowered woman at a time.



Esther Wanjiku, Advocacy Lead at WIRE, and Christine Mwelu, National Coordinator, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, holding the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)



Training in collaboration with Somo Africa

In August 2024, SDI Kenya partnered with Somo Africa to conduct a three-day training in Kisumu, equipping 13 Trainers of Trainers (TOTs) with the skills needed to strengthen business enterprises in informal settlements. The training aimed to enhance knowledge in business planning, marketing, financial management, customer service, and table banking tools that are essential for sustainable growth and resilience.

Through interactive sessions that combined lectures, group work, and practical exercises, participants refined their business models using the Business Model Canvas, explored marketing strategies to reach target markets, and learned to leverage both digital and traditional channels to grow enterprises. They also acquired practical skills in budgeting and expense tracking, alongside techniques to improve customer satisfaction and strengthen customer loyalty. A key highlight was training on table banking, where participants learned how to organize and sustain group savings schemes to improve financial access and empowerment within communities.

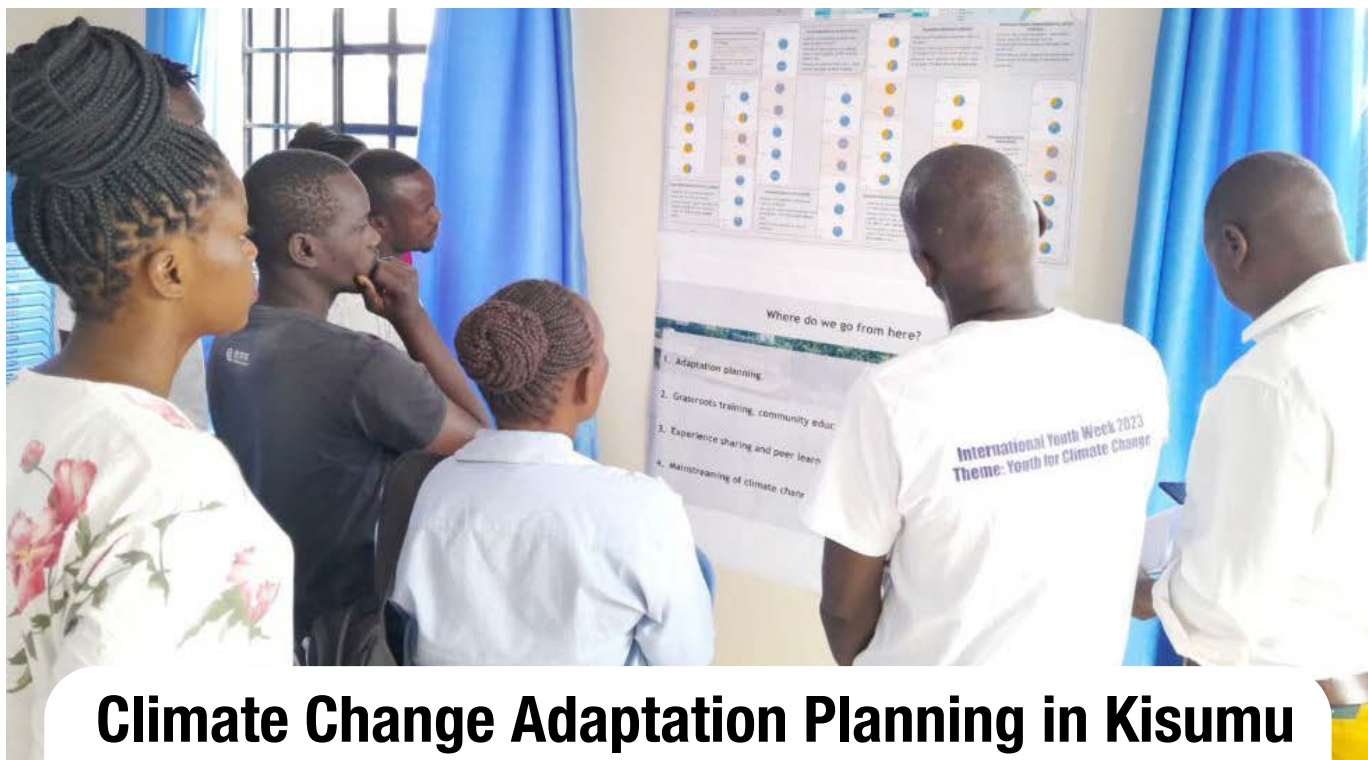
By the end of the training, the TOTs emerged as better equipped to mentor local entrepreneurs and support economic innovation. They gained

practical skills that they could immediately apply in real business contexts, while also building confidence to serve as change agents within Kisumu's informal settlements.

