



# Individual Portfolio In Sustainable Development

**15 May 2025**

Charnelle Kluth

Cover Image: Shutterstock

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Name: Charnelle Kluth

## LEARNING GOALS

### Learning goal 1

Please copy-paste the final version of your learning goal 1.

**Learning goals 1:**

**The building of a Just City: Understanding the shortcomings and recuperative strategies being put forward by the EU parliament, researchers/academics and NGOs to address the lack of affordable housing in Europe, complemented by lessons learnt from Global South.**

**Motivation:** SDG Target 11.1 proposes; “By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums” to enable the broader goal of making “cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (UN SDG 11).

Housing has become a tradeable and luxury good rather than treated as a basic human right which has led to a shortage of affordable housing in almost every major city. Its causes are diverse (from mass tourism to financialization) yet all speak to the growing unsustainable development of our urban areas and who has the right to the city. The EU growth-oriented policies do not sufficiently address these causes and instead facilitate an investment-friendly urban environment fueling unsustainable tourism models, short-term rentals and investment property.

My urban planning, design and affordable housing background in the Global South is a potential trajectory which I wish to continue in Europe, however it requires an understanding of the main causes, responsible authorities and policies, regulations and strategies being developed or implemented to address the European housing crisis. It also puts me in a favourable position to compare strategies and discuss lessons learnt from those of the Global South (Johannesburg and Cape Town), which has long since dealt with housing issues regarding migration, informality, rising homelessness and budget constraints. I hope to gain a critical, yet holistic understanding of the EU housing crisis and its repercussions and recuperative strategies from various sources such as the EU Parliament & its policies, Academics/Researchers and NGOs as well as understand my role as a potential sustainable design and planning professional in affecting the shortage of affordable housing in EU.

### Learning goal 2

Please add the final version of your learning goal 2.

**Learning goal 2:**

**To learn critical skills in the intersection of economic growth and sustainable development through the ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) framework.**

**Motivation:**

This goal ties somewhat to the first in that it directly addresses the economic growth-oriented models. I wish to be able to critically assess the sustainability of a business strategy and its value chain in terms of Environmental Social and Governance targets at an overview level. I believe it is important to understand the intersection of economics and sustainable development so as to better tackle the issues around greenwashing and prioritization of environmental or social concerns. It will provide me with insight into the implications of pathways and tradeoffs made in the business sector and how better to justify for more sustainable pathways.

Current policies are still fixated on growth-oriented economic models – at least for the foreseeable short term – therefore it is important, if not able to make drastic transformation, to start with incremental steps where possible. Although far from sufficient, ESG has been pushed as a potential strategy in at least the right direction and I see it as a step in the door towards more environmental and socially-oriented economic models. As ESG has not formed part of our Sustainable Development Course I believe knowledge on the topic will add great value to broaden my scope as a sustainable practitioner and potential consultant.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### Learning goal 1 - Learning activity 1

#### Learning activity 1: Manifesto for a Just City – TU Delft Online Workshops

**Date/time/place** (include link if possible):

4 part series workshops with practitioners and academics. 7, 15, 21 and 28 October. Online.  
<https://just-city.org/portfolio/manifesto-for-the-just-city/>

**Nature of involvement:** Participant and group member

**Motivation (including link with learning objectives):**

Critically discussing the key debates and proposals from an urban researcher and practitioner point of view regarding the social right to the city, and a vision of a just, inclusive and sustainable city. I draw links and apply these concepts to issues pertaining to affordable housing. The workshops also reflect on the role of planning and design professionals in the development of a just city which relates to my goal of understanding my own role and responsibility in the sustainable development of an inclusive and affordable urban environment with regards to affordable housing.

**Collaboration with other students to organize the learning activity** (add their names): N/A

**Title product** (add a small description of the product, including its intended audience):

Manifesto for a Just City: Building Inclusive, Sustainable, and Human-Centered Urban Futures – a manifesto of approximately 1000 words outlining a set of ideals and objectives for the development of an inclusive, just and sustainable city intended for a broad public audience such as spatial justice advocates and residents within cities.

In addition to the manifesto, gained knowledge from this activity will be incorporated into the product of the second learning activity.

**Did you publish this product?** If yes, add link: The manifesto is to be published as part of a collection of manifestos of the whole workshop series along with those of other groups. Publications of manifestos can be found at the following link: <https://just-city.org/publications/> however, please note that the 2024 manifestos will not be published before June 2025 (Summer period).

**Collaboration with other students in the development of the product** (add their names):

Theodore Price, Yana Dinkelmeyer, Angel Riofrio Jacinto

**Learning goal 1 - Learning activity 2**

**Learning activity 2:**

European Union Plenary Session debate on steps towards a just transition (debating the housing crisis) “Ensuring Sustainable, decent and affordable housing in Europe”

(Complementary activity to provide Global South & NGO nuance: Documentary, “No place to call home” available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udHAX4bp3K8> and released 15 Dec 2024 by News24)

**Date/time/place** (include link if possible):

**9 October 2024 (Online, Strasbourg) 13:00 – 14:30**

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2024-10-07/5/parliament-to-hold-debate-on-affordable-housing-in-europe>

[https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/plenary-session\\_20241009-0900-PLENARY\\_20241009-0900-PLENARY](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/plenary-session_20241009-0900-PLENARY_20241009-0900-PLENARY)

**Nature of involvement:**

Observer

**Motivation (including link with learning objectives):**

This activity provides insight into the main arguments from EU member states regarding the affordable housing crisis and their proposals/calls for change. It also serves as an introduction to EU housing regulations and policies which I have not yet had the opportunity to study. Familiarity with these policies will aid in providing a holistic and comprehensive overview of the current EU housing situation. It will reflect the main challenges needing to be addressed, and the pitfalls of current EU policy. Attending this event will also provide me with insight into the inner workings of the EU parliament and how change is affected at the greater scale in terms of policy-making.

**Collaboration with other students to organize the learning activity** (add their names): N/A

**Title product** (add a small description of the product, including its intended audience):

My personal product would be a critical summary, integration and comparison of the learning activities into a design poster to capture a range of perspectives on the European Housing crisis, the role of planning and design professionals and lessons learnt from the Global South. It is intended for both built-environment professionals as well as urban residents and housing activists to understand their role in shaping or calling for more equitable housing. It demonstrates in a clear and relatable manner the key issues pertaining to the housing crisis, key actors involved and possible solutions, hoping to create awareness and inspire action from local residents to challenge local policies and housing developments.

**Did you publish this product?** If yes, add link: /

**Collaboration with other students in the development of the product** (add their names):

N/A

**Learning goal 2**

**Learning goal 2 - Learning activity 1 (3)**

**Learning activity 3: ESG & Sustainability: ESG Corporate Masterclass offered by GenZed Learning on UDEMY Online Learning Platform**

**Date/time/place** (include link if possible):

Self-learning online, 26 February.

<https://www.udemy.com/course/esg-sustainability-corporate-masterclass-2023/?couponCode=ST13MT80425G1>

**Nature of involvement:** Participant and group member: Delia Moens de Hase

**Motivation (including link with learning objectives):**

Critically discussing the fundamentals of ESG. Understanding what it is, how it is implemented as well as the advantages and disadvantages of ESG. This provided the necessary introduction to ESG in order to review and compare two business case studies reporting on their ESG KPIs using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework. The course offered direct insight into ESG and how it links with sustainability in terms of its social, environmental and economic dimensions as pertaining to my learning goal.

**Collaboration with other students to organize the learning activity** (add their names):

None

**Title product** (add a small description of the product, including its intended audience):

ESG REPORT:

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TO SHED LIGHT ON THE DOWNFALLS OF ESG FRAMEWORK**

*Authors: Charnelle Kluth and Delia Moens de Hase*

Comparative Case Study analysis of ESG GRI disclosures of two major chocolate companies; Barry Callebaut and Ferrero Group. The report is intended for consumers of products and goods to be able to critically assess their own consumption choices based on major company ESG disclosures. It hopes to further inspire consumers to question the sustainable legitimacy of ESG as well as of the businesses which they support. It also serves as a learning tool for businesses to understand the shortcomings within their own sustainability disclosures and risks of greenwashing. Furthermore, this report can be used as case study learning material for sustainable development students interested in ESG comparisons to demonstrate where certain gaps occur to make their own critical reflections on ESG as a sustainable method.

**Did you publish this product?** If yes, add link: The product was tailored from its report form into a social media form in collaboration with COEXIST. It can be found at;

[https://www.instagram.com/p/DIRWU3v3Kp/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/DIRWU3v3Kp/?img_index=1)

**Collaboration with other students in the development of the product** (add their names):

Delia Moens De Hase

**Learning goal 2 - Learning activity 2 (4)**

**Learning activity 4: Business Sustainability Overview for business from the Global South: Africa Made Only Pty Ltd. (AMO) in a 3 work session process**

**Date/time/place** (include link if possible): **Learning activity is integrated into the product and forms part of the template**

Step 1: Interview (07.05.25 Online interview)

Step 2: Business Sustainability Questionnaire (08.05.25 Online working session)

Step 3: SDG Alignment Workshop (09.05.25 Online working session)

(transcript for interview in learning activity document)

**Nature of involvement:** Self-organised. Charnelle Kluth, interviewer and work session host  
Africa Made Only Director Ryan Amory, interviewee

**Motivation (including link with learning objectives):**

During the first learning activity, a number of criticisms regarding ESG were illuminated. This second learning activity aims to delve further into those criticisms, specifically the challenges and difficulties faced firstly by small businesses and secondly by businesses from the global south, in achieving greater sustainability targets. It also investigates alternative forms of sustainability reporting and targets that might prove more meaningful and attainable for businesses from the global south. The working sessions with an aspiring sustainable clothing business in the global south (South Africa) aims to highlight the nuances and those challenges of ESG and sustainability reporting as well as discover opportunities for alternative sustainability targets and the steps required to achieve them. The learning activity involved a three step self-organised working session process for data collection to identify SDG alignment, gaps and potential targets.

**Collaboration with other students to organize the learning activity** (add their names): Self organised

**Title product** (add a small description of the product, including its intended audience):

**Sustainable Business Overview for Africa Made Only (AMO) Start-up**

The product is a compilation of collected data from the learning activity working sessions into a business sustainability overview document. Included on the final page is a 'Commitment Policy' for the company to publicly share with their clients and consumers as well as guide their own sustainable development pathway. It is a means for demonstrating commitment yet also allow for accountability and transparency when that commitment is not met. Furthermore, the document in its entirety could be used as a potential template for other small businesses from the global south, wishing to become more sustainable, and to demonstrate their sustainability commitments and achievements in hopes of gaining greater access to specific markets or financial and institutional support – particularly if certification process are still not within reach.

