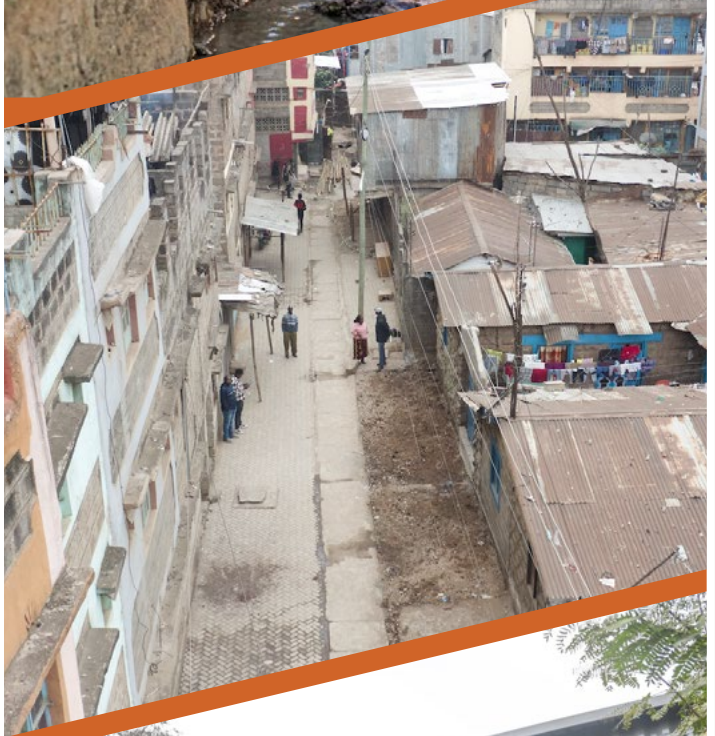




Shack Dwellers
International Kenya

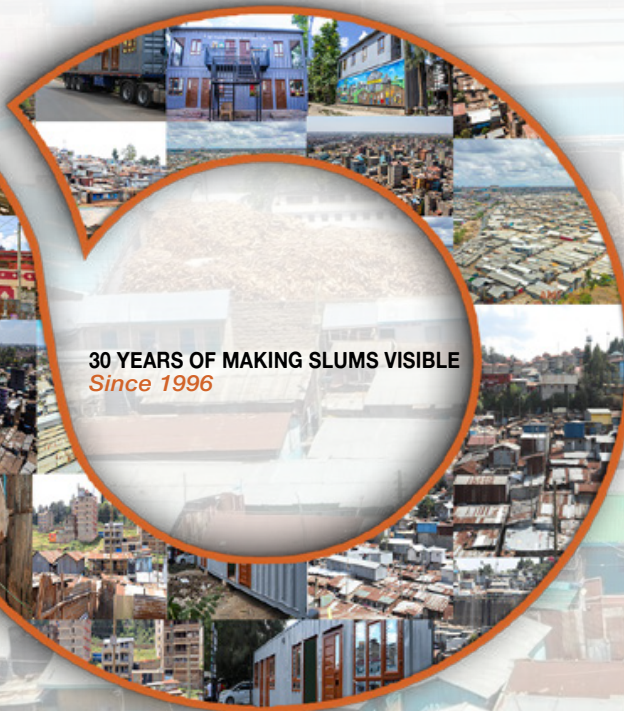
**Annual Report
2025**

***Celebrating 30 Years of
Community-Led Urban
Transformation***





MUUNGANO
wa wanavijiji



30 YEARS OF MAKING SLUMS VISIBLE
Since 1996



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Who is Shack Dwellers International Kenya?

SDI Kenya is a non-profit organization that exists to shift power so that urban poor communities can plan, negotiate, and drive their own development with dignity. Our work is participatory, incremental, and data-driven, centered on community contributions and leadership.

We realize our mandate by supporting the urban poor to organize their communities for development, collect data on their settlements, develop planning proposals, and engage with city and national government authorities to deliver development projects. SDI Kenya fulfills this role by providing technical support to Muungano wa Wanavijiji, Kenya's national movement of slum dwellers.

As the country's largest movement of slum dwellers and the urban poor, Muungano is supported by SDI Kenya, the Kenyan affiliate of Slum Dwellers International (SDI) a global network that provides technical and professional support to federations of the urban poor in more than 22 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Founded in 1996, Muungano wa Wanavijiji is a movement that brings together groups from urban slums and other poor communities to advocate for both policy and physical changes that address inadequate and challenging living conditions. The aim is to improve the quality of life for slum dwellers and the urban poor in Kenya. SDI Kenya shares Muungano wa Wanavijiji's vision of creating inclusive cities, where low-income communities have access to secure land tenure, adequate housing, and essential services, enabling them to live with dignity.

Muungano wa Wanavijiji employs tools such as daily savings, peer-to-peer exchanges, community-led data collection, and mapping to organize and mobilize thousands of vulnerable women, men, and youth from urban poor communities across Kenya, creating a network at the settlement, city, and national levels. This network aims to drive a collective, bottom-up agenda for change, contributing to more inclusive and resilient cities while 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 secure land tenure, access to adequate housing and basic 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



Slogan/Tagline

Inclusive Cities for the Urban Poor

Letter from the ED



As I take this moment to reflect on the past year, I am reminded that the work of transforming cities does not begin with projects or infrastructure; it begins with people. At SDI Kenya, our purpose remains clear: to shift power so that urban poor communities can organize, plan, negotiate, and drive their own development with dignity. This commitment continues to guide our work alongside Muungano wa Wanavijiji and the many partners who believe in the power of community-led change.

The year 2025 presented both opportunities and challenges for the communities we stand with. Across many settlements, residents continued to face the pressures of flooding, insecure tenure, limited access to basic services, and the broader impacts of climate change. In times of crisis, it is often the most vulnerable who carry the heaviest burden, particularly women, children, and young people who must navigate these realities while striving to build better futures for their families.

Despite these challenges, communities have demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination. Through the strength of the Muungano savings group (the heartbeat of the movement), residents continue to organize, save, and support one another, building solidarity, mobilizing resources, and collectively planning for change. At the same time, Muungano in Kenya has evolved in its approach, recognizing that communities strengthen and deepen their collective capacity when they pursue solutions to challenges both simple and complex, through more consolidated neighbourhood structures. This shift has been reinforced through settlement profiling, enumeration, and the establishment of physical address systems, which have opened pathways for organizing neighborhood associations in cities such as Kisumu and Nairobi.

Alongside this organizing, communities have strengthened their capacity to generate and use data as a tool for transformation. Through settlement mapping, household profiling, and documentation, communities produced evidence that helps them engage more effectively with city authorities and influence development decisions. Community-generated data is indeed a powerful tool for empowerment, allowing residents to make the realities of informal settlements visible and to advocate for inclusive urban planning.

Our experience continues to remind us that meaningful development must begin with listening. Too often, solutions for informal settlements are designed far from the communities themselves, based on assumptions rather than lived experience. At SDI Kenya, we remain committed to walking alongside communities, blending technical knowledge with community wisdom to co-create solutions that respond to the priorities people identify for themselves.

When communities are organized, equipped with reliable data, and connected to supportive partnerships, they can influence planning processes and ensure that investments respond to the realities of informal settlements.

Research and data, therefore, remain central to our work. Community-generated information continues to inform city planning processes, policy engagement, and broader advocacy efforts. In the coming years, we aim to further strengthen data quality, expand research output, and improve how information is visualized and shared to support policy dialogue and resource mobilization.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our team and the support of our partners. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of SDI Kenya for their commitment, resilience, and tireless efforts throughout the year. I also extend our appreciation to our partners, including civil society organizations, academic institutions, county governments, and development partners, whose collaboration continues to strengthen our collective impact.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear: strengthening community organization, deepening partnerships with government institutions, and supporting incremental upgrading that transforms informal settlements into resilient and inclusive neighborhoods.

This journey is not a short-term effort. It is a long-term process of building collective power, strengthening community systems, and ensuring that the voices of the urban poor remain central in shaping the cities of tomorrow.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Joseph Kimani, SDI Kenya ED

Letter from SDI President



As we mark 30 years of Slum Dwellers International and celebrate three decades of Muungano wa Wanavijiji, we pause to reflect on a remarkable journey of community-led transformation, solidarity, and collective action.

For three decades, SDI and its federations have stood at the forefront of change, demonstrating that the people most affected by poverty, exclusion, and inequality are often best positioned to design and drive solutions. What began as local organizing efforts has grown into a global movement of communities working together to secure land, housing, basic services, and dignity for all.

Over the years, we have amplified the voices of the urban poor and challenged systems that excluded them from decision-making. Through community-led savings, data collection, and collective action, we have influenced local, national, and global urban development agendas. We have reshaped the way cities and governments engage with residents of informal settlements, proving that meaningful development must be participatory, inclusive, and rooted in lived experience.

This milestone is also a celebration of the thousands of community leaders whose dedication has sustained and strengthened this movement. We pay special tribute to the women who have been the backbone of our organizing efforts and whose leadership continues to inspire change across communities and generations.

As we look to the future, we recognize that the challenges facing our cities are becoming increasingly complex. Climate change, displacement, deepening inequality, and rapid urbanization demand new approaches and renewed commitment. Meeting these challenges will require stronger partnerships, greater innovation, and deeper solidarity.

The next chapter of our movement belongs to the next generation. Across SDI and Muungano, young people are stepping forward with fresh ideas, energy, and determination. Their leadership will be critical in building a stronger, more inclusive movement capable of responding to the realities of tomorrow's cities. As we celebrate 30 years, we must also invest in nurturing youth leadership and creating pathways for meaningful participation in shaping our collective future.