This collaboration between SDI Kenya and Somo Africa underscored the transformative potential of capacity-building initiatives. Beyond strengthening individual participants, the training laid a foundation for broader community development by promoting entrepreneurship, financial resilience, and innovation at the grassroots level.



Keller Otieno, a Muungano youth leader from Kisumu, trains climate action groups on record keeping during the Somo Africa training



Climate Change Adaptation Planning in Kisumu

Climate Change Adaptation Planning for Resilience in Kisumu

In Kisumu, the fight against climate change is being shaped not in boardrooms, but in neighborhoods by the people who live its reality every day. Through a community-driven planning process, residents joined hands with research institutions, government agencies, civil society, and development partners to chart a shared path toward resilience.

Maseno University contributed research insights, while the County Government of Kisumu, through its departments of Environment, Climate Change, Water and Natural Resources, and Land, Housing, and Urban Development, ensured that adaptation actions could be integrated into policy and practice. Civil society partners, including SUSWatch Kenya and the YWCA, offered technical and outreach support. At the heart of it all were community members, represented through the Federation of the Urban Poor, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, who kept the process participatory and grounded in local priorities.

Adaptation planning covered seven wards within Kisumu's informal settlement belt: Nyalenda A, Nyalenda B, Kaloleni/Shaurimoyo, Kondele, Manyatta B, Railways, and Central Kisumu.



A reflection meeting with federation members on how some of the prioritised areas can be integrated into the budgeting documents.

Using the Tujuane Tujengane model, communities engaged at the household, cluster, unit, and ward levels, with Community Health Promoters and cluster heads mobilizing participation. In total, 1,382 people took part, with women and young people strongly represented.

The planning process addressed six priority themes: health, livelihoods, agriculture and food security, water and waste management, land use and infrastructure, and culture and traditional knowledge. This thematic approach ensured that adaptation strategies responded directly to local vulnerabilities. Financing and resource mobilization also emerged as a key focus, with strategies ranging from county budget allocations to donor support and public-private partnerships.

The resulting framework provides a roadmap for action, outlining timelines, responsibilities, and mechanisms for monitoring and knowledge-sharing. It also emphasizes scaling successful initiatives across other vulnerable areas.

Kisumu's adaptation planning is more than a technical exercise it is a blueprint for action. By blending local knowledge with institutional support, the city is demonstrating that climate resilience can be built from the ground up. This journey shows that when communities lead, supported by research, partnerships, and responsive governance, a sustainable future is not only possible, it is already taking shape.



SDI President Joe Muturi shares a moment of celebration with Muungano federation leaders and community members during the 28th Anniversary Festival of Muungano wa Wanavijiji, held on 6th December 2024 at St. Teresa Catholic Church, Mathare.

Muungano wa Wanavijiji Annual Forum

The commemoration of 28 years of Muungano wa Wanavijiji took place on 6th December 2024 in Mathare at St Teresa Catholic Church, marking a significant milestone in the movement's journey towards community empowerment and development. The festival brought together over 1,000 participants, including community members, youth groups, partners, the VCA RT team, the Nairobi County Government, and the State Department of Youth Affairs. The event brought together community members, stakeholders, and partners to reflect on the movement's achievements, challenges, and future direction. Notably, the forum also served as a platform to appoint and confirm leadership, while setting priorities for the coming year.

This gathering was a celebration of the resilience and strength of our community members, who endured challenges ranging from floods to evictions over the past year. Together, we honored those at the forefront and acknowledged their dedication to supporting their communities in times of need, especially our youth, women, leaders, and practitioners (CSOs and County Governments).