**Did you publish this product?** If yes, add link: / I was told it would be published on the AMO website (pending) <https://www.africamadeonly.com/pages/about-us>

**Collaboration with other students in the development of the product** (add their names): /

## Learning Activity Process & Product 1

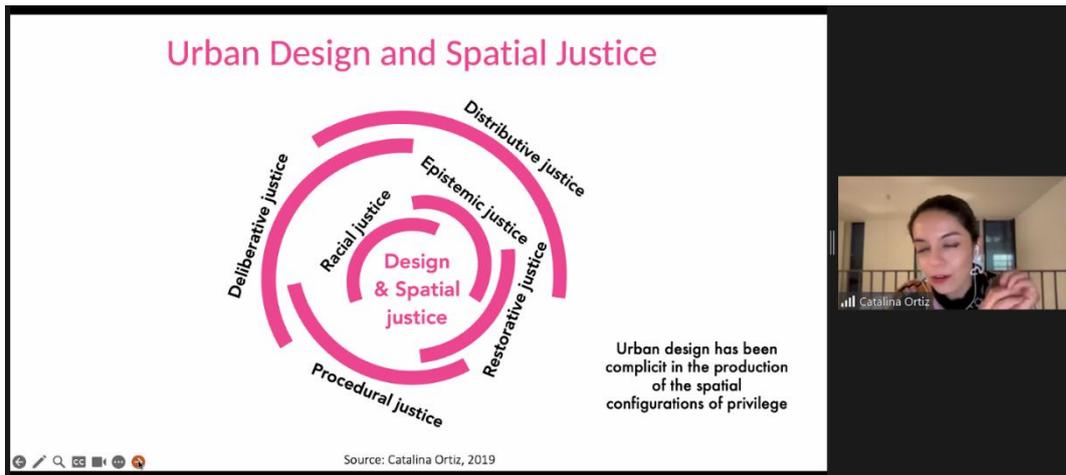
### **Manifesto for a Just City – TU Delft Online Four Part Workshop Series, October 2024**

Ongoing rapid urbanisation and migration of people to cities, requires the sustainable and socially-just development of our cities to enable the broader goal of making “cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (UN SDG 11).

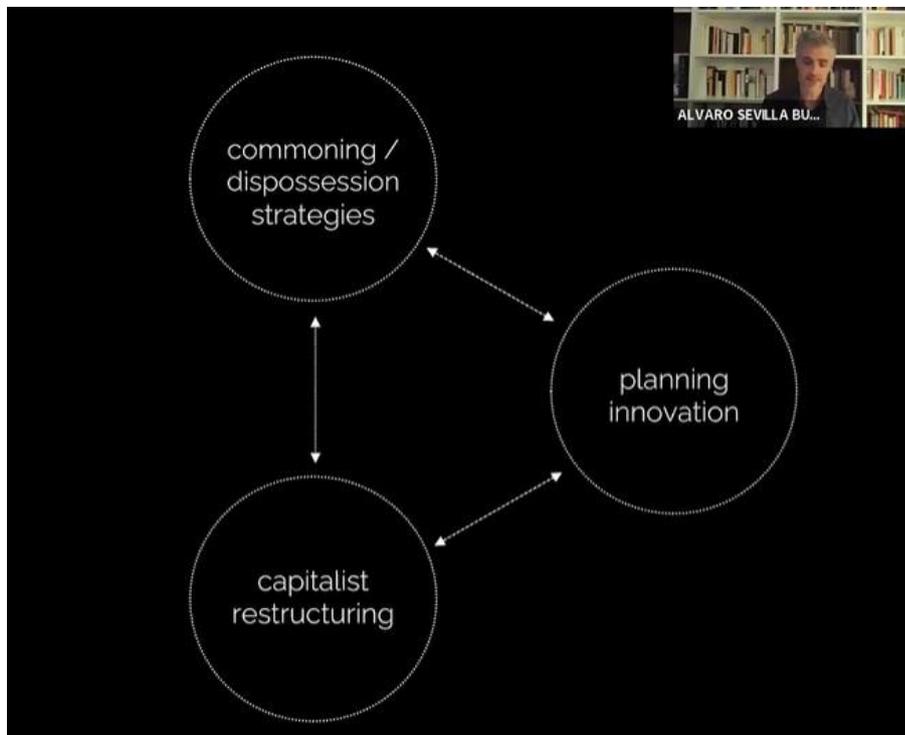
The TU Delft Manifesto for A Just City is an annual workshop series bringing together academics, practitioners and students from both the global north and south, with the aim of publishing a series of student manifestos collated into a book. I chose this learning activity as I find that spatial urban justice principles are closely aligned and interlinked with the sustainable development of affordable housing as part of my learning goal, as both reflect issues around inclusion, access, rights and security. A manifesto, as a visioning and sometimes a radical and disruptive tool, also seemed appropriate as it represents a sense of urgency & speaks clearly and concisely to the general public to call for immediate intervention by authorities to build a just city and address affordable housing.

The workshops provided a thorough and holistic overview of contemporary pressing urban justice issues and proposals. The topics ranged from The Commons, Urban Surveillance & technologies, Radical Care and Disobedient Urban Pedagogy with emphasis on equitable and inclusive urban planning practices. Although not having directly addressed the housing crisis, the lectures proposed ways in which opportunities for spatial justice can emerge. I applied, particularly the first and last topics, to address my learning goal 1- partly informing the second product, as well as applied it to affordable housing, sustainability and other urban elements to address issues pertaining to a Just City for the manifesto. The topic of the ‘commons’, first introduced in previous Sustainable Development Challenge and Political Ecology classes, was further applied to urban settings allowing me to view public space and its origins differently, stemming firstly from processes of ‘enclosure’. It also allowed me to reflect on how, going forward, the commons could be applied to community-based housing management models & the criticality of public space in developing sustainable socially inclusive communities and networks. It further highlighted the key roles of municipalities and the notion of decentralised governance in urban justice. Additionally, it has become more evident that our cities require a paradigm shift away from unsustainable economic growth-based models, which again I could link to the causes of affordable housing shortages such as speculation, short-term rentals and over-tourism. What was particularly interesting, was to reflect on my role as a planning professional and the nuances of the planning profession and its historic contribution to ‘de-commonisation’ practices as a political, and sometimes a colonial tool through urban regeneration which aligns with the history of planning in my own country, South Africa. I reflected on future ways in which I can support the development of a socially-just city by designing spaces for ‘commoning’ to occur, reforming regulations where possible to allow for various collaborative, participatory and management models which could create opportunities

for various forms of affordable housing. Furthermore, TU Delft is considered a trailblazer in the urbanism profession and the opportunity to have collaborated and networked with and within this institution fulfills a personal professional goal of mine. That being said, I would have liked to have participated in the online discussions more. After each lecture, breakout rooms were used for this purpose but unfortunately, limited time was provided for discussion which somewhat hindered the extent of my participation. However, as a collaboration group, we decided to unpack each topic between ourselves to mitigate this and assemble our manifesto as well as linking the discussions to broader sustainability debates of circular economies, climate and resilient cities beyond affordable housing.



Excerpt from lecture by Catalina Ortiz (UCL, London, UK): Professor of critical pedagogy at UCL on 28 October, 2024.



Excerpt from lecture by Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago (ETSAM, Madrid, Spain): Against the Commons, 7 October, 2024.

**INCLUSION**

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

**PARTICIPATE IN  
BUILDING THE  
JUST CITY**

**DE-  
CENTRALISATION**

HUMAN SPACES MUST BE  
HUMAN SIZED

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
IN URBAN PLANNING

**CIRCULAR  
ECONOMY**

JUST & INCLUSIVE  
ECONOMY

**A RIGHT TO  
THE CITY**

AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING

**A CITY AS AN  
ECOSYSTEM**

RESILIENT AND  
SUSTAINABLE

**A CITY MUST  
RESPECT ITS  
SURROUNDINGS**

A GREEN AND  
CLIMATE RESILIENT  
CITY

**JUST  
MOBILITY**  
RELIABLE, SAFE,  
FAIR, AND  
SUSTAINABLE  
TRANSPORT

# MANIFESTO FOR A JUST CITY

YANA DINKELMEYER    ANGEL RIOFRIO  
CHARNELLE KLUTH    THEODORE PRICE

KU LEUVEN

**ATTENTION**

# MANIFESTO FOR A JUST CITY

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PLANNING:

A JUST CITY IS BUILT ON THE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF ALL, ESPECIALLY PRIORITIZING THE VOICES OF THE MOST VULNERABLE. IT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES, BY BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL, FOSTERS SOLIDARITY, AND ENSURES COLLECTIVE NEEDS ARE MET. BY CENTERING THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE ELDERLY, YOUTH, WOMEN, AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS, THE CITY BECOMES SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, AND CONNECTED FOR ALL.

## INCLUSION:

A JUST CITY INTEGRATES EVERYONE EQUALLY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ORIGIN, ETHNICITY, OR STATUS. IT UPLIFTS VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS. A JUST CITY LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND. IT MAKES THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE AND EMPOWERS ALL TO CLAIM THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY.

## DE-CENTRALISATION:

A JUST CITY IS TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE TO ITS CITIZENS, AND EMPOWERS COLLECTIVE ACTION. DE-CENTRALISATION OF GOVERNANCE AND OF PUBLIC SERVICES, ESPECIALLY FOR PERI-URBAN AREAS, WILL STRENGTHEN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY TRUST.

## OPEN PUBLIC SPACES:

PUBLIC SPACES ARE FOR EVERYONE. THEY SHOULD BE INCLUSIVE, FREE FROM PRIVATIZATION, AND OPEN TO ALL TO PREVENT SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION. PUBLIC SPACES NEED TO BE PLANNED AS A COMMONALITY FOR SOCIETY, AS SHARED SPACES THAT FOSTER COMMUNITY, CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, AND ENABLE EXPRESSION AND CONNECTION.

## JUST MOBILITY:

EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO RELIABLE, SAFE, FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT. THIS MEANS PRIORITISING AND INCREASING THE ACCESSIBILITY, SAFETY AND INTERCONNECTIVITY OF ACTIVE MODES OF MOBILITY LIKE WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT WHILE DISINCENTIVIZING PRIVATE VEHICLES AND REDUCING THEIR PRIVILEGES TO CUT GHG EMISSIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

## THE CLIMATE RESILIENT CITY:

CITIES ARE INCREASINGLY EXPOSED TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS. THESE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT SOCIETY'S MOST VULNERABLE. A JUST CITY ENSURES THAT ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES ARE IN PLACE TO DECREASE THE INTENSITY OF CURRENT AND FUTURE CLIMATE SHOCKS. IT IMPROVES LINKAGES BETWEEN RESILIENCE PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND WORKS TOWARDS A HOLISTIC SYSTEMATIC CHANGE WHICH ENSURES A MINIMAL NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT BY REDUCING GHG, THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT, LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY AND POLLUTION OF NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS.