Thirty years is a reminder of what communities can achieve when they organize, save, learn, and act together. As we celebrate this anniversary in 2026, let us recommit ourselves to building cities that work for everyone, cities where every resident, regardless of income or status, has the opportunity to live with dignity and hope.

Here's to 30 years of courage, collaboration, and community-led change, and to many more years of strengthening our movement and transforming cities together.

Joe Muturi, President, Slum Dwellers International (SDI)

SDI Kenya Strategic Plan 2023-2027



SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji are committed to advancing a programmatic approach to transforming Kenya's informal settlements, guided by our 2023–2027 Strategic Plan and Theory of Change. Rather than implementing isolated projects, we work alongside communities, government, and development partners to deliver integrated, long-term interventions that address the interconnected challenges of housing, basic services, livelihoods, climate resilience, and urban governance.

Our Strategic Plan draws on decades of experience supporting community-led development and reflects our belief that lasting change begins with the knowledge, priorities, and leadership of people living in informal settlements. By strengthening community capacity, generating locally owned data, and fostering inclusive partnerships, we aim to influence systems and policies while improving the lives of the urban poor at scale.

We invite governments, donors, civil society organisations, the private sector, and other partners to join us in advancing this shared vision of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities. Together, we can co-create solutions that respond to local priorities and deliver lasting impact for communities across Kenya.

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



Quality education



Pro-poor data driven development



Institutionalized collaboration between the urban poor and government



Secure land tenure for the urban poor

Outcomes



SDI Kenya, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, and Tudor Muoroto community members at the Tudor Muoroto Resilience Hub during the IPCC field visit.

IPCC Field Visit to the Muungano wa Wanavijiji Tudor Muoroto Resilience Hub

For years, residents of Tudor Muoroto have lived on the frontlines of climate change. Rising sea levels, flooding, extreme heat, insecure land tenure, and inadequate infrastructure have shaped everyday life. Yet rather than waiting for solutions, the community organized, generated evidence, and began designing its own pathway towards resilience.

Through the **Urban SHADE** project, SDI Kenya worked alongside Muungano wa Wanavijiji, community leaders, Mombasa County, and local partners to strengthen community-led climate action. Residents mapped risks, collected data, documented local priorities, and worked together to develop practical solutions that reflected their lived realities. This collaborative process laid the foundation for the Tudor Muoroto Resilience Hub, a community-led space where residents coordinate disaster preparedness, climate learning, early warning systems, emergency response, and collective action.

The community's work gained international recognition in July 2025 when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) selected Tudor Muoroto for an official field visit during its Second Lead Authors'

Meeting. Co-organized by SDI, SDI Kenya, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, Cities Alliance and IIED, the visit brought some of the world's leading climate scientists directly into the settlement to observe climate vulnerability and learn from a community already demonstrating locally led climate resilience.

As they walked through Tudor Muoroto, IPCC authors engaged with residents leading mangrove restoration, shoreline protection, community disaster preparedness, and climate-health initiatives. Their visit culminated at the Tudor Muoroto Resilience Hub, where they joined community members for a reflection session on how grassroots knowledge, partnerships, and locally led innovation are shaping more resilient cities.

For the community, it affirmed that the experiences, knowledge, and innovations of informal settlement residents are essential to global conversations on climate adaptation and resilience. It also demonstrated that when communities are organized and supported through long-term partnerships, they can move beyond responding to climate risks to becoming leaders in designing solutions.

Reflecting on the visit, **Angel Hsu**, Lead Author for IPCC Working Group II Chapter 3, remarked:



Following a community walk through Tudor Muoroto, IPCC Lead Authors joined residents in a dialogue at the Tudor Muoroto Resilience Hub, reflecting on the importance of lived experience, local knowledge, and partnerships in shaping climate resilience.

"It was a powerful reminder that climate resilience isn't just about emissions or technology. It has to be about poverty reduction, economic development, social inclusion, dignity, survival, and justice for those most vulnerable."

For SDI Kenya and Muungano Wa Wanavijiji, the visit reinforced a simple but powerful lesson: the most effective climate solutions are often already being developed by the communities living with climate impacts every day.

Climate-Friendly Cities

Building Climate Resilience Through Community-Led Planning



Community consultative meeting to prioritize climate adaptation interventions.

In September last year, community members from Bandani informal settlement came together in a participatory forum to identify and prioritize key climate adaptation needs affecting their daily lives. Through a structured and inclusive process, residents reflected on the challenges posed by climate variability, particularly flooding, poor sanitation, and inadequate housing, and proposed a range of locally relevant solutions. These included housing improvement, enhanced WASH services (notably the construction of modern sanitation facilities and improved access to safe water), development and maintenance of drainage systems, establishment of a community livelihood fund, Construction of a community safe space that could serve best during response to flooding, Waste recycling initiatives, and construction of footbridges to improve mobility during floods.

Following further deliberations and technical engagement, the community collectively prioritized two critical intervention areas: housing improvement and WASH solutions. These were identified as the most urgent and impactful measures for strengthening resilience to the effects of climate change. Inadequate housing structures were seen to increase vulnerability to flooding and extreme weather, while limited access to safe water and sanitation posed significant public health risks, particularly during climate-related shocks.

The prioritization process demonstrated the value of community-led decision-making in climate adaptation planning. By centering local knowledge and lived experiences, the community was able to identify interventions that are not only contextually appropriate but also likely to deliver meaningful and sustainable impact. These priorities now form the foundation for ongoing efforts to co-design and implement integrated housing and WASH solutions, contributing to improved living conditions and enhanced resilience in Bandani

informal settlement.

Last year, Muungano Wa Wanavijiji, working closely with Bandani community co-researchers and with support from SDI Kenya, undertook a comprehensive, community-led, settlement-wide enumeration and numbering exercise. This process was designed to generate reliable, community-owned data to better understand the social, spatial, and service-delivery dynamics within the Bandani informal settlement. Importantly, the enumeration also sought to quantify demand for community-prioritized housing and WASH interventions and to analyze

these needs through a climate-resilience lens.

The findings revealed critical gaps that continue to undermine residents' resilience and well-being. Foremost among these was the urgent need for climate-resilient housing, as many existing structures are highly vulnerable to flooding and extreme weather conditions. The data also highlighted challenges related to inadequate spatial planning and insecure land tenure, both of which limit long-term investment in improved housing and infrastructure.

In the WASH sector, the enumeration underscored a significant deficit in access to safe and adequate sanitation. The majority of households rely on shared pit latrines, many of which are heavily overburdened and exceed their intended capacity. This not only raises serious public health concerns but also exacerbates vulnerability during climate-related events such as flooding, when sanitation systems often fail, increasing the risk of contamination and disease outbreaks.

Overall, the enumeration process provided a strong evidence base to inform the planning and implementation of targeted interventions. By grounding decision-making in community-generated data, the initiative has strengthened the case for integrated housing and WASH solutions that are both climate-responsive and aligned with the lived realities of Bandani residents.



Existing housing conditions in Bandani

From Savings to Soil: How Kasagam Welfare Society Turned Collective Action into Climate Resilience



Nyalenda A, Kisumu Material Recovery Facility Land Settlement

When the Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) for Nyalenda A surfaced its findings, one issue stood out starkly: improper waste disposal, including dumping directly into drainage systems and widespread open dumping, was compounding the settlement's exposure to flooding and climate-related risk. The data pointed clearly to the need for a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) as a priority intervention. But identifying the need was the easy part. Finding land to build it on was not.

Nyalenda A's experience reflects a wider pattern across Kisumu's informal settlements: access to public land is exceptionally difficult, and the county's land bank has little to offer. The MRF had, in fact, been proposed three times in the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), and each time it failed to secure land. The community explored other avenues, including extensive discussions with KIWASCO about using space in the lagoon, but these efforts also bore no fruit. Despite these being public land, access was affected by the complicated land ownership structures; for instance, while KIWASCO managed the lagoon, it was owned by the county government.

A Community Solution, Not a Borrowed One

It was in this context, after government channels and institutional negotiations had been exhausted, that the Kasagam Welfare Society stepped in. Rather than waiting for an outside solution to provide public land, members drew on their collective savings to purchase and secure a parcel of land for community development. This was not an isolated transaction but the product of trust built over time through the program's co-design process, and critically, it was made possible by the active involvement of community elders as knowledge-holders and decision-makers; individuals whose understanding of land history, customary claims, and community relationships proved indispensable in navigating a process that formal institutions could not.



The welfare records as shown and read by the secretary of the welfare

This land settlement was repeatedly named as one of the moments the community was proudest of. Significantly, the pride was not rooted in resolving a dispute, but in proof that the community could solve a complex, long-standing problem that neither the County Government nor the program team had been able to solve for them.

Bridging Generations Through Shared Purpose

What makes this moment a genuine story of change is what it set in motion afterward. The land transfer became a site of intergenerational exchange, elders passing on knowledge of land rights, negotiation, and stewardship to younger members, who in turn took on roles in planning and developing the facility itself. Interaction between generations, often limited by the day-to-day rhythms of settlement life, became more visible through this shared project.

Older members brought legitimacy, historical memory, and relational capital; younger members brought energy, technical engagement, and a stake in the facility's future use. Together, they turned a savings group's investment into a functioning piece of climate infrastructure, and turned a climate risk finding into a community-owned solution.



Holding a community intergenerational dialogue examining the map and the location of the parcel

Why This Matters

The Kasagam Welfare Society's experience demonstrates something the CRVA data alone could not capture: that savings groups can be engines of climate resilience and sustainable development, and that when communities are trusted to lead, they don't just fill gaps left by formal systems but build something more durable in the process, anchored in collective ownership, intergenerational knowledge, and a transferred sense of responsibility for the land itself.