This event was not only a chance to reflect on the progress we had made but also to celebrate the courage of those, especially youth and women, who took action to protect their settlements from the impact of climate change. Our communities demonstrated remarkable resilience, finding ways

to adapt, survive, and support each other. Together, we proved that when communities come together, they can overcome the greatest challenges, including the climate crisis.

As part of the festival, we explored the essence of the Muungano movement. Our unique approach to community organizing, referred to as our 'rituals,' included savings groups, community-led data collection, and peer-to-peer learning exchanges. These tools empowered communities to take charge of their futures.

The proceedings opened with a prayer from a religious leader, setting a tone of unity and hope for the day. This was followed by a presentation from SDI Kenya, reaffirming their ongoing support for Muungano wa Wanavijiji. Their involvement has been instrumental in supporting the urban poor: to organise their communities for development; to collect data on their settlements; to develop planning proposals; and to engage and work with city and national government authorities to deliver development projects.



Community members, youth, and partners, including representatives from the Nairobi County Government, gathered for the Muungano wa Wanavijiji Festival 2024.

Global Change Pathway



Doris Moseti and Christine Mwelu, Muungano wa Wanavijiji leaders, join Sheilah Patel and colleagues to spotlight the Roof Over Our Head (ROOH) Campaign, advancing women-led, climate-resilient housing solutions.

**NOVEMBER 11-22
2024**

Roof Over Our Head Campaign (ROOH): Building Resilient Homes, One Roof at a Time

In the heart of Kenya's informal settlements, women are leading the fight for dignified housing through the Roof Over Our Head (ROOH) Campaign. Adopted by SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji in 2020, this global initiative responds to the unique housing challenges faced by women living in slums, where a roof represents more than shelter—it symbolizes security and dignity.

Rooted in women's voices, the campaign draws from their lived experiences, capacities, and affordability to strengthen community resilience against climate change and poor living conditions. During COP29, ROOH launched stories from informal settlements in Kenya, the Philippines, and India. In Kenya, a collaborative effort with SPARC-India and the Technical University of Kenya brought these stories to life, with architecture students modeling the fragile homes that many families live in structures made of iron sheets and mud, prone to leaks during heavy rains, unbearable heat under the sun, and destruction by strong

winds. For women living near industries, toxic emissions worsen the situation by corroding roofs faster, forcing them to shoulder the burden of endless repairs and unsafe living conditions.

This year, the campaign has focused on three principles: Repair, Retrofit, and Rebuild. In partnership with the Technical University of Kenya and Women in Real Estate, communities are exploring alternative climate-resilient building materials, applying affordable repair solutions, and training women in construction techniques to improve housing. Through workshops and hands-on learning, women are gaining practical skills while directly improving the safety and dignity of their homes.

The Roof Over Our Head Campaign is not just about housing; it is about restoring dignity, protecting families, and building climate-resilient communities from the ground up.

COP29
Baku
Azerbaijan



Ibrahim Gandhi (CODOSAPA), Ivy Chumo (APHRC), Inviolata Njeri (LVCT Health), Milka Kori (SDI Kenya), and Jiban Karki (LSTM) at the International Conference on Urban Health.

International Conference on Urban Health

Reflections from ICUH 2025: Advancing Community-Led Urban Health Solutions

Attending the International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) 2025 was a powerful reminder of the urgency and complexity of urban health challenges worldwide. Across sessions and discussions, one theme resonated deeply: the need for community-led, localized solutions that address the intersection of health, climate resilience, and urban equity.

At SDI Kenya, our work aligns closely with many of the discussions at ICUH. The emphasis on participatory approaches to data collection, inclusive planning, and grassroots-driven policy advocacy mirrors the methodologies we employ in informal settlements. Our initiatives, such as the physical addressing system in Mathare, structured waste management models, and disaster resilience projects, demonstrate how bottom-up solutions can create a meaningful impact on urban health and environmental justice.