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY:

THE JUST CITY CONSIDERS THE WHOLE CIRCLE. MODES OF PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT ARE CIRCULAR. THE JUST CITY MUST BE DESIGNED IN A WAY THAT ALLOWS ITS CITIZENS TO REPAIR, REUSE AND REPURPOSE RESOURCES TO OPTIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL AND LIFE CYCLE. ADDITIONALLY, THE JUST CITY FACILITATES A CIRCULAR WASTE MANAGEMENT WHERE WASTE IS SEEN AS A RESOURCE.

## A JUST ECONOMIC SECTOR:

THE JUST CITY PROVIDES FAIR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES TO EVERYONE. IT SUPPORTS SPECIFICALLY SMALL-MEDIUM AND MICRO ENTERPRISES TO SUPPORT TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECTS AND LOCAL ECONOMIC STIMULATION. IT FACILITATES JOB SECURITY AND DECENT LIVABLE WAGES THROUGH A REGULATION OF MINIMUM WAGES, WORKING HOURS AND WORKING CONDITIONS. ADDITIONALLY, A JUST CITY ENSURES FAIR LABOUR PRACTICES, A WORKPLACE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND THE CLOSING OF GENDER AND UNEQUAL PAY GAPS.

## THE CITY AS AN ORGANISM:

IN THE JUST CITY, COLLABORATION FOSTERS INNOVATION RATHER THAN COMPETITION. SEPARATING INDUSTRIES ACCORDING TO SECTORS IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. NEIGHBORHOODS AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES FORM AN ORGANISM WITH SHARED FUNCTIONS. E.G. WASTE HEAT FROM HEAVY PROCESSES CAN BE USED TO HEAT HOMES. SCRAPS FROM INDUSTRIES CAN BE USED BY OTHERS. THIS EXCHANGE ONLY HAPPENS THROUGH CLOSE COLLABORATION AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS. THEREFORE, THE JUST CITY MUST BE THOUGHT AS AN ORGANISM.



**"The world changes according to the people we notice and the futures we dare to imagine"**





Certificate obtained from the Delft University of Technology: A Manifesto for a Just City

## Learning Activity Process & Product 2

### **European Union Plenary Session debate on steps towards a just transition (debating the housing crisis) “Ensuring Sustainable, decent and affordable housing in Europe”, 9 October, 2024**

#### Product 2: The EU Crisis of a Housing Monopoly

Initially I planned to visit a Social or Community-based housing project; however upon reaching out to various organisations in Brussels & South Africa, I was unsuccessful partly attributed to my traveling around and the awkward time of year. In hindsight I believe this activity would have insufficiently addressed my learning goal as it included perspectives too narrow and very much aligned with those from learning activity 1. Hopefully, out of interest I can revisit this excursion.

I therefore decided to use the European Parliament plenary session, which allowed various member states to debate their respective affordable housing situations as my second learning activity to gain the EU Parliament perspective and shortcomings. The discussions centred around what they believe to be the root causes such as mainly the Green Deal's building renovation standards and speculation, some of the repercussions being faced as well as proposals for a way forward such as reducing standards and Short-term rental regulation reform. It provided a comprehensive overview of the status quo of affordable housing in Europe, as well as the most pressured income and social groups. Building on knowledge from the Housing and the City class, I believe though, that blaming the Green Deal's energy renovations conveniently carpets over the EU's role in creating a speculation-friendly housing market based on unsustainable pro-growth political agendas and urban models. I found the direction of this particular discussion concerning and not fully addressing the root causes of housing shortages which have existed long before the Green Deal had come into play. Additionally, the session lacked depth in discussing ways forward which is critical to my learning goal. I therefore decided to complement this activity by delving into policies mentioned during the plenary such as the EU Urban Agenda for Housing, the EU Urban Housing Forum and the Short Term Rental regulation. Additionally, taking into consideration feedback on my previous submission and to include perspectives from the Global South, I watched a documentary called 'No Place to Call Home' which highlighted the current housing crisis in Cape Town, South Africa. This, as well as my professional background allowed me to draw on lessons from SA, such as improved and innovative public-private partnerships and an inclusionary housing policy applied to large housing developments. It also allowed me to compare and contrast the root causes of housing shortages in the respective global north and south settings. Some of the issues more recently emerging in Europe, such as rising unemployment and consequent homelessness, the migration and refugee crisis and rising informality has long since been present in cities of the south- albeit from differing causes- with particular ways in which they are trying to be addressed. I feel that I was adequately able to unpack the affordable housing crisis in Europe, by combining knowledge and perspectives from both learning activities. I was also able to contribute personally through my own South African experiences as both a resident

and professional. I believe this new knowledge will contribute significantly to my contextual professional development in Europe, by understanding some of the key policies and causes as well as by contrasting lessons learnt from various perspectives, especially from outside the global north, on similar housing issues. It is an issue close to my heart as I believe affordable housing is a human right and not a tradeable good and is key to sustainable cities and urban development as it not only addresses issues of social and income inequality, but also allows for more environmentally-conscious living my improving access to critical infrastructure and resources and combatting urban sprawl. The resultant product is a learning tool to simplify and exchange this knowledge in a relatable and familiar manner that speaks to many of its underlying causes (Monopoly Game) while also providing recommendations for built environment professionals, communities and housing activists in how to go about advocating for affordable housing.

#### References for the product portfolio 2:

European Parliament, 29 Feb 2024, New Rules For a Responsible and Transparent Short-term Rental Sector, *European Parliament News Press Release*, News Room,

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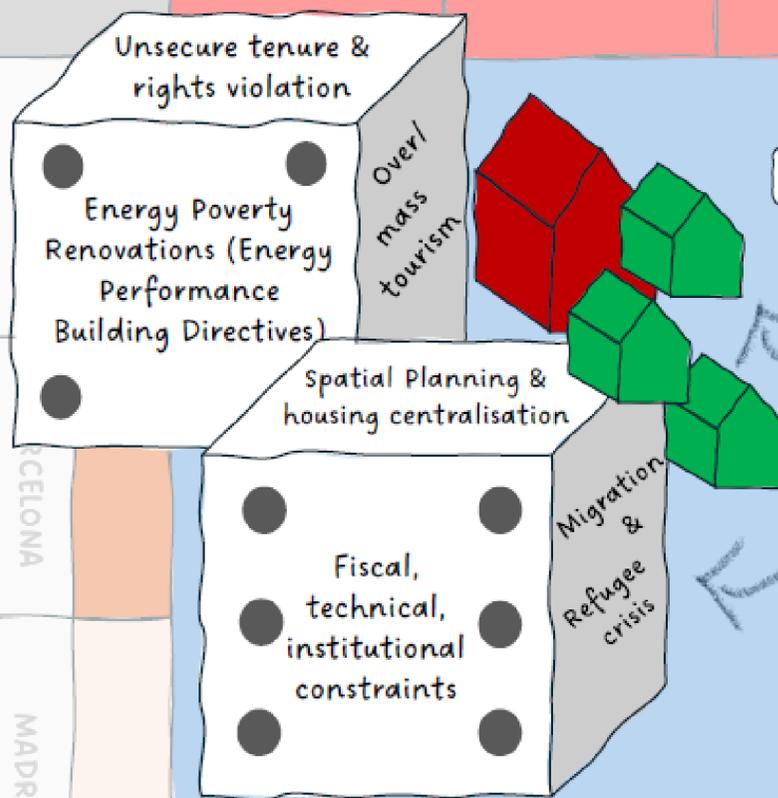
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Western Cape Government (WCG) (2022) *Inclusionary Housing Policy Framework*.

[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

# THE EU CRISIS OF A HOUSING MONOPOLY

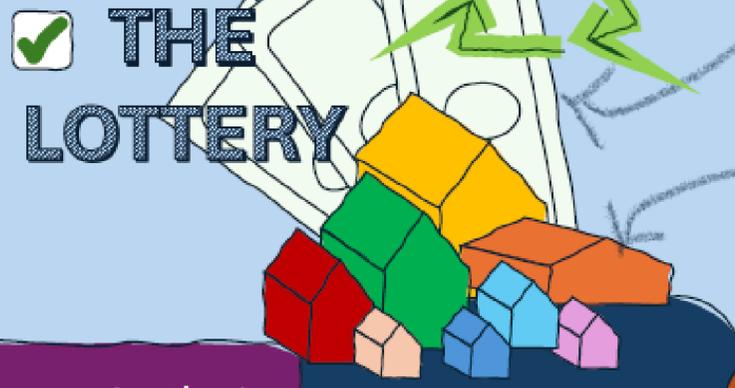


- ✗ Rigged System: Affordable Housing Shortage**
- Speculation-friendly urban models & regulations:
    - Housing as a tradeable good & not a human right
    - Housing for profit not for people
  - 11m vacancies in EU & rising housing costs (costs +50% & rents +25% since 2010)
  - Land grabbing
  - Rising homelessness & unemployment
  - 47% of 18-34yr living with parents

- ✗ Players & Top Earners**
- Short-term Rentals (SRTs)
  - Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) - speculators
  - Second home owners (Transnational wealth colonialism)
  - High interest home loans
  - Socially equitable energy EPBD transition
  - Cycle economy of renovate, adaptive reuse, restore, infill housing stock
  - Cut unnecessary housing & energy standards
  - Decentralisation to Municipalities with state support
  - Targeted interventions
  - Diversify social & affordable housing stock options for various incomes (not only vulnerable)
  - Rent stabilisation or caps



- ✓ New Funding & Investment**
- Public-private partnerships: investment in affordable housing sector
  - Planning & Zoning Incentives/ tax reliefs /construction subsidies for private sector, Housing Construction Convertible Bonds (HCCBs), low interest loans
  - Innovative funding models
  - LU regulations for Land Value Capture by Municipalities
  - Shared pvt & public management
  - Pan-European Investment Platform
  - EU Cohesion Plan funding
  - Incentives for conversion of STR to housing