Community members sharing the location and size of the land with the Structural engineer from the county government.

Community-Led Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience



The Tuwe Pamoja project, meaning “Let’s be together,” seeks to advance equitable urban nature-based solutions (NbS) for climate change adaptation in Mathare. In partnership with the University of Nairobi, the project focused on building a strong foundation through community engagement, capacity building, and collaborative learning with key stakeholders.

A key milestone was a Nature-Based Solutions pre-survey, aimed at assessing community understanding of NbS concepts.

This complemented the review and updating of the Muungano profiling tool, in partnership with Muungano wa Wanavijiji, by incorporating sections on climate change and nature-based solutions to reflect the realities of informal settlements. Community entry meetings further ensured grassroots awareness and participation, while an inception workshop brought together local administration, county government departments, academic institutions, civil society, and community members to collectively shape the project’s direction.

Capacity building was a central component of the project.

Community co-researchers underwent training in data collection and analysis using tools such as SPSS, RStudio, and Kobo Collect. Additional training on Climate

Resilient Development Pathways (CRDPs), supported by the University of Cape Town, strengthened participants’ understanding of policy frameworks, urban models, and climate interventions. These efforts contributed to the development of a comprehensive literature review on NbS, climate change, and informal settlements. Participation in the CLARE Gender Equality and Inclusion (GEI) platform further enhanced the integration of inclusive approaches, with federation members completing specialized GEI training.

Key reflections highlight that while Mathare community members are already familiar with and actively practicing NbS, such as waste recycling, vertical gardening, and river restoration, there is a need to better connect these initiatives and strengthen their livelihood potential.

Localizing NbS language and approaches is critical to ensuring community ownership and long-term sustainability.

Moving forward, the project emphasizes strengthening community-led data systems, including developing live, accessible maps to support advocacy and planning. There is also a strong focus on co-developing context-specific NbS and amplifying women’s roles in their design and implementation, recognizing their critical contribution to building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

Communities Leading the Clean Air Movement



Breathe Cities

In 2025, the Breathe Cities campaign, led by SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji as sub-grantees under the Breathe Nairobi Initiative, prioritized community engagement as a central strategy to improve air quality in Nairobi's informal settlements. Targeting Mukuru and Korogocho, the campaign implemented practical, community-led initiatives to address air pollution caused by waste mismanagement and open burning, which is common in the informal settlements. By working directly with residents, the campaign not only raised awareness of the environmental and health impacts of poor air quality but also facilitated tangible actions that empowered communities to take ownership of solutions, reinforcing that sustainable change is driven by collaboration and local leadership.

Through a series of community trainings, residents came together

to share their experiences and challenges with air pollution, discussing how both legal and illegal dumpsites directly affect the air they breathe every day. They learned that air quality in Nairobi remains in the moderate range, with average AQI levels frequently between 60 and 90, well above the World Health Organization's recommended standards, driven mainly by traffic emissions, open waste burning, and industrial pollution. These numbers became more than statistics; they reflected the daily reality of children coughing on their way to school, mothers cooking over smoky stoves, and workers navigating polluted streets.

Together, residents explored practical steps they could take immediately, such as segregating household waste, reducing open burning, and adopting community-led solutions. They also discussed the support they need to sustain these actions, including Materials

Recovery Facilities (MRFs), access to waste collection resources, public awareness campaigns, and continuous training, reinforcing the understanding that cleaner air is not just an environmental goal; it is a shared responsibility and a right for every member of the community.

The campaign also facilitated community-led clean-up initiatives across the target settlements, which brought together youth, women, and local groups to remove waste, clear blocked drainage systems, and restore shared public spaces. These activities showcased the creativity and problem-solving already present within the communities, demonstrating that residents are not passive observers but active agents driving solutions to improve the air they breathe.

In addition, an awareness walk through Nairobi's Central Business District, held in recognition of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, engaged both residents

and Public Service Vehicle operators, encouraging practical steps like switching off engines while idling. The walk reinforced the idea that clean air is a collective responsibility, emphasizing that small, everyday actions, when taken together, can have a powerful impact on the city's health and well-being.

The National Transport Summit, facilitated by the National Public Transport Alliance (NaPTA), a partner organization and fellow sub-grantee under the Breathe Nairobi Initiative, brought together community representatives to share experiences, exchange ideas, and propose practical solutions to improve public transport and manage urban air quality. This platform ensured that policy decisions are informed by the lived realities of residents and grounded in local knowledge. Complementing this, artistic initiatives, including murals

created by youth and community artists, became powerful, everyday reminders of the value of clean air, public health, and the role that communities play in driving meaningful change.

Through the collaboration of different partner organizations, including GROOTS Kenya, Kusudi Cause Communication, SDI Kenya, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, NaPTA, Nairobi City County, and NEMA, the Breathe Cities campaign achieved significant progress in strengthening community awareness of air pollution, promoting sustainable waste management practices, and fostering community-led actions to improve air quality across Mukuru, Mathare, Kibera, and Korogocho. SDI Kenya provided technical guidance and coordinated activities across settlements, ensuring interventions reflected local realities. Muungano wa Wanavijiji mobilized residents,

facilitated training sessions, and empowered communities to take ownership of solutions. Kusudi Cause Communication brought creativity and youth engagement, translating environmental challenges into practical campaigns. At the same time, GROOTS Kenya strengthened women-led initiatives and ensured local knowledge informed project strategies at the grassroots level. Nairobi City County offered leadership, resources, and policy alignment, and NEMA reinforced regulatory frameworks, monitored air quality, and ensured compliance with environmental standards. This collective effort created a strong foundation for sustained, community-driven action, demonstrating that cleaner air and healthier neighborhoods are achievable when communities and organizations work together.

Reflections From The Urban TRACS Cross-Learning Workshop on The Roof Over Our Heads Campaign in India



Climate resilience is often framed as a technical challenge. However, the **Roof Over Our Heads (ROOH)** campaign in India demonstrates that resilience is fundamentally about decision-making: the choices households, communities, and institutions make about how homes are built, improved, and sustained in the face of climate risks.

Through the Urban TRACS cross-learning workshop hosted by the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers (SPARC), participants explored how ROOH promotes climate-resilient housing in informal settlements by combining community leadership, local knowledge, and technical insight. The workshop, held across several ROOH learning sites in India, provided a practical understanding of how intentional decision-making can shape housing that is affordable, adaptable, and responsive to the lived realities of informal settlement residents.

At the ROOH secretariat in Ahmedabad, discussions focused on three central questions: What does implementing the campaign look like in practice? How are relationships between design, materials, and procurement organized? And how does innovation become localized? Although some participants had previously engaged with the framework in other contexts, direct exposure to the methodology reshaped their perspectives on how to approach climate adaptation.

A key turning point came when SPARC Programs Manager Smruti Jukur encouraged participants to think about ROOH not simply as a research method but as an adaptive process. Rather than striving for perfect solutions, the campaign emphasizes learning through action, iteration, and collaboration.

A Community-Centered Methodology

ROOH begins with a voluntary selection process in which households express interest in improving their homes following community mobilization led by local champions. Selected houses are then assessed through three interconnected lenses.

First, the campaign examines the broader context, from state housing policies and governance frameworks to the settlement's infrastructure and service dynamics. The assessment then narrows to the household level, analyzing structural conditions, materials, and vulnerabilities.

Second, the process explores the choices households make. Through interviews and conversations, the team seeks to understand how residents decide on investments, materials, and housing improvements. This helps ensure that solutions align with people's priorities and constraints.

Third, the campaign studies local microclimates to identify climate hazards and environmental pressures specific to each area. Recognizing that climate risks vary across geographies allows interventions to be tailored to local conditions.

ROOH integrates climate-resilient improvements into existing systems rather than imposing external solutions by combining these perspectives. The process is collaborative, involving households, artisans, community champions, and academic institutions.

Scaling Through Principles

During the workshop, SPARC founder Sheela Patel outlined key principles that guide ROOH's approach to scaling. One principle is retrofitting, which focuses on improving existing structures rather than waiting for new construction. Retrofitting allows households to adapt gradually while generating practical knowledge that can inform wider solutions.

Another principle is empowering vulnerable communities by positioning them as active contributors rather than passive beneficiaries. ROOH also emphasizes range, engaging diverse collaborators, and applying solutions across different contexts. Finally, the campaign highlights the power of aggregation, bringing together communities, artisans, researchers, and institutions around shared needs.



Lessons from the Ground

A visit to Rasulabad settlement in Surat illustrated how these ideas translate into practice. Women leaders from Mahila Milan mobilized households and artisans to participate in the campaign. Families saved money and accessed small loans to retrofit their homes using climate-responsive materials and techniques. As improvements became visible, neighboring households expressed interest, while local manufacturers responded to growing demand by moving closer to the settlement.

Academic institutions have also become active contributors. Architecture and engineering students from partner universities integrate ROOH into studio projects and design exercises, generating practical ideas for housing improvements.

Key Insights

While the Indian context, particularly the relative security of tenure in many settlements, differs from other regions, several lessons remain transferable.



First, local champions are essential. When communities, artisans, and academic partners take ownership, initiatives continue beyond project timelines. Second, mindset shifts matter. When households understand the value of climate-resilient housing, they invest in improvements not because they are told to, but because they see the benefits. Finally, adaptation is iterative. By embracing retrofitting and learning by doing, ROOH demonstrates that climate resilience can grow gradually through practical action.

Ultimately, the campaign shows that resilient housing is not only about materials or technologies; it is about collective choices, shared knowledge, and the power of communities to shape their own climate-secure futures.

