

Social Justice

SOCIAL JUSTICE M-PLAN

“Social justice is essentially about the equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms regardless of human diversity reflected in the fair and just distribution of all opportunities, resources, benefits, privileges and burdens in a society or group and between societies.”
– Thuli Madonsela

“During apartheid the pass laws were the barrier that limited your freedom. Today it is poverty that limits our movement. Poverty is today’s pass that sets limits on what I can and cannot do and how high my children can rise in the social structure.”
– Palesa Mosa (detained at the age of 12 on 16 June 1976)



The Musa Plan for Social Justice (Social Justice M-Plan) is a social justice accelerator programme, named after Palesa Musa and modelled on the post-World War II, Europe Recovery (or “Marshall”) Plan. It is aimed at fostering applied integrated research and related activities in order to catalyse the process of ending poverty and equalising opportunities by 2030, in support of the National Development Plan (NDP), Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Social Justice M-Plan seeks to coordinate systematic and integrated academic, business and broader civil society input to support government efforts towards breaking the back of poverty and inequality. It is also an avenue for giving effect to Stellenbosch University’s social impact objective, particularly with regard to the grand constitutional objective of healing the divisions of the past and transforming structural social relations in society to give effect to the constitutional promise of freeing the potential and improving the quality of life of every citizen.

Objectives

The Law Trust Chair in Social Justice is anchored in the triple objectives of responsive research, teaching and social impact. Research includes auditing and integrating existing social justice research and data while generating new knowledge and information where necessary. Teaching, on the other hand, extends to fostering appropriate knowledge, skills and values among decision-makers that drive public policy, planning and monitoring.

The Social Justice M-Plan key result areas aim to:

1. Empower policy- and law-makers to leverage data analytics to catalyse social justice and SDG 16-responsive law and policy reform;
2. Foster social accountability and social cohesion through legal, human rights and democracy awareness and empowerment initiatives;
3. Mobilise societal, corporate and international support and resources towards accelerated reduction of poverty and inequality by 2030; and
4. Encourage leadership among all and contribute to a capable state.

The Theory of Change Underpinning the Social Justice M-Plan

The Social Justice M-Plan moves from the premise that despite numerous transformation policies and resource investments since the dawn of democracy, the poverty and inequality gap has been increasing due to the exponential impact of structural accumulated socio-economic advantages and disadvantages among historically privileged and oppressed groups, respectively, as well as misaligned policy responses.

The theory of change behind the Social Justice M-Plan is that poverty and inequality are systems problems and require a systems approach to change. Current approaches tend to adopt a silver bullet paradigm. Poverty and inequality operate like debt, increasing exponentially with minimum repayment efforts and decreasing exponentially with significant investment. Current approaches to poverty alleviation are bedevilled by a silver-bullet, “one-size-fits-all” paradigm for mainstream policies, while creating in ramps for the historically oppressed whose gains are easily offset by the fact that the “one-size-fits-all” in the mainstream leaves those already disadvantaged behind.

Different dimensions of poverty and inequality feed on and foster each other. Gender, spatial disparities, disability, class, sexual orientation and age, amongst others, intersect with other forms of social injustice to compound disadvantage.

The assumptions further take into account the deleterious impact of corruption and related governance failure on social justice. In response thereto, the Social Justice M-Plan seeks to sponsor reinforced public participation in public policy processes, service monitoring and exacting accountability to ensure that whatever is gained through the Social Justice M-Plan is not offset by what is lost through corruption and related governance and service failure in state affairs.

Fostering Collaboration

Key to the Social Justice M-Plan and its interdisciplinary nature is the appreciation of the importance of collaboration within the university, and between universities, disciplines, the state, society and business. The coordination of resources will be critical for this purpose. The Social Justice M-Plan is ultimately intended to be a collaborative venture between Stellenbosch University and other academic institutions in a manner that builds bridges between diverse communities.

Key Activities

1. Social Justice-resonant policies and laws.

Activities include the establishment of a Social Justice hub; think-tank coordination; policy-briefs and social justice analytics tools design.

2. Social accountability and social cohesion.

Activities include an Everyday Justice legal empowerment initiative working with students to enhance access to justice for disadvantaged groups and communities. It also includes social justice cafes and the #Dear President initiative and fosters accountability for constitutional, SDG and NDP imperatives for social justice.

3. Resource mobilisation.

The flagship activity involves encouraging retail outlets to help collect small public donations of R2,00 or more towards an #Action4Inclusion Fund managed by a Council of Social Justice Champions. The fund is directed towards impact investment in education and ward-based socio-economic inclusion initiatives in 4392 wards.

4. Encourage leadership among all and contribute to a capable state.

Design a poverty and inequality map and encourage social justice championship that has targeted the poorest areas on it. This includes encouraging a strategic investment legal framework targeted at reducing poverty and inequality.