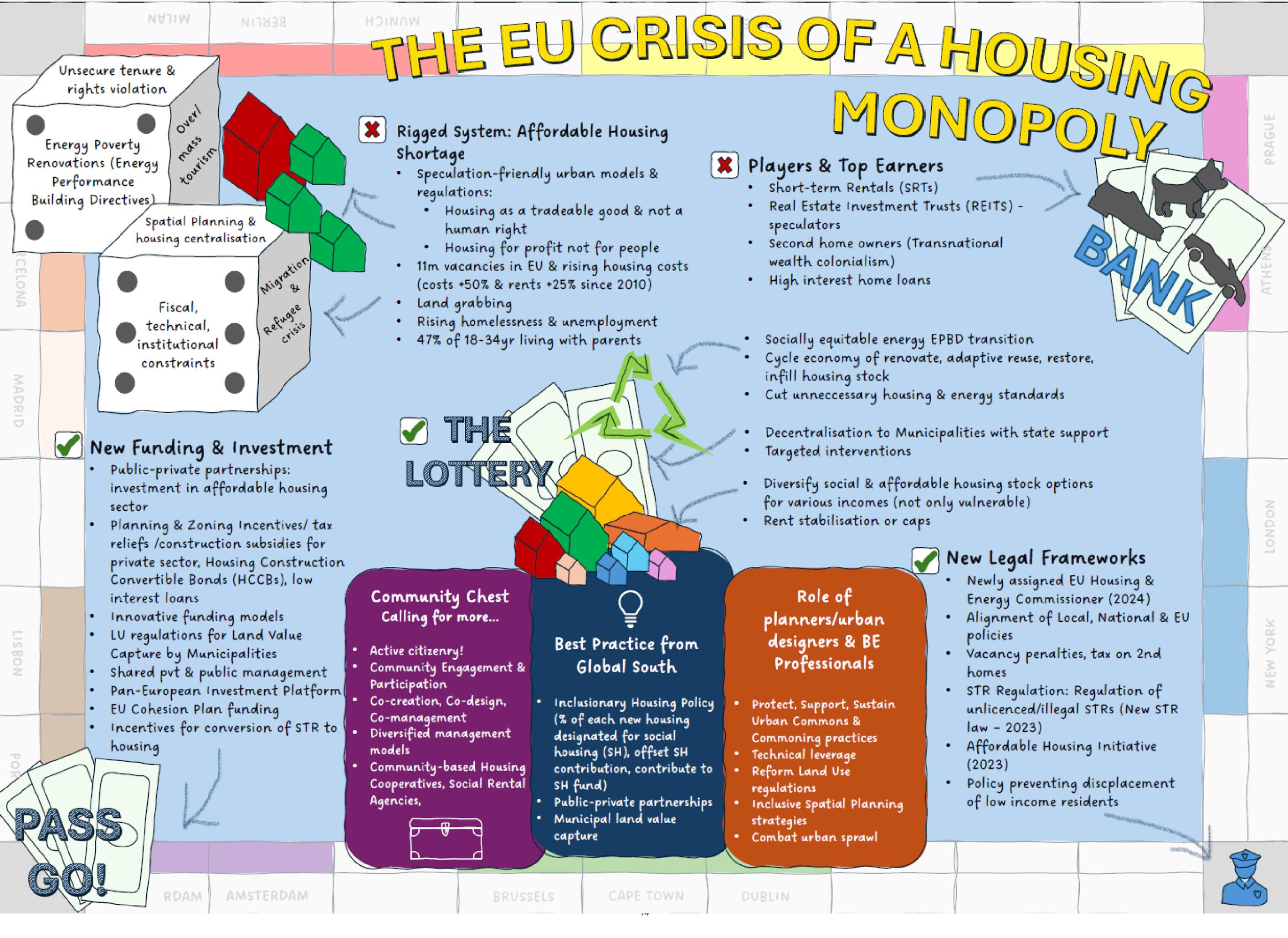


- Community Chest**  
Calling for more...
- Active citizenry!
  - Community Engagement & Participation
  - Co-creation, Co-design, Co-management
  - Diversified management models
  - Community-based Housing Cooperatives, Social Rental Agencies,
- 

- Best Practice from Global South**
- Inclusionary Housing Policy (% of each new housing designated for social housing (SH), offset SH contribution, contribute to SH fund)
  - Public-private partnerships
  - Municipal land value capture
- 

- Role of planners/urban designers & BE Professionals**
- Protect, Support, Sustain Urban Commons & Commoning practices
  - Technical leverage
  - Reform Land Use regulations
  - Inclusive Spatial Planning strategies
  - Combat urban sprawl

- ✓ New Legal Frameworks**
- Newly assigned EU Housing & Energy Commissioner (2024)
  - Alignment of Local, National & EU policies
  - Vacancy penalties, tax on 2nd homes
  - STR Regulation: Regulation of unlicensed/illegal STRs (New STR law - 2023)
  - Affordable Housing Initiative (2023)
  - Policy preventing displacement of low income residents



## Learning Activity Process & Product 3

**Learning Goal 2: To learn critical skills in the intersection of economic growth and sustainable development through ESG (Environment, Social and Governance).**

**ESG & Sustainability: ESG Corporate Masterclass offered by GenZed Learning on UDEMY Online Learning Platform, 26 February 2025**

For my product and learning activity 3 I took part in an online UDEMY ESG masterclass course and presented by GenZed Learning and obtained a certificate after completion. I felt the course provided a fantastic introduction into the fundamentals of ESG in a simple and relatable manner. The content was broad and touched on various parts of sustainable reporting. I believe engaging with the learning activity facilitated in reaching my learning goal 2 and learning critical ESG skills (listed below). The portfolio product is a reflection of that journey and the insight gained in how I was able to apply them in a creative and critical manner to assess and compare two frameworks and understand both the complexities of ESG and the implications it could have for sustainable development.

As a sustainability professional I feel I have gained great insight into the Sustainable business reporting and have learned a new skill set such as; 1) learn new **concepts**, 2) **ESG frameworks**, how they are implemented and their various functions; 3) **Double materiality assessment** regarding stakeholder/investor and consumer goal and business risk alignment as a key driving force behind ESG strategy 4) **Key performance indicators** used within the Global Reporting Initiative framework. I found the course insightfully highlighted the positive valuation of ESG disclosures beyond economic terms as well as highlighting specific career opportunities within the ESG consulting field in the concluding section. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, using the newfound knowledge in assembling the product provided first-hand experience of the **challenges and complexities** of ESG pertaining to comparability, disclosing favourable KPIs, and potential greenwashing through ESG disclosures. These nuances were particularly compelling as it certainly allowed me to be more critical of ESG reporting and the gaps that may hinder sustainable development. For example, ESG is predominantly a quantitative exercise reducing everyday lived experiences of people and communities – specifically from the global south- impacted by global corporations to mere statistics. Furthermore, delving into various frameworks and their associated KPIs, provided insight into the sustainable consulting world and process involved in ESG disclosures. The learning activity and product compilation has already proven highly valuable in that it gave me confidence to approach companies at the KU Leuven Scientica Job Fair that employ ESG consultants. There I asked about their eligibility criteria, daily working life of their consultants and looked at some of the ESG reports they had displayed which provided greater understanding of possible learning gaps and a future career in consulting.

Apart from professional skills, the exercise has also made me question my own consumption choices and exposed me to more sustainable food and clothing brands. Although it was a brief introduction into ESG, going forward I will be more critical of the products I consume and

businesses I support as well as how to read their annual sustainability reports with a critical eye.

The product helps guide both a consumer (on their consumption choices) as well as a business considering adopting ESG in their strategy. It is a straightforward way in which a consumer or stakeholder can see which KPIs are used and addressed by the GRI framework. Furthermore, this report can be used as case study learning material for sustainable development students interested in ESG comparisons and where certain gaps occur to stimulate discussions regarding ESG as a sustainable method. Although the product portrays only two case studies, it consisted of considerable background research which delved into various other companies and their respective frameworks which are not represented in the product itself. This proved a great opportunity for further reading and information gathering of different examples pertaining to the online course content.



*Certificate obtained from the ESG Masterclass on UDEMY*

PRODUCT 3: ESG Report by Delia Moens de Hase and Charnelle Kluth

# ESG REPORT:

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TO SHED LIGHT ON THE DOWNFALLS OF ESG FRAMEWORK

Authors: Charnelle Kluth and Delia Moens de Hase

## 1. Introduction

### What are Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Criteria?

In recent times, global challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, water scarcity and biodiversity loss have pushed the debate for an urgent need to transition towards sustainable development and consider the interconnection between economic, social, environmental and institutional systems (Giljum et al., 2005; Sciarrelli et al., 2021). As businesses have significant ecological, economic, and social impacts (Mebratu, 1998), there is growing recognition that corporate performance should not be measured solely by financial indicators. Increasing attention is therefore placed on a company's contribution to environmental sustainability, the well-being of, and impact on, surrounding communities, and overall corporate responsibility (Hastalona and Sadalia, 2021). In 2005, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria emerged as a framework for evaluating an organization's sustainability and impact, focusing on three key dimensions: environmental responsibility, social impact, and governance (Pérez et al., 2022). ESG incorporates these three dimensions into the business strategy and trajectory, and is not treated as a voluntary framework (Każmierczak, 2022).

ESG indicators are used to align with Sustainable Development Goals. Financial materiality factors are used by companies to provide information to investors on factors that specifically affect the financial performance of a company in order to guide them in their decision-making (Delgado-Ceballos et al., 2023). However, 'financial materiality' is deemed too narrow of a framework and requires the encompassing of stakeholder concerns pertaining to the external impact of the organisation on society and the environment as well while also recognising that these factors affect company performance in return. In response, the notion of 'double materiality' which incorporates both the financial and stakeholder (impact) materiality of a company is used as a framework to better align the company's micro ESG goals with global sustainability pursuits such as the Sustainable Development Goals. This aids in guiding stakeholders as well as investors on how the organisation is contributing to overall global sustainability. Therefore an organisation would conduct a Double Materiality Assessment to identify its key financial, social and environmental risks and utilise these to adopt and align with specific ESG targets and SDGs (Delgado-Ceballos et al., 2023).

Within this criteria, many ESG frameworks for measuring, managing and reporting exist, offering complementarities but also overlapping from one another. Examples of these frameworks are the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), the Sustainability Accounting Standard Board (SASB), the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD), the Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB), the World Economic Forum Stakeholder Capitalism Metrics (WEF), among others (Bose, 2020). Organisations select a framework based on their assessment needs as well as their internal ESG goals which might prefer a certain dimension or treat all three as equally relevant (Luo & Tang, 2023). Regardless of the framework used, companies that implement ESG frameworks are required to report non-financial Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For example, environmental KPIs typically measure factors such as energy consumption and sources, greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation and disposal methods, as well as the company's impact on the environment and biodiversity. Social KPIs assess aspects like pay equity, employee turnover, workplace injury rates, child labor, and human rights compliance. Lastly, corporate governance KPIs focus on elements of internal governance, including board diversity, supplier codes of conduct, ethical standards, anti-corruption measures, and disclosure practices, among others (Każmierczak, 2022).

### Why is ESG beneficial for businesses?

Although ESG reporting can be time consuming and involve considerable costs related to data-collection, processing and the implementation of mediation mechanisms, it is also considered valuable for organisations. According to Chopra et al. (2024), strong economic functioning is linked to strong sustainability goals which can ultimately improve an organisation's financial outlook. Some additional advantages of ESG include:

- Adopting ESG improves the financial performance of companies over long time horizons, mainly due to improved risk management and more innovation (Whelan et al., (2021)
- Adopting ESG is “good for the brand” as it improves the brand image. Although this benefit is often criticized as ESG efforts can be sometimes classified as “greenwashing” (Pérez et al., 2022)
- Investors are increasingly using SDG related societal-level information collected through ESG factors as part of their due-diligence processes (Delgado-Ceballos et al. 2023) which could lead to greater access to a wider finance pool.
- Enhanced sustainable policy and market alignment ensuring smoother integration of businesses within local contexts positioning them better for future success (Delgado-Ceballos et al. 2023; Luganskaya and Sukhareva, 2024).
- Enhanced competitive advantage influenced by improved customer satisfaction, market acceptance, greater public trust and its alignment with societal values (Mohammad and Wasiuzzman, 2021).
- Potential to improve internal resource efficiency thereby reducing costs and increasing optimisation (Mohammad and Wasiuzzman, 2021; Hennisz, Koller and Nuttall, 2019).
- Increased financial support in the form of additional government tax breaks, subsidies or lower interest loans (Luganskaya and Sukhareva, 2024).
- A sustainability focus could open new markets and customer bases, again increasing competitiveness through differentiation (Luganskaya and Sukhareva, 2024).
- Attract and retain top talent and motivate employees due to enhanced social credibility which affects long-term productivity (Hennisz, Koller and Nuttall, 2019).
- Improved managerial performance and decision-making due to exposure to additional external scrutiny (Luo & Tang, 2023).