Pro-Poor Data-Driven Development

ACRC Project Summary For The Annual Report

The project, “Creating the Conditions for Change in Large Informal Settlements in Nairobi,” is an action research initiative funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office through the African Cities Research Consortium and led by the University of Manchester. Implemented in Mathare, the project aims to address interconnected challenges in solid waste management, sewer infrastructure, and public spaces through a holistic, community-driven approach.

The initiative began with stakeholder mapping and engagement to ensure inclusive participation in co-designing sustainable solutions. To create a sustainable model, baseline research was conducted across all 13 villages in Mathare, combining spatial mapping, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Community co-researchers mapped critical infrastructure, including dumpsites, sewer lines, manholes, and public spaces, while waste collection groups were profiled to identify systemic gaps across the waste value chain.



Community engagement of waste pickers from Local Waste CBOs co-developing a solid waste business model for implementation in Hospital Ward, venue Salvation Army, Mathare.

Findings on solid waste management reveal a highly fragmented waste management system involving both formal and informal actors. Waste is frequently disposed of in rivers, roads, and drainage systems, contributing to environmental degradation and increased flood risks. Waste collectors face high transportation costs and structural barriers at the Dandora Landfill, limiting their options for proper disposal. As a result, many prioritize selling recyclable materials, while non-recyclable waste accumulates within the settlement. Additionally, 59% of youth-led waste groups operate without licenses, which restricts their ability to dispose of waste legally and contributes to unsanctioned dumping. These challenges have serious health and environmental implications. Blocked drainage systems, often clogged with solid waste, lead to frequent flooding, exposing residents to diseases such as cholera and bilharzia. Waste pickers play a critical role in the circular economy by recovering valuable materials; however, their work remains undervalued, stigmatized, and hazardous, with many lacking protective equipment.

Sewer and sanitation systems face equally significant challenges. Although 62% of surveyed areas are connected

to formal sewer lines, much of the infrastructure is old, damaged, or overwhelmed due to rapid population growth. Illegal sewer connections, observed at 38% of sites, are common and driven by inadequate service coverage and high connection costs. Maintenance is minimal, with only 34% of infrastructure showing signs of recent upkeep. Consequently, sewer overflows, broken manholes, and direct discharge of wastewater into rivers, accounting for 40% of liquid waste, pose severe public health risks, including water contamination. Despite these challenges, strong community-led initiatives are evident. Residents regularly organize clean-ups, unblock drainage systems, manage shared sanitation facilities, and promote hygiene awareness, often with limited tools and resources. These efforts demonstrate local resilience and commitment but also highlight the urgent need for institutional support and safer working conditions.

On the other hand, public open spaces in Mathare are increasingly under threat from encroachment, illegal dumping, and climate-related risks such as flooding. This has resulted in many residents lacking space for leisure and recreational activities. Limited access to safe recreational spaces disproportionately affects children, who lack safe play areas and often play along roads or among solid waste, contributing to health issues. Additionally, vulnerable groups such as women and persons with disabilities, who need these spaces for their well-being, are also impacted.

Overall, the research highlights critical gaps in waste, sanitation, and public spaces, providing a foundation for informed action. Co-developing solutions with communities, waste groups, and government ensures relevance, ownership, and sustainability. This collaborative, data-driven approach enables targeted interventions that strengthen resilience and support inclusive, long-term, and sustainable waste management in Mathare.



Structure owners Engagement meeting for awareness creation about the Simplified Sewer System ahead of its implementation in Kosovo village, Mathare.

62% OF
SURVEYED AREAS
ARE CONNECTED TO
FORMAL SEWER LINES

38%
OBSERVED ILLEGAL
SEWER CONNECTIONS

34% OF
INFRASTRUCTURE
SHOWING SIGNS OF
RECENT UPKEEP

40%
OF LIQUID WASTE,
POSE SEVERE PUBLIC
HEALTH RISKS

True Change Happens When Communities Lead: Lessons from the Tudor Muoroto Enumeration

Communities are often the first to experience the impacts of climate change, but too rarely are they at the centre of designing solutions. In Tudor Muoroto, an informal settlement in Mombasa, residents are changing that narrative by generating the knowledge needed to shape a more resilient future.

In 2025, SDI Kenya, through the Urban SHADE project, supported a community-led enumeration to better understand the realities of life in Tudor Muoroto. Home to a growing population facing frequent flooding, rising temperatures, poor infrastructure, and insecure land tenure, the settlement needed more than assumptions, it needed evidence generated by the community itself.

The exercise brought together 80 youth community co-researchers, Community Health Promoters (CHPs), village elders, and Mombasa County officials in a collaborative effort to map the settlement and document household demographics, livelihoods, access to basic services, and climate-related health risks. Working side by side, community members identified settlement boundaries, conducted household surveys, mapped services, and documented structures, ensuring that the data reflected local realities and priorities.

More than a data collection exercise, the enumeration strengthened community ownership and participation. For many of the young co-researchers,

it was their first opportunity to lead an exercise that directly informed community planning and decision-making. Their local knowledge improved the quality of the data while building confidence, leadership, and a shared commitment to improving their neighbourhood.

The findings highlighted critical gaps in infrastructure, land tenure, and health services, while providing a strong evidence base for advocacy and planning. Today, the data continues to guide community priorities and inform engagements with local government and health authorities. Residents are using the evidence to advocate for improved services, while healthcare workers are better able to understand and respond to climate-related health challenges within the settlement.

The enumeration also demonstrated the power of collaboration. By bringing together communities, local government, health workers, and development partners, the process strengthened relationships and reinforced the value of community-generated data in shaping inclusive urban development.

Above all, the Tudor Muoroto experience reaffirmed a simple but powerful lesson: when communities generate and own the evidence about their own settlements, they are better positioned to influence decisions, advocate for change, and lead solutions that improve their lives. Through Urban SHADE, community-led knowledge is not only informing local action, it is laying the foundation for healthier, more resilient, and more inclusive cities.



Community-Led Climate Adaptation in Bandani Informal Settlement



Bandani community co-researchers conduct household interviews during the settlement-wide enumeration, generating community-owned data to inform climate-resilient housing and WASH interventions.

In 2025, community members from Bandani informal settlement came together in a participatory forum to identify and prioritize key climate adaptation needs affecting their daily lives. Through a structured and inclusive process, residents reflected on the challenges posed by climate variability, particularly flooding, poor sanitation, and inadequate housing, and proposed a range of locally relevant solutions. These included housing improvement, enhanced WASH services (notably the construction of modern sanitation facilities and improved access to safe water), development and maintenance of drainage systems, establishment of a community livelihood fund, Construction of a community safe space that could serve best during response to flooding, Waste recycling initiatives, and construction of footbridges to improve mobility during floods.

Following further deliberations and technical engagement, the community collectively prioritized two critical intervention areas: housing improvement and WASH solutions. These were identified as the most urgent and impactful measures for strengthening resilience to the effects of climate change. Inadequate housing structures were seen to increase vulnerability to flooding and extreme weather, while limited access to safe water and sanitation posed significant public health risks, particularly during climate-related shocks.

The prioritization process demonstrated the value of community-led decision-making in climate adaptation planning. The community identified interventions that are not only contextually appropriate but also likely to deliver meaningful and sustainable impact by centering local knowledge and lived experiences. These priorities now form the foundation for ongoing efforts to co-design and implement integrated housing and WASH solutions, contributing to improved living conditions and enhanced resilience in Bandani informal settlement.

Muungano Wa Wanavijiji, working closely with Bandani community co-researchers and with support from SDI Kenya, undertook a comprehensive, community-led, settlement-wide enumeration and numbering exercise. The enumeration exercise revealed that Bandani Informal Settlement has a total population of **1,026**, with **women accounting for 53%** of the residents. The findings further indicate that approximately **85% of households rely on shared sanitation facilities**, highlighting the limited



access to adequate sanitation infrastructure within the settlement. Additionally, the enumeration identified **464 housing structures**, pointing to a high level of congestion and overcrowding relative to the available housing stock. These findings underscore the urgent need for improved housing, sanitation, and basic infrastructure to enhance the living conditions and resilience of residents in Bandani.

this process was designed to generate reliable, community-owned data to better understand the social, spatial, and service-delivery dynamics within the Bandani informal settlement. Importantly, the enumeration also sought to quantify demand for community-prioritized housing and WASH interventions and to analyze these needs through a climate-resilience lens.

The findings revealed critical gaps that continue to undermine residents' resilience and well-being. Foremost among these was the urgent need for climate-resilient housing, as many existing structures are highly vulnerable to flooding and extreme weather conditions. The data also highlighted challenges related to inadequate spatial planning and insecure land tenure, both of which limit long-term investment in improved housing and infrastructure.

In the WASH sector, the enumeration highlights a significant deficit in access to safe and adequate sanitation. The majority of households rely on shared pit latrines, many of which are heavily overburdened and exceed their intended capacity. This not only raises serious public health concerns but also exacerbates vulnerability during climate-related events such as flooding, when sanitation systems often fail, increasing the risk of contamination and disease outbreaks.

Overall, the enumeration process provided a strong evidence base to inform the planning and implementation of targeted interventions. The initiative has strengthened the case for integrated housing and WASH solutions by grounding decision-making in community-generated data, which are both climate-responsive and aligned with the lived realities of Bandani residents.



Bandani community co-researchers carry out community mapping and household numbering, laying the foundation for evidence-based planning and locally led climate adaptation.

Good Economic Livelihood



Tembelea Kanisa Initiative, one of the Phase 2 NLGF Beneficiaries, empowered youth and women to establish cone kitchen gardens, improving household nutrition while strengthening food security and promoting community resilience.

The Next Level Grants Facility (NLGF) Kenya

The Next Level Grants Facility (NLGF), implemented under the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) program, concluded in 2025 after three successful funding cycles that demonstrated the power of devolved climate finance. Designed to reach grassroots groups often excluded from conventional funding mechanisms, NLGF provided small, flexible grants directly to community-led initiatives addressing climate adaptation, resilience, and emergency response.