One key takeaway from ICUH was the growing recognition that health is not just

about medical care; it is about the social and environmental determinants that shape well-being in cities. Conversations around climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, and health equity reinforced the importance of integrating urban planning with health policies, a principle embedded in our community-driven upgrading processes.

Another critical discussion revolved around data democratization and participatory research. SDI Kenya's use of settlement profiling and community-led enumerations reflects global best practices in empowering residents to shape the policies that affect their lives. The ICUH sessions reinforced that data collected at the community level should inform decision-making and serve as a tool for advocacy and structural change.

The future of urban health lies in collective action. Let's continue the conversation and build bridges between research, policy, and grassroots action.



Art by Carlota CAT

Next Level Grant Facility



Nursery women displaying seedlings at the expanded tree nursery in Sindo, Homa Bay.

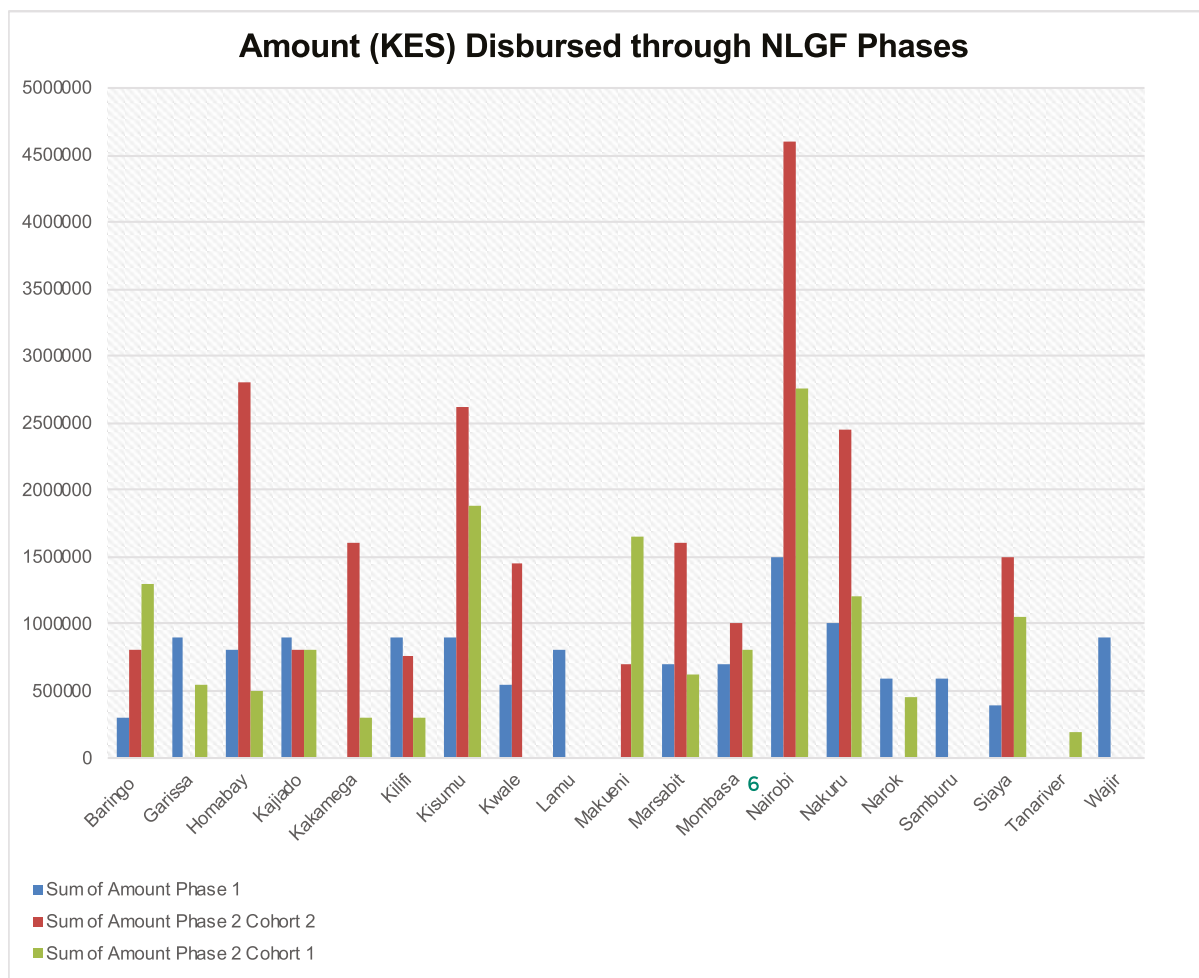
The Next Level Grants Facility is a unique finance mechanism that is designed to ensure that more climate finance reaches communities at the lowest level, those experiencing the most severe climate impacts. SDI Kenya launched NLGF in Sept 2023, and the roll-out started in Dec 2023/January 2024 in 19 counties in Kenya, reaching 168 climate action groups.