### Aim of the Report

Although ESG frameworks offer several benefits for businesses, they are not without criticisms and challenges. One common concern is the difficulty of achieving a balanced focus across the environmental, social, and governance dimensions. Critics also argue that some companies may use ESG reporting as a form of greenwashing, emphasizing sustainability efforts superficially without meaningful impact. Additionally, even when each component of ESG is assessed individually, aggregate ESG scores are often viewed as lacking significance or comparability (Pérez et al., 2022). This last criticism is closely tied to the issue of standardization, as different frameworks can evaluate the same phenomena using varying metrics and methodologies. As a result, ESG reporting lacks consistency, making it difficult to compare companies, even within the same industry, since organizations are free to select their own Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). To investigate this challenge, the present study examines the ESG reporting of two major chocolate producers: Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut. By analyzing their sustainability disclosures, this report aims to uncover both the strengths and limitations of current ESG practices and assess how each company defines, measures, and communicates its environmental, social, and governance performance.



## 2. Case Study

To achieve the purpose of this report, two main chocolate manufacturers and producers were selected to compare. Firstly, the Ferrero Group operates in over 50 countries, with 37 production plants across five continents, employing approximately 47,000 people. Its products reach more than 170 countries, and by the end of the financial year, the company reported a trailing 12-month revenue of €18.4 billion. Ferrero is widely known for its flagship brands, including Nutella, Ferrero Rocher, Kinder Bueno, and Kinder Joy. However, other brands such as Blue Ribbon Classics, Blue Bunny, Tic Tac, Chunky, Crunch, Eat Natural, among others, also belong to the Ferrero Group (Ferrero Group, 2025). Out of 20 risks, Ferrero’s Double Materiality Assessment identified Transparent Supply Chain; Products & Ingredient Safety; Plastic & Packaging; Human Rights in the Supply Chain and Protecting Biodiversity, Sustainable Agriculture & Preventing Deforestation as its five top priorities (Ferrero Group, 2024a). These were further used to measure both positive and negative impact on human rights SDGs 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health & Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender equality), 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), and environmental SDGs 12 (Responsible consumption & production), 13 (Climate action), and 15 (Life on land) (Ferrero Group, 2024a).

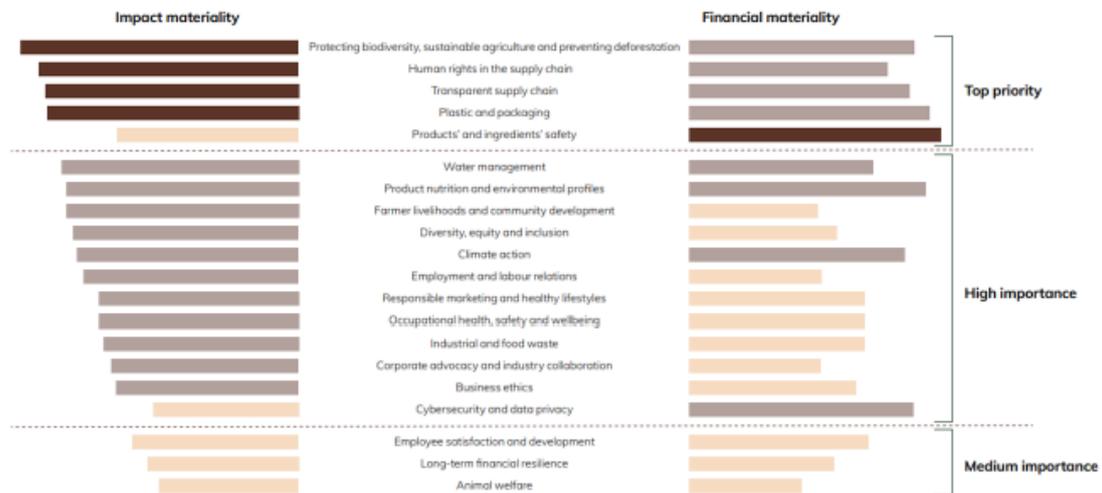


Figure 1: Ferrero Group Priorities

Source: Double Materiality Report (2023)

Secondly, Barry Callebaut, a leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products, also has a global presence across five continents and employs over 13,000 people (Pitchbook, 2025). The company owns several brands, including Cacaofruit, D’Orsogna, Gertrude Hawk Ingredients, La Morella Nuts, Cacao Barry, Callebaut, Carma, Chocovic, Dings Decor, and Mona Lisa (Barry Callebaut, 2025). By the end of the financial year, Barry Callebaut reported a consolidated turnover of €10.7 billion (Pitchbook, 2025). Key financial and impact materiality risks identified according to the company’s Double Materiality Assessment include Supply Chain Traceability; Climate & Energy; Biodiversity & Ecosystems; Workers in the Value Chain; Affected Communities and Supply Chain Traceability. The company aligns these to human rights SDGs 1, 8, 10 and 5 and environmental SDGs 12, 13 and 15 (Barry Callebaut, 2023b).



This short description of the companies highlight that although the Ferrero Group is bigger in terms of operation and financial returns, both companies have a significant market share in the chocolate industry. Moreover, both companies use the GRI framework, which provides a common basis for assessing and comparing their ESG performance.

### 3. Results: Ferrero Group vs Barry Callebaut

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Ferrero Sustainability Report 2023

#### Environmental Dimension

To assess and compare the environmental performance of Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut, *Table 1* presents the KPIs reported by both companies. These indicators cover critical areas such as greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water usage, waste management, traceability of ingredients, biodiversity, and sustainable packaging. The data also highlights the trend since the 2020-2021 report if available, or from 2021-2022, offering insights into each company's progress or setbacks in specific environmental dimensions. This comparison highlights that Ferrero Group provides a more comprehensive set of metrics, which reflects the broader challenge of data consistency and comparability in ESG reporting. It is worth noticing that not all KPIs available in the sustainability report of both companies were included in this table as many of them were not comparable between companies. Moreover, the section of traceability may contain different products between companies, as Barry Callebaut did not specify the products included in the variable.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Ferrero Rocher	Trend	Barry Callebaut	Trend
<i>Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions</i>				
Total Emissions CO2 (tCO2eq)	7 502 303	↑	13 388 433	↑
<i>Energy</i>				
Energy intensity Ratio (GJ/t)	7,12	↓	0,99	↓
Total Energy consumption (TJ)	10 836	↑	5 524	↑
Renewable energy consumption (%)	22	↓	49	↑
<i>Water</i>				
Water consumption (m3)	5 093 589	↓	2 309 364	↓
Wastewater (m3)	2 992 834	↓	n/a	
Wastewater Sewage (%)	92,24	↓	n/a	
Wastewater Surface Water (%)	5,83	↑	n/a	
Wastewater ground and underground (%)	1,93	↓	n/a	
<i>Waste</i>				
Waste production (kg/t)	65	↓	n/a	
Total waste (t)	96 731	↑	n/a	
Percentage of recovered waste (%)	97,92	↑	n/a	
Non-hazardous waste recycled (t)	95 304	↑	n/a	
Non-hazardous waste disposed (t)	1 647	↓	n/a	
Hazardous waste recycled (t)	1 374	↑	n/a	
Hazardous waste disposed (t)	407	↓	n/a	
<i>Traceability</i>				
Cocoa and chocolate products sold which contain certified or verified cocoa (%)	100		55,5	↑
Certified or verified agricultural non-cocoa ingredients sourced (%)	83,28		82	
Raw material proven to be free from deforestation (%)	97		46,5	
<i>Biodiversity and thriving nature</i>				
Agroforestry newly established (ha)	n/a		34	↑
<i>Packing</i>				
Recycled materials in packaging (%)	5,34	↑	n/a	
Renewable materials in packaging (%)	40,53	↑	n/a	
Recyclable, reusable or compostable packaging (%)	84,81	↑	n/a	
Packaging designed for recycling (%)	90,7	↑	n/a	
Total raw materials used (t)	2 414 260	↑	n/a	
Refrigerant gases: ODP contribution (kgR11eq)	3,94	↑	n/a	
Refrigerant gases: GWP contribution (tCO2eq)	13,708	↓	n/a	

Table 1: Summary of Environmental KPIs for Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut

Source: Own elaboration



Barry Callebaut Annual Report 2022/2023

### Social Dimension

To evaluate the social dimension of ESG performance, *Table 2* compares KPIs of Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut for the reporting period 2022/2023. This includes metrics related to human rights, child labor prevention, support for cocoa farmers, and broader community development initiatives. The table also outlines the companies' partnerships, remediation systems, and alignment with international labor and human rights standards. By presenting this data side by side, the table aims to highlight each company's efforts to uphold social responsibility within their supply chains and communities, as well as the ongoing challenges in achieving transparency and comparability in social impact reporting.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Ferrero Rocher (2022/2023)	Trend	Barry Callebaut (2022/2023)	Trend
<b>Human Rights</b>				
% farmer groups in our direct supply chain that have systems in place to prevent, monitor and remediate child labor	96%	n/a	76,5%	↑
# child labor cases identified	n/a		53 839	↑
# child labor cases under remediation	n/a		65 569	↑
# remediated child labor cases	n/a		10 504	↑
<b>Associated Child Labour Policies</b>				
Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) aligned with International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)	✓		✓	
Child Learning Education Facility	✓		✓	
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Work with International Cocoa Initiative and the World Cocoa Foundation</li> <li>* Part of Save the Children programme</li> <li>* Child Labour Prevention and Remediation Guidelines with Save the Children and the Centre of Child Rights and Business</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community Risk Assessments through ICI</li> <li>* Established Child Protection Committees</li> <li>* Pre-competitive project on child rights and labor rights with International Labour Organization (ILO) and Cocoa Action</li> <li>* Formulation of Cocoa 2030 strategic guidelines</li> <li>* Nestle Income Accelerator participant</li> <li>* Zero Child Labour Roadmap through Embode</li> <li>* Child Friendly Villages participant</li> </ul>	
<b>Prospering Farmers</b>				
# farmers above poverty line (USD 2,15)	n/a		Estimated 269 762	↑
# farmers in our sustainability program	n/a		462 471	↑
# farmers who have received Farm Service activities	71 000	n/a	169 981	↑
# ha covered by programs to support farmers with paid labor teams	n/a		19 326	n/a
<b>Associated Farmer Policies</b>				
Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	✓		✓	
Côte d'Ivoire Land Partnership (CLAP)	✓		✓	
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Income diversification training</li> <li>* Long term Farm-Development Plans</li> <li>* Sustainability Programme Ferrero Farming Values (FFV)</li> <li>* Ferrero Hazelnut Charter with Earthworm Foundation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cocoa Household Income Diversification Project</li> <li>* Individualized Farm Business Plans (FBPs), with Farm Services Business</li> <li>* Prospering Farmers ambition for 2030 Framework</li> <li>* Human Rights Committees (HRCs) at the farmer group level</li> <li>* Ghana Cocoa Initiative (CIGCI) Economic Pact signator</li> <li>* White Paper on Farming Model</li> </ul>	
<b>Associated Human Rights Policies</b>				
Fairtrade	✓		✓	
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Supplier Code in line with ILO Conventions</li> <li>* Human Rights Report</li> <li>* CGF Human Rights Coalition (HRC) member</li> <li>* Consumer Goods Forum Human Rights Coalition (HRC) member &amp; aligned due diligence framework</li> <li>* Cocoa Charter</li> <li>* Cocoa Action Plan</li> <li>* World Cocoa Foundation, International Cocoa Initiative</li> <li>* Community-based healthcare outreach pilots</li> <li>* Supports national Living Income Differential</li> <li>* Global Shea Alliance member</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Supplier Code</li> <li>* Human Right Statement</li> <li>* Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs)</li> <li>* Human Rights Due Diligence framework modeled after the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct</li> <li>* EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD) supporter</li> <li>* Alliance on Sustainable Cocoa roadmap contributor</li> <li>* Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).</li> <li>* GRI Reports</li> <li>* CDP Reports</li> </ul>	

Table 2: Summary of Social KPIs for Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut

Source: Own Elaboration



Barry Callebaut Annual Social & Environmental Impact Report 2023/2024

### Governance Dimension

Table 3 presents a comparison of governance-related KPIs for Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut. It includes data on gender representation in leadership roles, such as board and management positions, as well as workplace safety metrics like the Lost Time Injury Rate (LTIR). Additionally, the table outlines various governance policies and employee engagement initiatives implemented by both companies. These indicators provide insight into each company’s internal governance practices, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and focus on employee well-being, all of which are essential components of responsible corporate governance under the ESG framework.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Ferrero Rocher	Trend	Barry Callebaut	Trend
<b>Governance</b>				
Board of Directors who are women	n/a		20%	+
Executive Committee members who are women	n/a		16,70%	+
Management positions who are women (director level)	21,7	+	31%	+
<b>Governance associated policies</b>				
Lost Time Injury Rate (per million hours)	4,6		9,30	
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ YOU Survey for employees</li> <li>+ DEI Month &amp; DEI KPI</li> <li>+ Business Disability Forum, Catalyst and Country Navigator (HRR) partner</li> <li>+ Your Life in Ferrero Action Plan</li> <li>+ Master in International Management Programme including sustainability component</li> <li>+ Nudge Global Impact Challenge for young professionals</li> <li>+ Launched the Labour Relations Centre of Expertise</li> <li>+ Workforce Nutrition Programme with Group Alliance for Improved Nutrition</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Employee Experience Survey</li> <li>* Inclusion Foundation events</li> <li>* Equal Pay Analysis</li> <li>* Winning With Our People (WWOP)</li> <li>* People Manager Essentials training programme</li> <li>* Leader Mentorship Programme</li> <li>* Sites SME IA compliant</li> </ul>			

Table 3: Summary of Governance KPIs for Ferrero Group and Barry Callebaut

Source: Own Elaboration

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

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Unfortunately, Ferrero Rocher Group does not publicly disclose their Social and Governance GRI results thereby impeding a fair and accurate comparison. For this reason, additional information was added to each table pertaining to particular associated policies to demonstrate the commitment to the social and governance dimensions within each company model. Barry Callebaut also has multiple undisclosed environmental KPIs. Indicators also reflect absolute values regarding either business's entire supply chain making it difficult to assess proportional impact. This is particularly necessary due to the differences in company sizes and business operations. For instance water consumption or CO2 emissions should be reflected per output product of a certain weight (i.e 100g) to be able to adequately and proportionally assess impact. This lack of statistical data on the KPI's however, demonstrates the difficulty and flaws within ESG comparisons despite the use of identical frameworks. It also underscores the often limited KPIs used within a framework which might either over or under represent a company's commitment to ESG dimensions. By providing evidence of policy commitment support, yet without disclosing statistical data, sustainability reports can create opportunities for greenwashing or undermining of the importance of ESG frameworks and their respective KPIs. As a consequence consumers are hindered in making adequately informed decisions.

Due to the GRI framework's broad and non-sector-specific disclosures, its principle-based approach allows organizations to tailor their reporting according to their specific context and stakeholder priorities. While this flexibility can lead to more meaningful and relevant disclosures, it also introduces challenges in consistency and comparability across companies. These limitations became particularly evident when comparing two major players in the chocolate industry, as each company selected significantly different KPIs for their ESG reporting. This variation underscores the difficulty stakeholders face when attempting to evaluate ESG performance across similar organizations using the GRI framework. The lack of statistical data could partly be attributed to ESG implementation involving considerable initial costs and resources for data collection (Luganskaya & Sukhareva, 2024). This 'additional' cost makes it somewhat unfeasible especially for start-ups and smaller companies or may impede its effectiveness as seen in the tables above (Luganskaya & Sukhareva, 2024).

Fundamentally, ESG and other sustainability reporting tools are still used for business improvement while maintaining the triple bottom line which may undermine transformative changes necessary for true sustainable development (Chopra et al., 2024). Delgado-Ceballos et al. (2023) has associated ESG to the 'financialisation' of sustainability indicating its business-centred focus as its use of double materiality assessments to prioritise risks and thereafter aligning its ESG accordingly, do so, by materialising the cost to company of not taking adequate action in terms of its impact on society and the environment. This implies that should an environmental or social factor not be a considerable financial risk to stakeholder and investor returns; it might not be a priority to address and thereby may not form part of the materiality priorities despite its significant negative impact (Delgado-Ceballos et al. 2023). To avoid superficial reporting, companies would often adopt multiple ESG frameworks with each being more tailored for the disclosure of a specific dimension and which would allow for a more comprehensive assessment. In contrast, businesses may also selectively adopt frameworks that display them in a more favourable light by only indicating positive KPIs (Luo & Tang, 2023).

Furthermore, as our analysis reveals, ESG frameworks may indicate a good score within one dimension yet may fail to meet criteria within another thereby overshadowing potential negative impacts attributed to the organisation’s business strategy. To improve comparability or standardisation of ESG metrics, governments should introduce policies and regulations pertaining to the disclosure of specific environmental, social and economic information and risks (Luganskaya & Sukhareva, 2024).

ESG has been shown to improve business performance, increase its value-capture, enhance its competitiveness and improve stakeholder and investor loyalty. It has also demonstrated its disadvantages particularly its limited comparability, lack of regulation, the financialisation of sustainability which risks diverting focus from non-financialised factors or KPIs and its need for business reorganisation and initial high resource consumption. Therefore ESG frameworks cannot be misconstrued as ‘agents for change’ but rather one manner in which companies can be held accountable for their negative impacts and/or positive contribution to global sustainable development (Chopra et al., 2024).



Ferrero Sustainability Report 2023

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## Learning Activity Process & Product 4

**Learning Goal 2: To learn critical skills in the intersection of economic growth and sustainable development through ESG (Environment, Social and Governance).**

### **Business Sustainability Overview for business from the Global South, 7-9 May 2025**

Coming from South Africa and understanding the challenges our local economy faces, particularly in light of the pandemic or infrastructure failure, I was motivated to explore how small global south businesses can pursue sustainable practices and what obstacles they face. Learning from my activity 3, I found that ESG and certifications prove costly and complex for smaller or informal enterprises, even though many engage in meaningful, yet unrecognised sustainability efforts. This could limit their opportunities. For product and learning activity 4 I selected a small global south business, whom I'm familiar with, as a case study. It is a self-organised action research activity structured into three parts to obtain holistic information regarding the business operations and to accommodate the business owner's schedule. The outcome is a 3 step template to help a small business create a public sustainability commitment and introduce them to sustainable business criteria, without the depth and complexity of formal ESG frameworks. The business provides simplified information to start them on their sustainable path. Additionally, it highlights small yet impactful business actions.

Professional skills gained included learning consulting skills such as professional conduct, extracting relevant information, drawing credible conclusions from information provided and policy drafting. It also allowed for information-sharing specifically regarding sustainable development goals and brainstorming on more sustainable business practices. The product is a reflection of integrating previous ESG skills and knowledge, yet introducing flexibility and adaptability for a business from the global south and its respective challenges that are absent from north-focused sustainability disclosure models.

Challenges included setting realistic sustainability targets that did not feel overly binding for the business. In such instances, smaller practical and incremental actions (e.g. eco-friendly packaging to high-value clients) were acknowledged and promoted. Furthermore, the social-orientated focus (rather than environmental) of the case study reflects the reality of pressing social issues prioritised and faced by global south businesses. For instance, major challenges illuminated by the learning activity include overreliance on clients for cashflow, especially with a minimal waste 'made-to-order' model as well as the socio-economic conditions that the majority of the labour production team face (crime, lack of formal insurance for marginalised suppliers, protest action preventing getting to work, loadshedding etc, posing a great risk to daily business operations). Surprisingly, international competitors were listed, but ranked low implying that the business found a niche (indigenous textiles and locally-made products) that is being valued on the market. This template attempts to introduce elements of both social and environmental dimensions for holistically sustainable practices.

The learning providing avenues for more accessible and responsible consulting, taking care to remind the business of their responsibility to be transparent and not misleading while my repetitive questions and asking for specific follow-up examples ensured transparency and prevented greenwashing. The self-organised learning activity contributed positively to my understanding of sustainability consulting, as well as how sustainable development challenges are experienced in various parts of the world. In doing so it has been made clear that global north business should lead sustainability efforts while opportunities to better support small and informal global south businesses to adopt sustainable practices should be sought. Additionally, as Africa is currently the second fastest growing economy (Chatham House), economic sustainability discussions need to expand 'globalised' sustainability disclosure criteria and certifications to be made more accessible, affordable and straightforward while retaining their credibility.