As Fund Manager for Kenya, SDI Kenya worked alongside VCA Alliance partners and other local organizations to ensure resources reached communities most affected by climate change, including youth groups, women-led initiatives, community-based organizations, and individual climate champions. The facility prioritized simplicity, accessibility, and rapid response, enabling communities to design and implement solutions that reflected their own realities and priorities.

The Climate Finance Access Gap- Reaching the 'Hard to Reach'

Many grassroots climate actors working in informal settlements, rural areas, and underserved communities face significant barriers in accessing formal climate finance, despite being among those most affected by floods, droughts, poor sanitation, and livelihood insecurity, and despite already undertaking important climate action. Many of these groups operate informally and therefore lack the governance structures, audited financial records, and proposal-writing capacity typically required by traditional donors.

In Nairobi's informal settlement, vulnerable youth, including reformed gang members, are using climate action initiatives such as waste recycling, drainage rehabilitation, urban farming, and environmental clean-ups as pathways toward safer livelihoods and social reintegration. Despite their impact, these groups are often perceived as "high-risk" due to insecurity, stigma, informal structures, and the environments in which they operate.

The Next Level Grants Facility (NLGF) was designed to address these gaps by providing flexible, accessible, and community-centered financing. Through simplified applications, multilingual tools, low-tech submission methods, and flexible reporting requirements, the fund enabled excluded and hard-to-reach groups to access climate finance and implement locally led climate adaptation and resilience solutions.

Types of Interventions Funded

Thematic Area	Share of Projects	Illustrative Interventions
Other Climate Adaptations	42%	Waste management; recycling and reuse; bio-briquettes; energy-saving jikos; clean cookstoves; flood risk awareness; gabion construction
Food Security	28%	Kitchen gardens; urban farming; school gardens; drought-resistant crops; food preservation; indigenous vegetables; smart agriculture
Biodiversity & Nature-Based Solutions	25%	Tree nurseries; reforestation; mangrove restoration; permaculture; riparian restoration; land reclamation; river ecosystem restoration
Water & Sanitation	6%	Borehole rehabilitation; water pans; rainwater harvesting; water kiosks; water management systems; water treatment and storage

NLGF Funding Snapshot

NLGF 2023 – 2025: RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Through the Next Level Grants Facility (NLGF), SDI Kenya and partners put climate finance directly in the hands of communities. By 2025, the programme reached across counties, supported hundreds of grassroots groups, and invested in locally-led climate solutions.



Beyond financial support,

NLGF invested in strengthening the capacity of grassroots groups in financial management, governance, proposal development, and project implementation. Through mentoring, peer learning, and linkages to technical expertise, community organizations strengthened their ability to manage resources, implement sustainable solutions, and access future funding opportunities. 13.7% of supported groups secured additional funding following NLGF support, reflecting both the continued challenges grassroots groups face in accessing formal financing and NLGF's catalytic role in enabling a subset of initiatives to transition toward more sustained funding pathways.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

NLGF's impact goes beyond funding – it strengthens communities, drives lasting change and builds a pathway to sustainability.



The NLGF Legacy

A key lesson from NLGF is that communities already possess innovative and practical solutions to climate challenges; what is often missing is timely and accessible financing. The program demonstrated that small, flexible grants can unlock significant local action when coupled with trust, simplified processes, and appropriate support.

As NLGF comes to an end, its legacy lives on through strengthened community institutions, scalable local solutions, and evidence that locally led climate finance can deliver meaningful results. The program has provided a model for future climate financing mechanisms that seek to place decision-making and resources directly in the hands of communities on the frontlines of climate change

Youth Engagement

Launch of Dr. Sulley Gariba SDI Impact Innovation Initiative



200+ YOUNG
PEOPLE IN MATHARE WILL
BE EQUIPPED WITH SKILLS IN
DATA COLLECTION

As Muungano approaches its 30th anniversary, 2025 marked the launch of the Dr. Sulley Gariba SDI Impact Innovation Initiative, an ambitious youth-led program designed to equip young people with the skills, tools, and opportunities to transform their communities and their own futures.

Kenya hosted the initiative's first inception meeting, bringing together youth delegates from seven SDI affiliate countries across Africa: **Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia, and Kenya.** The gathering provided an opportunity for young leaders to exchange experiences, build relationships, and shape a shared vision for how youth can drive change within informal settlements.

The initiative arrives at a critical moment. Across urban informal settlements, many young people face limited opportunities for decent work despite their creativity, resilience, and deep understanding of the challenges affecting their communities. Rather than viewing

youth as beneficiaries, the initiative positions them as knowledge entrepreneurs and agents of change who can generate evidence, influence decision-making, and co-create solutions with communities and stakeholders.

This approach builds on Muungano's own history. Since its formation in 1996, the movement has organized communities around issues of land, housing, and access to basic services. As Muungano approaches its 30th anniversary in 2026, a new generation of leaders is emerging to carry this legacy forward. While the tools may have evolved, from savings schemes and settlement enumerations to digital mapping and storytelling, the principle remains the same: communities are the experts of their own realities.

Community-led data continues to be the backbone of this work. Through the initiative, more than 200 young people in Mathare will be equipped with skills in data collection, mapping, media production, and storytelling. These young leaders

will generate evidence about their communities, identify opportunities and challenges, and work alongside local stakeholders to develop practical solutions.

Young people are often the first responders when communities face floods, fires, forced evictions, and other crises. Their lived experience gives them unique insights into the realities of informal settlements and the opportunities for change. The initiative seeks to unlock new pathways for employment and entrepreneurship while strengthening community-driven development by investing in their skills and leadership.

Ultimately, the initiative is about building the next generation of Muungano leaders who are well-skilled, strengthening youth participation in shaping urban futures, and demonstrating how community knowledge can inform more inclusive policies, programs, and solutions.

Pictorials

Demanding Dignity



In 2014, women of the Muungano wa Wanavijiji Federation took to Nairobi's CBD, wearing sackcloth as a powerful symbol of the harsh realities women in informal settlements face. Their action highlighted poor living conditions, inadequate sanitation, insecure land tenure, and the lack of government accountability in Mukuru. United in solidarity, they raised three key demands: safe and affordable sanitation, recognition of land rights for slum dwellers, and meaningful government action to improve living conditions. This moment stands as a testament to the power of organized communities in demanding dignity, justice, and inclusive urban development.

Kambi Moto In-Situ Slum Upgrading Project



Nakuru West

Once threatened by fires and eviction, Kambi Moto residents organized through Muungano wa Wanavijiji to save, plan, and build permanent homes. Today, the settlement stands as a leading example of community-led housing, with secure tenure, improved services, and dignified living conditions.

From collective savings to homeownership, Nakuru West shows how communities can acquire land, plan their neighbourhoods, and build affordable, dignified housing through collective action

From Flooding to Resilience



What was once a flood-prone drainage channel is now a symbol of community-led resilience. For many years, the 187-meter Mahira drainage was associated with recurring flooding, stagnant water, poor sanitation, unpleasant odors, and increased risks of waterborne diseases. Determined to change this, the Mahira Kiamaiiko community organized, identified the drainage as a priority, and worked alongside Muungano wa Wanavijiji, SDI Kenya, local authorities, architects, engineers, and partners through the Urban TRACS Project to transform it into resilient community infrastructure. Today, the upgraded drainage has improved flood management, sanitation, accessibility, and the community's overall health, safety, and resilience.

James' Housing Improvement Journey



For years, James' family lived with flooding and extreme heat because their house sat on a low foundation beside a storm drainage channel and had poor ventilation. Through the Roof Over Our Head (ROOH) Campaign, they raised the house, improved ventilation, and installed durable UPVC roofing sheets that keep the home cooler and more resilient. Supported by a hybrid loan-and-grant model, the transformation restored safety, comfort, and dignity. Today, James and his family proudly call it a home built for the future.

"This project woke us up. We had been standing still, but this house brought us progress. Today, we are proud to own a stone house." Mercy, James' wife.

Defending the Right to Stay



Behind every eviction is more than the loss of a house; it is the loss of community, dignity, livelihoods, and hope. For over 30 years, Muungano wa Wanavijiji has organized, mobilized, and advocated for the rights of residents living in the urban informal settlements, standing against forced evictions and displacement. This photograph reflects the resilience of communities determined to secure their right to land, housing, and a dignified life. The struggle continues until every resident can live free from the fear of eviction and enjoy the security of a place they can truly call home.

Knowledge from the Ground Up



For over three decades, community-led data has been the backbone of Muungano wa Wanavijiji, strengthening community organizing, participation, and driving collective action for more inclusive cities. Today, communities are complementing door-to-door enumeration with participatory mapping, physical addressing, drone technology, and digital technologies to strengthen the quality and use of community-generated data. Together, these approaches are transforming how informal settlements are documented, planned, and understood, ensuring that the knowledge produced by communities informs advocacy, improves service delivery, and shapes more inclusive, resilient, and equitable cities.



Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub



For years, Muungano wa Wanavijiji has organized communities to turn challenges into opportunities for change. The Kiamaiko Resilience Hub stands as one of its most transformative achievements; a community-led space for disaster preparedness, emergency response, learning, and collective action. Built over years of organizing, saving, and community-led data, the hub demonstrates the power of residents to shape safer, more resilient neighborhoods.

This initiative is supported by the German Government through the GIZ Resilience Initiative Africa (RIA).