The grant facility targets grassroots organizations in climate action and needs support to amplify their work and quickly respond to climate emergencies/

unforeseen activities, or emerging opportunities. In Kenya, these organisations are primarily Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), including networks and associations, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), including women groups and youth groups. These grassroots organisations are, by their nature, organised groups registered and some unregistered, and either cannot comply with the formalities demanded by donors or cannot operate openly for security reasons.

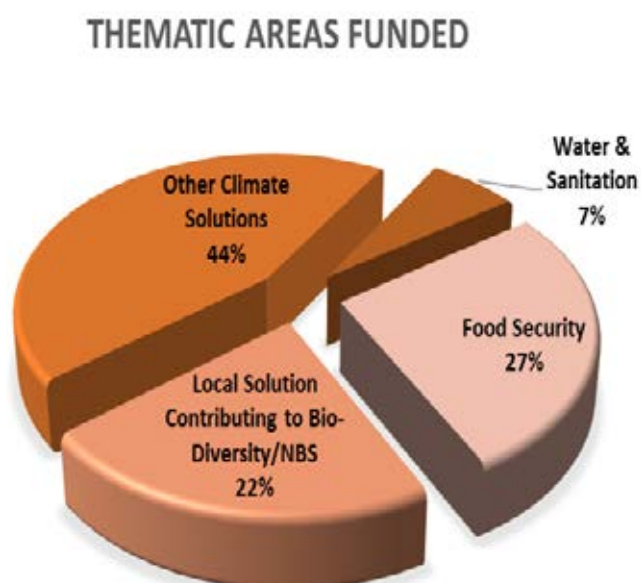
Progress

PHASE	TIMELINES	No. FO GROUPS	AMOUNT FUNDED (KES)
Phase 1	Dec 2023 - Jan 2024	46	12,445,000.00
Phase 2 Cohort 1	September/October 2024	47	14,350,000.00
Phase 2 Cohort 2	December 2024/January 2025	75	22,669,800.00
TOTAL		168	49,464,800.00



Thematic Areas of Group Climate Action

Category	Types of Projects
Food Security	Urban and kitchen gardening, School vegetable gardens, Smart/resilient crop agriculture, Nutrition and food preservation, Demonstration centers, Indigenous vegetable farming
Local Solutions contributing to Biodiversity/NBS	Land and river restoration, Permaculture and tree nurseries, Riparian and River reclamation, Mangrove Restoration, Reforestation, Fodder production, Increasing forage cover
Other Climate Adaptations	Black soldier fly farming, Recycling and reuse (bio-briquettes, cleancook stoves), Waste management value chains and buy-back centres, Energy solutions e.g energy efficient stoves (jikos), Gabion construction, Community sensitization e.g flood risks, climate change through art
Water and Sanitation Solutions	Water conservation and harvesting, Rainwater harvesting, Water pans, boreholes, kiosks, Water treatment and management systems