## Sustainable Business Overview for Africa Made Only (AMO) Start-up

Charnelle Kluth

12 May 2025

## Introduction:

Africa Made Only (AMO) is a start-up clothing business, established in 2018 by Ryan Amory and Patrick Pearson and is based in Cape Town, South Africa. It was the 2019 winner of the Investec Startup School. The company produces a range of casual wear that celebrate African culture and vitality, by using local indigenous Da Gama ShweShwe fabric. It functions on a made-to-order model so as to reduce waste and overproduction, while also aiming to be a socially and environmentally-conscious brand. The following document, through a series of work sessions with the director, Ryan Amory, aims to identify current SDG alignment while also identifying possible gaps or pathways for more sustainable business operations – all the while being conscious of current challenges faced by businesses in the global south.

**Company website:** <https://www.africamadeonly.com/>

**Contact details:** [Info@africamadeonly.com](mailto:Info@africamadeonly.com)

**South Africa Company Registration No:** 2016/126796/07

**Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/africa\\_made\\_only/](https://www.instagram.com/africa_made_only/)

## Overview Process

The Sustainability Overview process consists of three steps and is outlined as follows:

1. **Interview:** to determine business vision, values and goals, current social and environmental impacts as well as some of the greatest challenges regarding sustainable business operations in the global south.
2. **Supply Chain and business operations sustainability questionnaire workshop:** Questionnaire for overview of current business and supply chain sustainability operations, as well as potential targets for future operations.
3. **Sustainable Development Goal alignment workshop:** to determine how the business operations currently align to sustainable development goals as well as how it could better align to sustainable development goals

## A. INTERVIEW GUIDE: SMALL GLOBAL SOUTH BUSINESS OWNER

### 1. Introduction (materiality)

- a. Tell us about your business – how did it come about, where did the idea come from?
- b. What are your 3-5 main core values for the business?
  - i. Why are they important to you?
- c. Who are your main customers? (Typical customer profile if possible)
- d. What values do you believe are important to your customers?
  - i. How do you align with their values?

### 2. Sustainability reporting

- a. Does your business partake in sustainability reporting or certifications?
- b. What product certifications are you aware of within the South African clothing/textile sector?
- c. Do you have any certifications for your business or products?
  - i. Why not?

### 3. Impact

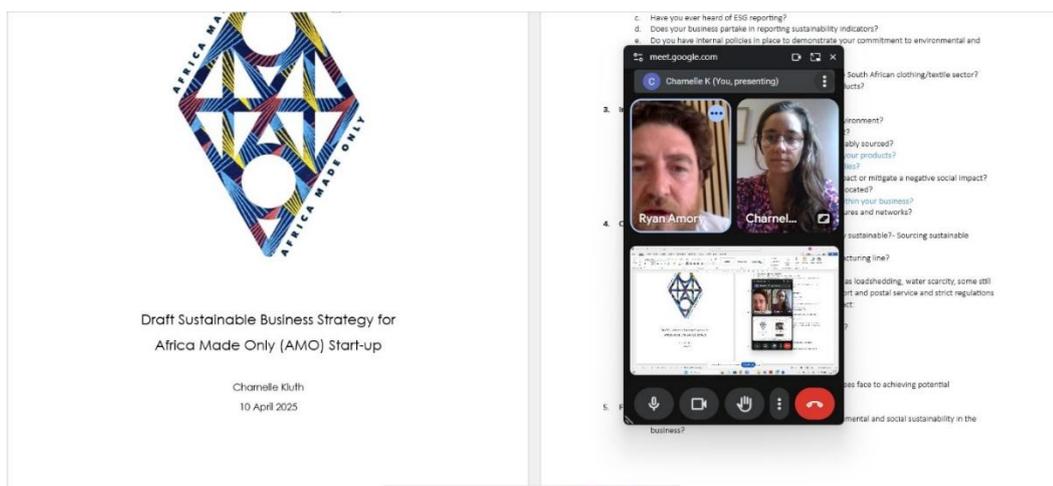
- a. How do you try to limit your negative impact on the environment?
- b. Where have you been successful in limiting your impact?
- c. In what way do you aim for your materials to be sustainably sourced?
  - i. What natural or organic materials are used in your products?
  - ii. Where do you source your materials and supplies?
- d. What practices are in place to have a positive social impact or mitigate a negative social impact?
  - i. Where is your manufacturing and production located?
  - ii. How do you include diversity and inclusivity within your business?
  - iii. How are you contributing to local social structures and networks?

### 4. Challenges:

- a. What are the challenges to being more environmentally sustainable, especially in countries of the global south?
- b. To ensure a socially-responsible production and manufacturing line?
- c. What other hurdles do you and other small SA businesses face to achieving potential certifications?

### 5. Future trajectory and conclusion

- a. What support do you think is required to potentially improve your environmental and social sustainability in the business and from whom?

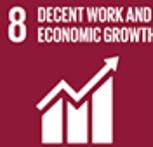


Work session 1: Interview 07.05.25

## **B. SDG ALIGNMENT WORKSHOP (09.05.25 ONLINE)**

The workshop reviewed the 17 sustainable development goals found at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> to identify potential goal alignment. 4 of the 17 goals were identified as having strong and sufficient alignment for inclusion. Other potential SDG goals to include relate to Goal 13 – Climate Action, however greater actions need to be taken within supply chain to demonstrate the desire to reduce overall company environmental footprint, therefore this goal can become an aspiration.

	<b>SDG Goal</b>	<b>Goal Indicator/target (UN SDG 2025)</b>	<b>AMO Alignment</b>
	<b>GOAL 10 REDUCE INEQUALITY</b>	<p>“Target <b>10.1</b> By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average Indicators”</p> <p>“Target <b>10.2</b> By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status Indicators”</p> <p>“Target <b>10.3</b> Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marginalised Community upliftment through partnership with local informal business in disadvantaged communities: Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) - Production Street &amp; Da Gama Textiles.</li> <li>• Celebration &amp; recognition of Indigenous Culture (Da Gama textiles and ShweShwe prints)</li> </ul>
	<b>GOAL 12 ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION &amp; PRODUCTION</b>	<p>“Target <b>12.5</b> By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse Indicators”</p> <p>“Target <b>12.6</b> Encourage companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reuse and recycling of textile waste for garment generation and quilting</li> <li>• Made-to-order model allows for less over-production</li> <li>• Local consumers and producers in supply chain</li> <li>• Organic materials &amp; recycled blends: 100% cotton, 100% Recycled cotton (60-70% of products), recycled polyester (10% of products), poly cotton blend (20% of products)</li> <li>• Promote sustainable packaging options</li> <li>• Inspect supply chain &amp; supply chain goals &amp; values alignment</li> </ul>

	<p><b>GOAL 8</b>  <b>PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL.</b></p>	<p>“Target 8.4          Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation”</p> <p>“Target 8.5          By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”</p> <p>“Target 8.8          Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment Indicators”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair labour practices: above minimum wage</li> <li>• Support local businesses - Family-run businesses, informal businesses, community-based initiatives (Da Gama, KAN Screen printers Buttermilk Embroidery, Production Street, Embroidery Specialists, Julius Solomons Specialist Labels CC.</li> <li>• Enhance local value chain through greater local trickle-down effects and economic benefits</li> <li>• Promote local consumption culture within corporate</li> </ul>
	<p><b>GOAL 5</b>  <b>GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS</b></p>	<p>“Target 5.1          End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere”</p> <p>“Target 5.5          Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply chain business partnerships: Female-owned business employment of vulnerable groups such as elderly women, single mothers from disadvantaged communities and provide additional training (Production Street)</li> <li>• All-female embroidery - Embroidery Specialists (Woodstock)</li> <li>• Locally located business within disadvantaged communities to reduce transport costs, ease of access to work</li> </ul>

## **C. BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE WORKSHOP** **(BASED ON TYPICAL ANNUAL PRODUCTION)**

(08.05.25 online)

<b>A. Value alignment and materiality</b>	
1. 3 Core values of business	African suppliers African materials Ethical sourcing Social change
2. 2 Current Sustainability goals (environmental, social)	Scale-up of Socio-economic empowerment through partnership More Sustainable packaging
3. 3 values from consumers (ranked)	Local products for Reasonable local premium Sustainability Social upliftment
4. Biggest risks within the business (ranked)	1. payment term for big corporates, 2. informal business insurance arrangements 3. supply chain sustainability & certification levels 4. Socio-economic instability affecting workforce, 5. cheaper international competitors, 6. cashflow 7. loadshedding,
5. Current SDG alignment	Goals 5, 8, 10 and 12
6. Hopes for Future sustainability goals and SDG alignment	Business production growth (scale up)= social impact (increase satellite locations & small sustainable textile production factories)
<b>B. Sustainability Reporting/Accountability</b>	
1. Current certifications	/
2. Potential certifications interested in:	
i) Proudly South African ( <a href="https://proudlysa.co.za/how-to-register/">https://proudlysa.co.za/how-to-register/</a> )	X
ii) Global Organics Textile Standard	
iii) Carbonfree® Product Certification	
iv) ISO 14001: Environmental Management ( <a href="https://www.iso.org/standards/popular/iso-14000-family">https://www.iso.org/standards/popular/iso-14000-family</a> )	
v) ISO 26000: Social Responsibility ( <a href="https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100258.html">https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100258.html</a> )	
vi) ISCC PLUS	
<b>C. Carbon footprint (tools for certification calculations)</b>	
1. <a href="https://www.carbontrust.com/our-work-and-impact/guides-reports-and-tools/sme-carbon-footprint-calculator">https://www.carbontrust.com/our-work-and-impact/guides-reports-and-tools/sme-carbon-footprint-calculator</a>	/
2. <a href="https://smeclimatehub.org/start-measuring/#block-small-business-carbon-calculator">https://smeclimatehub.org/start-measuring/#block-small-business-carbon-calculator</a>	/
<b>D. Sustainable Business Supply Chain</b>	
1. Who are the main material suppliers	<b>South African Suppliers:</b> Da Gama Millar Textiles SK Textiles
2.	
3. Who is used for Logistics and from where to where (main routes)	Bob Go
4. Who does the Marketing (marketing manager, photographer, AI, models etc.)	In house
5. Sales (platform, management) Who responsible for sales	In house
6. Courier used	Courier Guy and Internet Express
7. What are the business's greatest expenses?	1. Materials 2. Labour 3. Logistics/shipping 4. Digital Costs
<b>E. Social this section looks at your internal and external permanent and non-permanent employees</b>	