Youth Telling Their Own Stories



Young people are reshaping how informal settlements are seen, understood, and represented. Through photography, filmmaking, writing, and digital storytelling, they are documenting community realities, amplifying local voices, and showcasing solutions driven from within. This vision gave birth to Know Your City TV (KYC TV Kenya), a platform established by Muungano wa Wanavijiji that empowers youth of all genders to tell their own stories, challenge stereotypes, and influence public conversations. Through their lens, communities are not only seen and heard—they are recognized as leaders of change.

Recognizing the Invisible Workforce



Where others see waste, informal waste pickers see opportunity, livelihood, and environmental stewardship. Working under challenging conditions, they recover and sort recyclable materials that would otherwise contribute to pollution and overflowing landfills. Their contributions are essential to urban sustainability, yet they often remain unrecognized within formal systems. This image highlights the vital role of waste pickers in building cleaner, more resilient cities and underscores the need for inclusive waste management approaches that recognize, protect, and support their work and livelihoods.

The Next Generation of Savers



For over three decades, women have been the backbone of Muungano wa Wanavijiji's savings movement, using daily savings to strengthen households, build collective power, and drive community development. Today, that legacy continues through the Jitegemee Learning Hub, where young people are embracing a culture of saving, leadership, and collective action. More than a place for learning, the hub is nurturing the next generation of federation leaders, equipping them with the values, skills, and solidarity needed to strengthen communities and shape a more inclusive and resilient future.

Testimonials

Starty Odingo – Project Officer, Kisumu, SDI Kenya



The past year at SDI-Kenya has been both challenging and rewarding as the organization transitioned from data and planning to co-designing and actual implementation of climate resilience and adaptation interventions. This shift required navigating technical, legal, institutional, and community dynamics while ensuring that communities remained at the center of decision-making and implementation. Witnessing communities prioritize, take ownership, pool resources, and translate ideas into action was incredibly fulfilling and strengthened my appreciation for the power of community-led development. I am grateful to SDI-Kenya for the opportunity to contribute to this not only important but necessary transition and to work alongside a technical team and communities that continue to demonstrate remarkable power, resilience, and determination in shaping the future.

Leah Karaka – HR, Procurement and Admin Manager, SDI Kenya

The past year has reinforced for me that organizational growth is built through resilience, people, and strong systems. It was a year that required patience, accountability, adaptability, and teamwork, while also creating opportunities for personal and professional growth. I am grateful for the support and capacity-building opportunities that enabled me to strengthen my role and contribute to the systems that support our work. What continues to inspire me most is knowing that every effort behind the scenes ultimately contributes to SDI Kenya's wider mission of standing with communities and building more inclusive, dignified cities.



Nicera Wanjiru – Muungano National Coordinator



As we celebrate 30 years of Muungano wa Wanavijiji, I am proud to be part of a movement that continues to transform lives through community-led action. Over the past year, we have established Resilience Hubs, improved homes through the Roof Over Our Heads program, and created a platform for young people to lead. These achievements show that after three decades, Muungano is not just celebrating its legacy; it is building a stronger, more resilient future for informal settlement communities.

Kate Wanjiru – Muungano National Coordinator

The mental health cafes, which were set up with efforts from SDI Kenya and Muungano wa Wanavijiji, have been engaging, informative, and deeply impactful because they have created a safe and inclusive environment where participants feel respected and encouraged to share. Thank you for your dedication to mental health advocacy.



Emily Wangari – Muungano National Coordinator



As we celebrate Muungano@30, I am proud of how far we have come in building stronger and more resilient communities, and I look forward to the journey ahead.

Kamila Gojobe – Muungano Youth National Coordinator

Last year was a great year for the movement because we witnessed significant growth and positive change. One of our biggest achievements was mobilizing more young people to join the movement and take on different roles. In the area of mental health, we brought together many young people through the Tabasamu Café. It created a safe space where we could openly share our experiences and challenges. These conversations helped us better understand the psychological struggles many young people face, where we can seek support, and what it means to come together and advocate for improving our settlements.

We also made good progress in livelihoods. Many young people are improving their lives by creating new livelihood opportunities within their communities. For example, through the Climate Action Groups, we have seen young people take practical action that is making a positive impact in their settlements while also creating opportunities for themselves. These achievements show that when young people are empowered and organized, they can drive meaningful change in their communities.



Felista Ndunge – Muungano National Coordinator



The year 2025 was a special year for me. I got the opportunity to champion a program known as R2R, meaning Race to Resilience. This program aimed to understand how climate change affects our mental wellness as slum dwellers and how to bounce back from the shocks caused by the negative effects we experience. I realized that climate change is a comprehensive agenda when it comes to health, education, livelihood, transport, and housing, just to mention a few. I also came to understand that through storytelling and shared experience, we can heal and build resilience together as individuals and the community as a whole. All this was thanks to the Muungano wa Wanavijiji movement, SDI Kenya, and partners.

International Events

19th International Conference on Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change



SDI Kenya participated in CBA 19 to explore the roles of intermediary organisations in ensuring that community-led solutions are inclusive and sustainable, particularly for marginalised groups. The session brought together practitioners, researchers, and development partners to reflect on how intermediaries can strengthen locally led adaptation by facilitating meaningful participation, building local capacities, and connecting communities with policy, research, and funding opportunities. Discussions emphasised that sustainable and equitable outcomes are achieved when communities are empowered to lead decision-making processes, existing local structures are strengthened, and the voices of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups are intentionally included. The session reinforced the importance of partnerships that shift power to communities while fostering long-term resilience, local ownership, and inclusive climate action.

The conference emphasized the critical role of intermediary organisations and individuals in connecting community priorities with global policy, research, and funding processes. These actors play an essential role in translating locally generated knowledge into evidence

that can inform decision-making, influence policy, and support the mobilisation of resources for community-led adaptation initiatives.

Discussions throughout the conference reinforced that Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) extends beyond a project implementation approach to represent a broader governance and development paradigm. The sessions highlighted the importance of shifting decision-making power, ownership, and accountability to local communities, rather than simply decentralising financial resources, as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable and equitable adaptation outcomes.

In addition to the formal conference programme, informal interactions during networking sessions, breaks, and social gatherings emerged as valuable spaces for peer learning, collaboration, and relationship building. These engagements facilitated the exchange of practical experiences, strengthened professional networks, and created opportunities for future partnerships beyond the conference itself.

Communications and Youth



A youth, Yvonne Muyi, videographer capturing community stories and lived experiences in an informal settlement.

In 2025, the Communications Department strengthened SDI Kenya's visibility, strategic partnerships, and community-driven storytelling by amplifying grassroots voices across digital, broadcast, and online platforms. Through the KYCTV Kenya YouTube channel, the Urban Talks podcast, and www.sdikenya.org, SDI Kenya expanded access to community-generated knowledge, stories, and evidence, while increasing the visibility of community-led solutions and inclusive urban development.

A major milestone during the year was the successful launch of the Urban Talks podcast, created by Muungano wa Wanavijiji youth, for youth. The podcast serves as a bold platform for amplifying real stories, fresh ideas, and grassroots solutions shaping the future of our cities. Through conversations on climate action, land rights, housing, services, mental health, and youth leadership, Urban Talks offers an authentic reflection of urban life while positioning young people as powerful voices in shaping inclusive and resilient communities.

As a youth-led platform, the podcast centers conversations suggested and shaped by young people themselves. The youth who feature on the episodes choose the topics they know best, sharing personal stories and perspectives that deepen understanding of life in urban informal settlements. By giving youth the space to own their narratives, the podcast delivers authentic, fresh insights and amplifies voices often excluded from mainstream discussion. As the year came to a close, the youth had recorded four episodes that captured these perspectives and extended the podcast's reach.

Website
www.sdikenya.org

Instagram
[@wanavijiji_sdi](https://www.instagram.com/wanavijiji_sdi)

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KYCTV Kenya & Urban Talks Podcast

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TickTok
[@kyctvkenya](https://www.tiktok.com/@kyctvkenya)

Linkedin
SDI Kenya

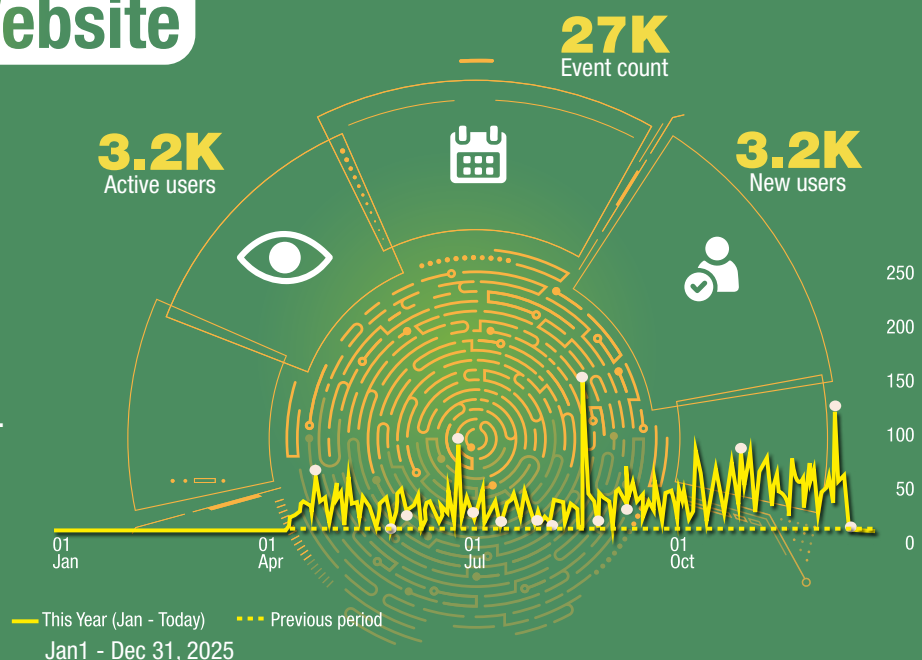
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SDI Kenya Website

Although only one year old, the SDI Kenya website achieved an impressive reach, demonstrating the growing demand for community-led knowledge, stories, and evidence on inclusive urban development.