2024 Pictorial



2024 Pictorial



9



10



11



12



13



14



15

1. Lucky Summer Environmental and Waste Management Organisation (LEMWO) developed a waste management system for collecting, segregating, and partnering with other organizations to collect recyclables waste.
2. Tembelea Kanisa Initiative-Empowering youth and women through sustainable kitchen gardening—150 community members engaged through awareness meetings, with 5 demo gardens established as hands-on learning hubs.
3. Matasaru Ntoiye Foundation trained over 50 women from Aitong' Narok on environmental conservation.
4. Muungano Federation leaders Doris Mosei and Christine Mwelu at COP 29 in Baku
5. Empower Her CBO- From North Eastern Kenya region, trained over 60 women on alternative livelihoods and climate-adaptive farming, leading to the successful establishment of fully functional kitchen gardens.
6. Voices for climate action, Promoting Climate adaptation through Art in Kibera
7. Together4Climate successfully conducted a mangrove restoration exercise at Mkupe, along the Tudor Creek, planting a total of 500 mangroves
8. Marsabit Go Green Initiative Group procured and distributed tree seedlings to schools in Saku to promote environmental conservation and inspire a culture of sustainability among young learners
9. SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji Federation leaders graduated with certificates in Counselling and Psychology from Clarity Counseling Kenya.
10. Kenya Youth Biodiversity restored degraded mangrove areas in Msambweni, Kenya's South Coast, by planting 3,000 mangroves
11. KEYF Women of Garissa planted trees and distributed seedlings along heavily affected areas by floods along River Tana
12. Morning Star Plastics & Waste Management CBO- Promoting behavior change and plastic recycling to build an informed and responsible community.
13. Women and Nature CBO's "Fruit Trees for Climate Resilient Communities" project was successful with three functional nurseries and over 9,000 seedlings propagated to support climate resilience
14. Mirera farmers have enhanced agricultural productivity and sustainability by installing water tanks and drip irrigation systems
15. Madiaba CBO training women on making energy saving jikos/cookstoves

Institutional Strengthening



SDI Kenya staff and Muungano wa Wanavijiji leaders convene for a reflection meeting to review progress and strengthen collaboration.

SDI Kenya's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was initially designed with a strong programmatic focus. However, a mid-term review in 2024 revealed the need for a more integrated and holistic approach to organizational growth and impact measurement. This realization led to the adoption of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework, which aligns strategic objectives with operational efficiency, enabling SDI Kenya to better track progress and achieve its goals.

Under the **Stakeholder Perspective**, SDI Kenya has prioritized strengthening engagement in city, settlement planning, and housing to promote inclusive urban development. The organization also focuses on empowering communities through livelihoods and movement-building initiatives, which enhance resilience and foster sustainable development within informal settlements. These efforts build on SDI's history of community-led upgrading projects, such as Kambi Moto Housing, where profiling and mapping supported slum upgrading and tenure security.

For **Operational Excellence**, the organization has enhanced its research and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) systems. These improvements ensure that decision-making is data-driven and that programs are more effective in achieving their intended outcomes.

In terms of **Organizational Capacity Development**, SDI Kenya is committed to expanding its human resource capabilities to build a skilled and motivated workforce. The organization has also invested in improving communications to increase visibility, advocacy, and stakeholder collaboration. Furthermore, streamlining administration and procurement processes ensures operational efficiency and resource optimization.

Finally, under the **Finance** category, SDI Kenya has reinforced its financial sustainability by improving resource mobilization, accountability, and fiscal management. These measures are critical for ensuring the organization's long-term stability and its ability to deliver impactful programs.

By adopting the Balanced Scorecard framework, SDI Kenya has established a robust mechanism for aligning its strategic priorities with measurable outcomes, fostering institutional growth, and driving sustainable urban development.

Mental Health Certificate training for staff and Federation Leaders



SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji Federation leaders graduated with certificates in Counselling and Psychology from Clarity Counseling Kenya. The journey was tough, but we made it through!

In informal settlements, mental health challenges such as trauma from forced evictions, financial stress, limited access to support services, and the negative effects of climate change deeply affect communities. This milestone equips us to address these issues more effectively. Mental health is a cornerstone of creating resilient and inclusive cities, and we reaffirm our commitment to supporting communities every step of the way.