Institutional Strengthening



SDI Kenya staff and Muungano wa Wanavijiji members at a Muungano Alliance reflection meeting.

To strengthen organizational capacity, the organization onboarded key staff and engaged technical consultants to support program delivery, enhance monitoring and evaluation systems, and improve strategic communication. These additions contributed to more effective implementation and strengthened internal systems. During the reporting period, Kilion Nyambuga was appointed to the senior management team as Program Coordinator, taking on expanded responsibilities to strengthen program coordination, cross-departmental collaboration, and organizational leadership.

To strengthen organizational capacity, SDI Kenya onboarded key staff and engaged technical consultants to enhance program delivery, strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, improve strategic communications, and provide specialized technical expertise. These investments contributed to more effective implementation and stronger internal systems.

During the reporting period, **Kilion Nyambuga** was appointed to the senior management team as Program Coordinator, assuming expanded responsibilities for **program coordination**, cross-departmental collaboration, fundraising support, and organizational leadership.

The organization also strengthened its finance function under the leadership of **Faith Maina**,

Finance Manager, who oversees financial reporting, compliance, and financial systems. With over seven years of experience in finance, accounting, business development, and monitoring and evaluation, she continues to strengthen financial accountability and support evidence-based decision-making across the organization.

As SDI Kenya expands its housing and settlement upgrading initiatives, the organization also engaged an **Architectural Consultant** to provide technical expertise in the planning, design, and implementation of construction projects.



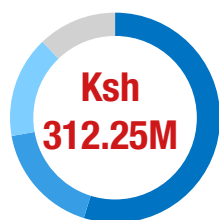
Jane Njoroge, SDI Kenya, making a presentation at the Muungano Alliance Reflection Meeting.

Finance

Annual Financial Highlights Report 2025

SDI Kenya continued to implement programs aimed at strengthening community-led development and improving the lives of residents in informal settlements across Kenya. The organization maintained strong donor partnerships and invested significantly in program implementation while strengthening institutional systems.

Financial Performance Per Category



Income

SDI Kenya had a total income of KSh **312.25 million**, comprising:

- Donor funding: KSh **307.33 million** (98.4%)
- Other income: KSh **3.03 million**
- Amortization of capital grants: KSh **1.88 million**
- The increase in donor income demonstrates continued confidence from development partners in SDI Kenya's programs and financial stewardship.

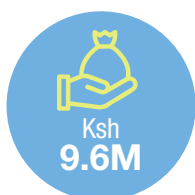


Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year amounted to KSh **322.20 million**, primarily supporting program implementation and organizational operations.

Key expenditure areas included:

- Program management and implementation: KSh **307.33 million**
- Administrative expenses: KSh **12.99 million**
- Depreciation on equipment: KSh **1.88 million**
- Approximately 95% of total expenditure was directed towards program implementation, reflecting SDI Kenya's commitment to maximizing resources for community impact.



Operating Result

The organization recorded a deficit of KSh **9.96 million** during the year.

This result mainly reflects the utilization of previously accumulated restricted funds to implement planned program activities and should be viewed within the context of donor-funded project cycles rather than as an indication of financial distress.



Fund Balances

At the end of the financial year, SDI Kenya reported:

- Restricted Funds: (KSh **12.99 million**)
- Unrestricted Funds: KSh **7.68 million**
- Net Fund Balance: (KSh **5.30 million**)

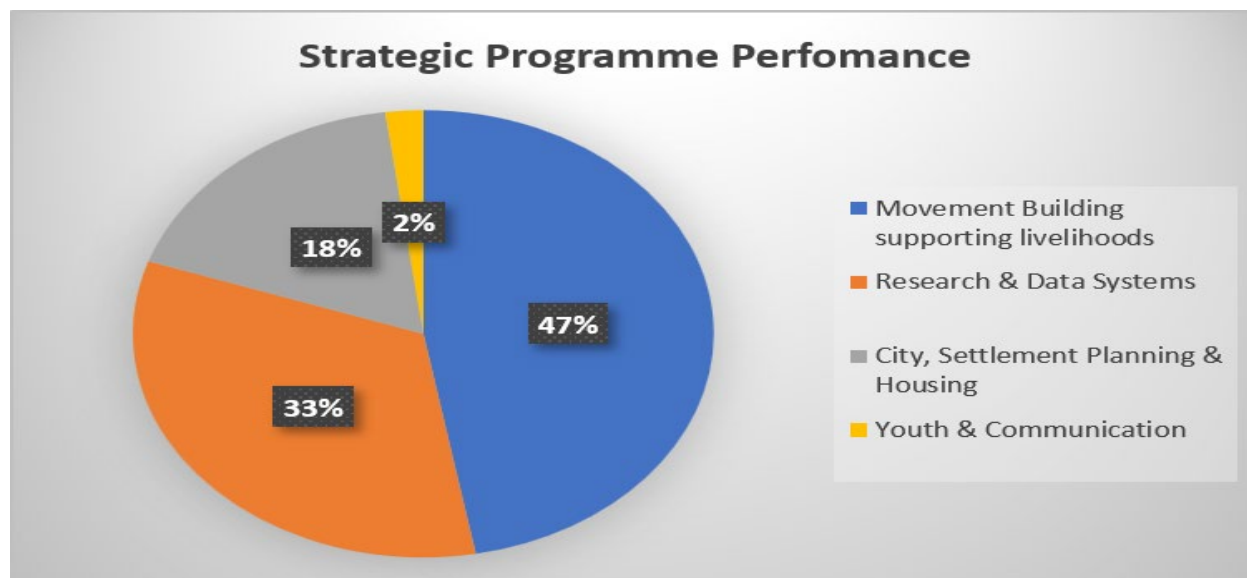
Management continues to monitor fund balances closely while ensuring compliance with donor funding agreements and maintaining effective financial controls.

Strategic Program Performance

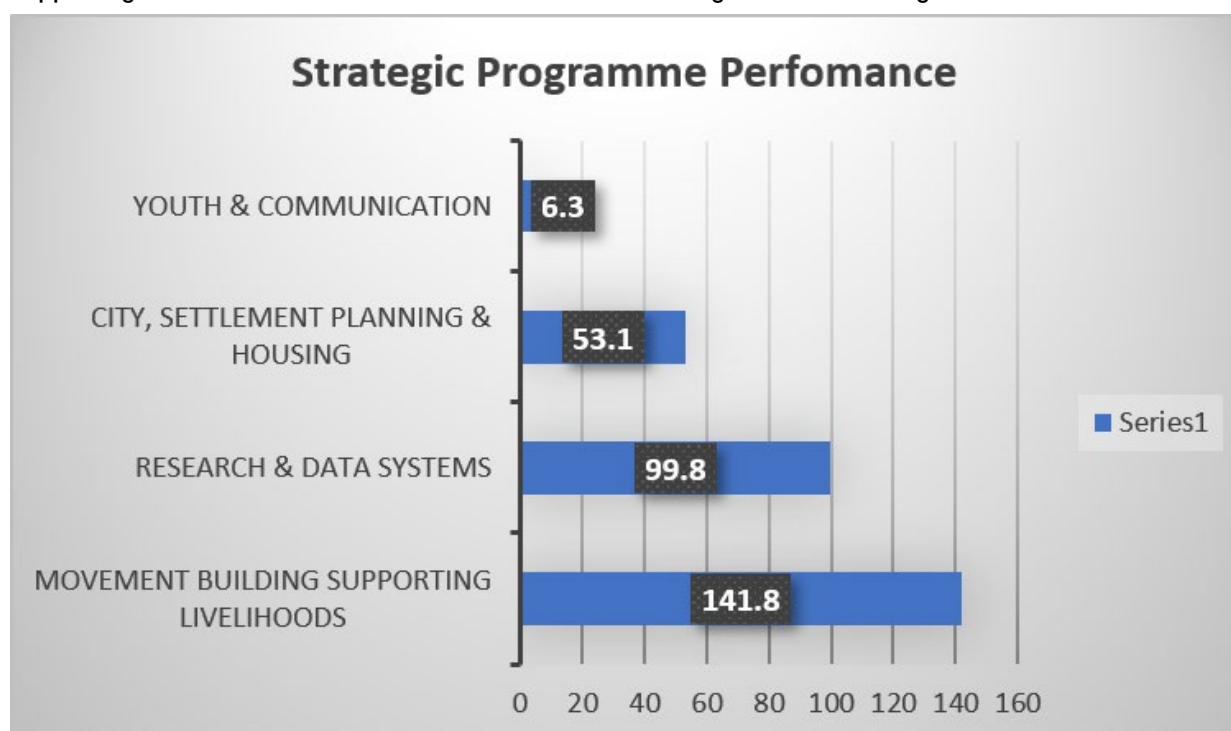
Movement building supporting livelihoods received the largest investment at KSh 141.8 million (46.6%), reflecting SDI Kenya's emphasis on community organizing, climate advocacy, and grassroots strengthening.

Research & Data Systems accounted for KSh 99.8 million (33.1%), demonstrating the organization's commitment to evidence-based urban development and community led research.