Communications

The image shows a screenshot of the SDI Kenya website. The header features the SDI Kenya logo in the top left, navigation links (About, What we do, News) in the top right, and a Contact button. The main content area has a large background image of a slum. The SDI Kenya logo is prominently displayed in the center, with the tagline 'Making Slums Visible' below it. The text below the logo describes the launch of a new website at the Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Festival 2024, highlighting its focus on amplifying community voices and showcasing urban development initiatives. The text is presented in three paragraphs, each starting with a bolded first sentence. The background image is a high-angle, slightly hazy view of a densely packed urban area with many small, makeshift structures.

At the heart of the Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Festival 2024, SDI Kenya launched a new website that embodies our passion for amplifying the voices of the communities we support. The SDI Kenya website is more than a digital space; it's a celebration of community-led initiatives, resilience, and the incredible stories of change that are shaping urban development in Kenya.

The platform features a wealth of resources, including community voices, where firsthand stories of challenges and triumphs are shared, offering a window into the lived experiences of the urban poor. It also houses reports and publications that document critical community-led research and insights from our work in informal settlements. Visitors can explore our programs, such as city and settlement planning, housing initiatives, livelihoods and movement building, communications, and youth empowerment, each showcasing how communities are shaping inclusive urban development.

Additionally, the website keeps users informed about events and updates while providing an in-depth look at SDI Kenya's mission, theory of change, and partnerships. With refreshed branding and intuitive navigation, this platform ensures that the struggles and successes of marginalized communities are accessible to all.

This website launch is a celebration of our commitment to creating spaces where community stories are not just heard, but celebrated. SDI Kenya is a platform that connects digital access with grassroots action by ensuring that the struggles and successes of marginalized groups are brought to the forefront. Join us in this journey as we build a future where every story matters and every voice contributes to meaningful change. Explore sdikenya.org today and be part of amplifying these powerful narratives!

Most Significant Story

KYCTV Training, Mentorship Program, and Learning Exchange

KYCTV Documentation Training in Kisumu



In our commitment to amplifying the voices of vulnerable and marginalized communities in urban and peri-urban areas, SDI-Kenya, in partnership with Maseno University's School of Media and Communication, facilitated a three-day training for the KYCTV team. This training aimed to equip the team with essential skills in video editing and creative storytelling.

KYCTV-Kisumu has always played an important role in documenting stories of change and highlighting best practices by grassroots groups and organizations in informal settlements, particularly about climate action and enhancing community resilience through advocacy. Despite these great strides by the team, the young people require additional skills to enhance their documentation and editing for richer media products.

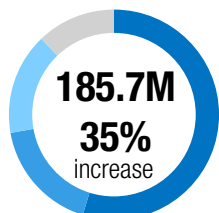
By refining their documentation techniques, such as storytelling and editing, these young individuals have helped build a compelling collection of experiences and achievements that inspire growth, collaboration, and community empowerment. This initiative not only equips them to capture stories of change but also amplifies the vital work of various groups and the broader community, particularly within informal settlements. Furthermore, the training has opened doors for them to explore livelihood opportunities emerging from the field of documentation, for example, training other people interested in the field and producing other media products like talking photos, blogs, and documentaries.

The objectives of the training were to build the skills of KYCTV members by offering hands-on experience in digital documentation, script writing, interviewing, and editing. A key aim was to amplify community voices by producing media products that help bridge the knowledge gap and share best practices and initiatives emerging from the communities. As a result, the team produced three videos and two blogs.

The training also sought to create an interactive platform that encourages meaningful contributions and collaboration with media professionals, thereby fostering innovation in storytelling. Additionally, the training leveraged the existing knowledge of KYCTV members who had previously undergone similar sessions, encouraging them to support and mentor new participants. This approach aimed to ensure continuity, strengthen the team, and promote sustainable growth within the group.

Finance

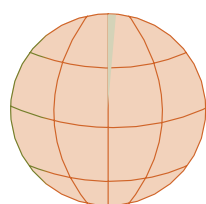
Income and expenditure for the year 2024



Total income for the year stood at Kes 185.7 million, representing an increase of Kes 48.6 million (35%) from the previous year (2023: Kes 137.1 million).

This consistent upward trend was largely driven by the initiation of new projects and partnerships, including ACRC, WRI, Race to Resilience, Roof Over Our Head (ROOH), Urban Shade, NOREC Youth Exchange, and CFLI, as well as the expansion and strengthening of ongoing initiatives such as VCA–NLGF.

Revenue Sources



(99%) international partners
(1%) local partners
Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the income originated from international partners, while 1% came from local partners.

Expenditure



Spent on strategic plan activities.

The organization spent Kes 185.7 million on strategic plan activities. Of this amount, 71% was allocated to program activities, while 29% went toward HR and administrative costs.

Our impact



19 Counties

175,000 people

With the support of local partnerships, we impacted 19 counties in Kenya, reaching more than 175,000 people.

Project's income % contribution

Project	Contribution
Voices for Climate Action -VCA	49 %
African Cities Research Consortium	12 %
Cities Alliance	8 %
Race to Resilience	7 %
Urban Shade	6%
Roof Over Our Heads	5 %
Muungano Housing Study Research -GRET	4%
NOREC Youth Exchange Project	4 %
Kounkuey Design Initiative -KDI	3 %
World Resource Institute -WRI Research	1 %
Other projects	1 %

ToC Strategic Plan Outcome 2024

Strategic plan Outcome	Contribution
Good Economic Livelihoods and movement building	25 %
Safety and security in settlement	2 %
Upgrade Climate Friendly Settlement and Housing	10 %
Improved Health and Well being	8 %
Pro- poor data driven development	14 %
Quality Education	0 %
Institutionalized Collaboration between the Urban poor and Government	11%
Secure land tenure for the Urban Poor	1 %
Finance and administrative costs	29 %



Residents navigate a sanitation facility left standing amid the rubble in Mathare, following devastating floods and forced evictions in April 2024.

Between Floodwaters and Forced Evictions

In April 2024, Kenya endured one of its most devastating flood seasons in recent memory. Tenacious rains swept through urban neighborhoods and rural regions alike, displacing hundreds of thousands of people and leaving swathes of destruction in their wake.

In response, President Ruto issued a mandatory 48-hour evacuation order on April 30, targeting communities along riparian zones in Nairobi, including the densely inhabited Mathare Valley. Though government assurances included promises of shelter, enumeration, and prioritized social housing, implementation quickly became erratic.

As bulldozers tore into homes, community members tracked the loss themselves with the support of SDI Kenya. Through a community-led enumeration, observation, and mapping process, Muungano and SDI Kenya captured the full scale of the destruction:

- **5,076** structures demolished
- **6,443** households across 13 villages were displaced
- **Vital infrastructure**, including water points, toilets, schools, and community halls reduced to rubble.

This data was real-time, lived experience made incontrovertible, it is worth noting that, While Mathare was flattened, nearby affluent zones on similar riparian land—including Muthaiga and other upscale areas remained untouched. The selective enforcement exposed sharp systemic biases in urban governance.



The river divides informal and affluent neighborhoods, yet only the informal side faces demolitions.



Residents of Mathare proudly install a physical address plate, part of a community-driven effort to ensure every home is recognized, mapped, and included in urban services.

At SDI Kenya, we are motivated by the conviction that all people deserve to live in dignity, with secure access to land, housing, and essential services. Our staff are not typical employees but activists deeply committed to justice and equity, driven by the belief that inclusive cities are possible when the voices of the urban poor are heard. Community—led data is our DNA and youth and women on the frontline who collect, analyze, and disseminate information about their settlements, making the invisible visible and shaping solutions. With this evidence, communities negotiate directly with governments and partners for recognition, improved housing, and essential services. What inspires us daily is the resilience and creativity of organized communities: women who save every day, youth who lead mapping and advocacy, and neighbors who turn hardship into collective power. Their courage shows us that the urban poor are not passive beneficiaries but drivers of real change, and that people—centered cities are truly possible.



+254 207 840 031
Spanish Villas, Hse- No.4 Lenana Road
P.O. Box 8000 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
info@sdikenya.org
www. sdikenya.org