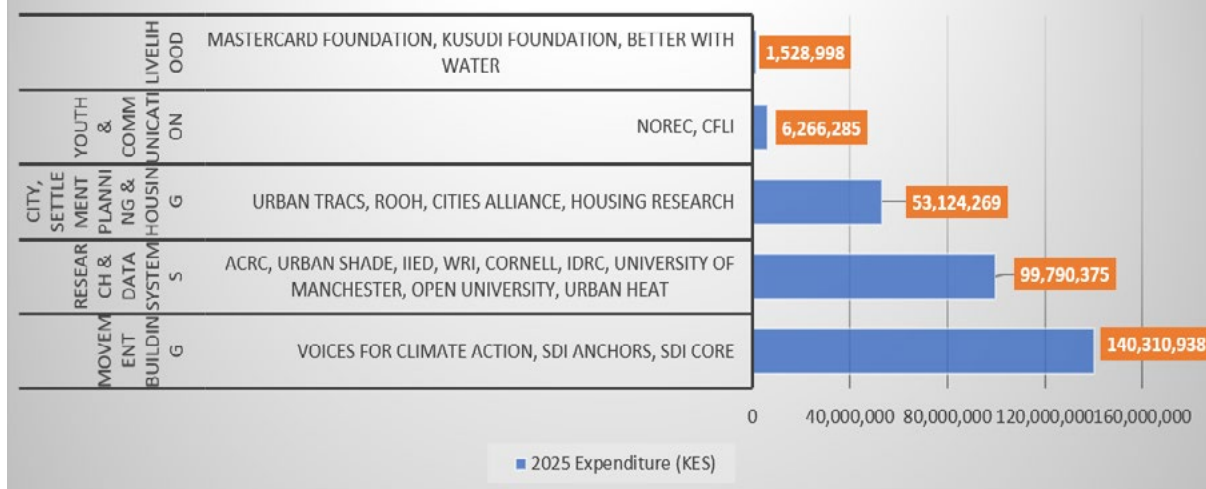
City, Settlement Planning & Housing represented KSh 53.1 million (17.6%), supporting inclusive settlement planning and housing initiatives.



Youth and Communication received KSh 6.3 million (2.1%), which indicates SDI Kenya's effort towards supporting communities raise awareness and understanding on their challenges and solutions.



2025 Expenditure (KES)



Overall Financial Analysis of Performance

Shack Dwellers International (SDI) Kenya
Annual report and financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2025

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND FUND BALANCES

	Notes	2025 Restricted Shs	2025 Unrestricted Shs	2025 Total Shs	2024 Restricted Shs	2024 Unrestricted Shs	2024 Total Shs
Income							
Donor income	3	307,332,393	-	307,332,393	185,793,754	-	185,793,754
Other Income	4	-	3,032,068	3,032,068	-	1,348,030	1,348,030
Amortisation of capital grants	12	-	1,883,786	1,883,786	-	1,150,768	1,150,768
Total income		307,332,393	4,915,854	312,248,247	185,793,754	2,498,798	188,292,553
Expenditure							
Administrative expenses		(12,987,422)	-	(12,987,422)	(2,296,524)	-	(2,296,524)
Programme management costs		(307,332,393)	-	(307,332,393)	(183,497,230)	-	(183,497,230)
Depreciation on equipment		-	(1,883,786)	(1,883,786)	-	(1,150,769)	(1,150,769)
Total expenditure		(320,319,815)	(1,883,786)	(322,203,601)	(185,793,754)	(1,150,769)	(186,944,523)
Result for the year	5	(12,987,422)	3,032,068	(9,955,354)	-	1,348,029	1,348,029
Fund balances							
At start of year		-	4,650,664	4,650,664	-	3,302,635	3,302,635
Result for the year		(12,987,422)	3,032,068	(9,955,354)	-	1,348,029	1,348,029
At end of year		(12,987,422)	7,682,732	(5,304,690)	-	4,650,664	4,650,664

The notes on pages 11 to 19 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Report of the independent auditor - pages 5 to 7.

SDI Kenya significantly expanded its programme implementation in 2025, increasing donor funded activities by 65% compared to 2024. Thanks to the confidence and support of our development partners, SDI Kenya mobilized KSh 307.3 million in donor funding in 2025, representing a 65% increase from KSh 185.8 million in 2024. This growth enabled us to deepen our work across communities and expand implementation of programmes focused on urban development, climate resilience, research, and movement building.

SDI Kenya maintained a strong commitment to programme delivery, with approximately 96% of donor-funded expenditure directed toward programme implementation, while administrative costs remained lean at approximately 4% of total expenditure. This demonstrates our continued focus on maximizing resources for community impact. Our programme expenditure grew by approximately 68%, reflecting an expanded portfolio of projects and increased support reaching communities across Kenya.

Total organisational income increased from KSh 188.3 million in 2024 to KSh 312.2 million in 2025, reflecting successful resource mobilisation efforts and strengthened donor partnerships. Continued investment in organisational assets supports effective programme implementation while ensuring proper accounting for asset use through annual depreciation and amortisation. Unrestricted reserves increased from KSh 4.7 million to KSh 7.7 million, strengthening SDI Kenya's financial resilience and providing greater flexibility to support innovation, compliance, and organisational sustainability.

Shack Dwellers International (SDI) Kenya
Annual report and financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

		As at 31 December	
	Notes	2025	2024
		Shs	Shs
Non-current assets			
Equipment	7	7,368,150	2,304,044
Intangible assets	8	75,000	156,000
		<u>7,443,150</u>	<u>2,460,044</u>
Current assets			
Other receivables	9	65,497,140	18,032,954
Cash and cash equivalents	10	30,772,993	61,984,720
		<u>96,270,133</u>	<u>80,017,674</u>
Total assets		<u>103,713,283</u>	<u>82,477,718</u>
Fund balances			
General funds		<u>(5,304,690)</u>	<u>4,650,664</u>
Non-current			
Capital grant	12	<u>7,443,150</u>	<u>2,460,044</u>
Current liabilities			
Deferred income	12	100,860,822	72,746,541
Other payables	11	714,001	2,620,469
		<u>101,574,823</u>	<u>75,367,010</u>
Total fund balance and liabilities		<u>103,713,283</u>	<u>82,477,718</u>

SDI Kenya strengthened its asset base in 2025, with total assets increasing by 26% to KSh 103.7 million. This growth reflects increased organisational capacity to deliver larger, more complex programmes while ensuring the infrastructure needed to support high-quality implementation. During 2025, SDI Kenya made substantial investments in equipment and operational infrastructure, increasing the value of fixed assets by more than 220%. These investments strengthen our ability to support field operations, enhance staff productivity, improve data management, and deliver programmes more effectively across the country.

Capital grant funding increased significantly during the year, enabling strategic investments in assets that will continue supporting programme delivery and strengthening organisational effectiveness over the long term.

Shack Dwellers International (SDI) Kenya
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STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

	Notes	2025 Shs	2024 Shs
Operating activities			
Result for the year		(9,955,354)	1,348,029
Adjustments for:			
Depreciation on equipment	7	1,802,786	1,069,769
Amortisation of intangible assets	8	81,000	81,000
Amortisation of capital grant	12	(1,883,786)	(1,150,769)
Changes in working capital:			
- deferred income		28,114,281	31,757,575
- receivables		(47,464,186)	(11,117,156)
- payables		(1,906,468)	2,168,510
- restricted cash balances		39,960,999	(25,040,609)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities		<u>8,749,272</u>	<u>(883,651)</u>
Investing activities			
Purchase of equipment	7	(6,866,892)	(954,688)
Purchase of intangible assets	8	<u>-</u>	<u>(195,000)</u>
Net cash (used in) investing activities		<u>(6,866,892)</u>	<u>(1,149,688)</u>
Financing activities			
Capital grants received	12	<u>6,866,892</u>	<u>1,149,688</u>
Net cash from financing activities		<u>6,866,892</u>	<u>1,149,688</u>
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		<u>8,749,272</u>	<u>(883,651)</u>
Movement in cash and cash equivalents			
At start of year		5,800,352	6,684,003
Increase/(decrease)		<u>8,749,272</u>	<u>(883,651)</u>
At end of year	10	<u><u>14,549,624</u></u>	<u><u>5,800,352</u></u>

The notes on pages 11 to 19 form an integral part of these financial statements.

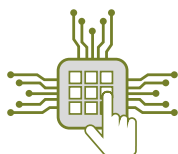
Report of the independent auditor - pages 5 to 7.

SDI Kenya maintained strong cash flow management in 2025, generating a positive operating cash flow of KSh 8.7 million despite a significant expansion in programme activities. The organisation invested KSh 6.9 million in strengthening operational infrastructure, fully supported by capital grant funding, ensuring that donor resources were used for long-term organisational capacity rather than financed through debt. Cash and cash equivalents increased to KSh 14.5 million at year-end, demonstrating sound financial stewardship, healthy liquidity, and strong readiness to implement future donor-funded programmes.



Accountability and Governance

SDI Kenya remains committed to strong financial management and accountability, transparent utilisation of donor resources, compliance with statutory and donor reporting requirements, robust governance and internal control systems, delivering measurable impact for communities across Kenya.



Looking Ahead

In 2026, SDI Kenya will continue to strengthen partnerships with donors and communities. Expand community led development initiatives, improve financial sustainability, enhance organisational systems and operational efficiency, deliver impactful programmes that improve the lives of residents in informal settlements.



Appreciation

The successful implementation of a broad portfolio of donor funded projects reflects SDI Kenya's strong programme management capacity and the continued confidence of development partners. Through these investments, the organisation strengthened community institutions, generated policy-relevant research, promoted climate resilience, and advanced inclusive urban development across Kenya. SDI Kenya remains committed to delivering high-impact, community-led programmes while ensuring accountability, transparency, and value for resources entrusted by its partners.

The Board of Directors and Management sincerely thank all development partners, community federations, government institutions, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders for their continued support, collaboration, and confidence in SDI Kenya's mission. Together, we remain committed to building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities across Kenya.



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