1.	Total number of <b>internal AMO permanent</b> employees	2
i.	No. internal permanent AMO women in workforce (%)	0
ii.	AMO % from marginalised communities (BEE – Black Economic Empowerment)	0
iii.	<b>Target for internal AMO permanent employees in 5 years (what would you like to achieve)</b>	/
2.	Total number of <b>internal non-permanent</b> employees	2
i)	No. of women in workforce (%)	1 (50%)
ii)	% from marginalised communities (BEE)	2 (100%)
iii)	<b>Target for in internal non-permanent employees 5 years (what would you like to achieve)</b>	Grow 100-150%
3.	Total number of <b>external</b> workforce employees (production etc., manufacturing; embroidery, photographer)	
i)	No. of women that make up external workforce (%)	Production Street - 8 women (88%) Buttermilk - 25 women (100%) Embroidery Specialists - 15 women (100%)
ii)	% from marginalised communities that make up external workforce (BEE)	80-100%
4.	Number of businesses on platform (number of other businesses you provide with access to your platform i.e. Original Magpie)	4: Amatola, Lekker Kalk Bay, Weirido, Love by Majozi
i)	% of local South African businesses on platform	100%
ii)	<b>Target for number of businesses on the platform in 5 years (what would you like to achieve)</b>	Reduce, driving for more corporate clientele
5.	Charity and donations	
i)	Annual % of stock, % of other	(Varies) Leftover Stock to workforce or local community Community Braai Day (+/-10%)
ii)	<b>Target for donations or charity in 5 years (what would you like to achieve)</b>	/
6.	Suppliers	
i)	% Local suppliers (list of South African suppliers and their provincial locations and the estimated % bought from them)	100%
ii)	What % of products are produced by the Production Street?	100%
iii)	iii) Embroidery	50% (client dependent)
<b>F. Environmental</b>		
1.	Suppliers	
i)	Estimated % local African materials	90%
ii)	Radius of production from point of sales	Material: +/-3km Production: +/- 50km Embroidery: +/-10km
2.	Materials	
i)	% of 100% natural or organic textiles used in products etc.	Da Gama ShweShwe 100% cotton & Da Gama 100% black cotton (60-70% of products)
ii)	% of non-organic or unnatural materials in products or % of products from non-organic or unnatural materials	Polyester (10%)
iii)	% of natural or organic materials within mixed textiles etc.	Poly Cotton (20%)
iv)	<b>Target for materials in 5 years (what would you like to achieve)</b>	/
3.	Textile Waste management	Produce on demand (made-to-order model)
i)	% discarded, % reused	<b>Discarded:</b> 10-30% <b>Reused:</b> 70-90%
ii)	Packaging options	<b>Non sustainable:</b> Plastic film packaging <b>Sustainable:</b> Paper packaging, Cardboard packaging, Recycled cardboard packaging, Biodegradable
iii)	<b>Target for waste and packaging in 5 years (what would you like to achieve or reduce)</b>	Reduce waste to < 15% discarded Introduce sustainable packaging to 30% of corporate clientele
4.	Manufacturing	Supply dependent
i)	Processing Products used for materials and textiles	/
ii)	Litres of water used per X product output	/
iii)	Other	/
iv)	<b>Target for manufacturing in 5 years (what would you like to achieve or reduce)</b>	/

### Conclusion:

The business has demonstrated its positive contribution to the social dimension of sustainability through its own social contributions but more importantly through partnering with socially-uplifting local businesses. The target is to scale-up its operations to allow for the expansion of more such partnerships either through an expansion of the supplier businesses themselves or through additional local and socially conscious supplier partnerships. The organisation has some significant actions towards reducing its environmental footprint such as local supplies and materials, local labour, minimal waste and reduced emissions from small carbon footprint radii between production and point of sales; however conscious effort should be made to promote more environmentally sustainable business operations within its supply chain such as pertaining to the use of water and chemicals in garment manufacturing, more sustainable packaging options and greater percentage of organic materials used in its products. These are particularly difficult to achieve as the company cannot dictate to its suppliers but can merely recommend, furthermore more sustainable packaging and organic materials has a direct implication for the price of the product which is already at a premium due to being locally-made. More partnerships with larger clients (corporates) such as already aimed for, may facilitate more environmentally sustainable operations due to their scale of demand. Lastly, the business supports diversity and inclusion within its supply chain however, it could improve this dimension within its inhouse team as the business expands in future. It can do so through permanent employment of current non-permanent female employees of people from disadvantage communities.

# OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY, SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT & ETHICAL SOURCING

**Africa Made Only (AMO) Sustainability & Ethical Sourcing Policy**

**Effective Date:** 12 May 2025

## **Introduction**

This policy outlines our approach and commitment at Africa Made Only (AMO) to integrating sustainability, social development, ethical sourcing, and fair labour practices into our business operations. We are committed to aligning our business operations with **Sustainable Development Goal 5** - to enhance gender equality and empower all women and girls; **Goal 8** - promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; **Goal 10** - reduce inequality and **Goal 12** - to ensure sustainable consumption and production.

## **Our Commitment to Sustainability**

We strive to reduce our environmental footprint by:

- Sourcing supplies within South Africa or the African continent, aiming to support local businesses and reduce transport traveling distances to lower carbon emissions per product.
- Made-to-order model aims for Zero textile waste through responsible and sustainable reuse and recycling of offcut materials
- Using 100% natural and organic materials in the majority of our products.
- Locating production close to employee communities to reduce carbon emissions from transport and commuting.
- Partnering with corporate clients who prioritise sustainable and social development goals.
- Introduce eco-friendly packaging whenever possible.

## **Locally and Ethically Sourced Materials**

We are dedicated to sourcing materials responsibly by:

- Sourcing materials and textiles ethically from local trademark suppliers such as Da Gama, to support local business but also support, celebrate and give recognition to indigenous culture within the textile industry.
- Staying committed to 'Africa Made Only' by preferring African-based suppliers and alternatives.

## **Community and Social upliftment**

- Continue production partnerships with BEE community-based initiatives that contribute to social upliftment of disadvantaged communities and support local labour pools.
- Contribute to enhancing gender equality through employment and training of women, especially vulnerable women such as single mothers and the elderly, through our Production Street partnership
- Continue to develop an online platform for other local SMMES and artists on our website to provide greater accessibility to the market and benefit from our brand exposure.

## **Fair Labor Practices**

We uphold human rights and fair labour practices by:

- Ensuring all workers in our supply chain receive fair wages and work in safe conditions.
- Rejecting forced labour, child labour, and discrimination in all forms.
- Encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workforce and supply chain through BEE supply partnerships.

## **Implementation, Monitoring & Transparency**

To ensure accountability, we will:

- Conduct periodic evaluations of our sustainability and sourcing practices.
- Encourage feedback from employees, customers, and stakeholders.
- Continuously improve our policies based on new insights and industry best practices.
- Engage with stakeholders to foster open dialogue about our progress.

We welcome input from our consumers, clients and AMO community on improving our sustainability efforts. For inquiries or suggestions, please contact us at [Info@africamadeonly.com](mailto:Info@africamadeonly.com).

## **Approved by:**

Ryan Amory (Director)

Africa Made Only (PTY) Ltd



ANNEXINTERVIEW with Ryan Amory, Director of Africa Made Only07.05.25 (Online via Google Meet)TRANSCRIPT:**[Speaker 2]** (0:00 - 1:17)

Okay, good morning, Ryan. My name is Charnelle Kluth and I'm a student of a Master in Sustainable Development at KU Leuven. And we are currently doing coursework where we have to build a professional portfolio and sort of showcase some of our products or line of work that we'd like to go into.

And my product was particularly interested in how businesses can become more sustainable. And I thought it would be a great opportunity to interview someone from the Global South who's got a business in the Global South and some of the real challenges that they have to becoming more sustainable. Yeah, and I came across your platform and it looked really, really interesting.

And I'm really inspired by some of the work you're already doing. So I'd like just to hear a bit from your side, what it's like running a business in South Africa and what your sort of vision for more sustainable business could be. So I'm going to ask you to just give us a short introduction of yourself and the business and some of the main core values that your business has.

**[Speaker 1]** (1:18 - 4:42)

Hi Charnelle, thanks for the opportunity and thanks for choosing us. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk about some of the work that we are doing in South Africa and in particular in underprivileged communities in the Western Cape. About seven years ago, I decided to leave a corporate position and start a business called Africa Made Only.

And the reason why we called it that was we wanted to make sure that we could be held to that promise. And the promise of Africa Made Only is that everything that can be made in South Africa should be made in South Africa. And the name Africa Made Only holds us to that position.

We are predominantly a B2B business at the moment, which is something we've evolved into. We used to be a B2C business and a retail business offering locally made clothing products to consumers. But during the COVID period, which was a difficult period for the whole world at the end of the day and for retailer in particular, we decided that we needed to pivot as a business and focus predominantly on corporate clothing offerings for corporate businesses, for restaurants in South Africa and corporate companies in South Africa, big corporate companies in South Africa who have a strong social initiative in place. The brand is predominantly produced in a lesser known community of the Cape Flats called Lavender Hill. And this is a predominantly high crime area with many social issues and challenges.

And we've chosen to maintain and produce our products within this community in order to try and keep the development and benefit in that community. So at the end of the day, we established a community project or cooperative, if you will, that we call Production Street. And we established a partnership with two local high value community members who had worked in the textile industry with Levi's, for instance, for many, many years and decided that they wanted to go on their own and wanted to work within the community and benefit their community.

So we established Production Street, which is a space for single mothers and grandmothers to produce garments for us on our behalf that directly benefit the community. Majority of the ladies that work with us all live within walking distance of the community and are a part of the Lavender Hill community, which is obviously very, very important to us. Because at the end of the day, if we can keep employment within the community, then the community can grow and benefit from that income that comes into that community.

**[Speaker 2]** (4:46 - 4:58)

And let me hear a bit about, so it sounds like you have like a really big social goal. What sort of how would you like to see that maybe grow in the future?

**[Speaker 1]** (5:00 - 5:44)

So at the end of the day, we are trying to create a circular economy. Part of the problem with South Africa is that we tend to purchase products which come from other countries. And that then means that the benefit of purchasing and making those products ends up in that country.

The economic benefit ends up in that country. And what we really want to see is more people purchasing locally made products so that the benefit stays in our country at the end of the day and with its people.

**[Speaker 2]** (5:47 - 5:53)

Where, for instance, do you source your materials and your supplies?

**[Speaker 1]** (5:54 - 9:21)

So we try our very best, I would like to say 90% of the time to source products locally. So our materials come from, we work predominantly with the product called Shwe Shwe, which is produced in the Eastern Cape. It's 100% produced in the Eastern Cape by the Da Gama group.

And we use a lot of Shwe Shwe to produce our products. It's indigenous and authentic to South Africa. And we love it because it supports a huge group of South Africans.

I think they staff contingencies of 1,000 people in the Eastern Cape. So we believe that by sourcing locally made materials, that we're indirectly benefiting a lot more people. We source, we use local mills in the Western Cape, in Durban, in the Eastern Cape, as I mentioned, to get some of our other more core products like cotton and your lacoste for golf shirts that are used for golf shirts.

We try, our first port of call is to find a local resource that produces it. And that goes back to the core of what it is that we're trying to do, which is to make sure that everything that can be made here is made here. Obviously, there are some products which are unique and that are not produced in South Africa.

But we always start with what can we find that is here already and that is being made here. And if we can't find something that is made here, we should utilise a local resource to produce that and not go directly to whoever makes that. So to put it into perspective for you, if a particular fabric is made in China, we deal with a South African company that brings that fabric in.

We don't want to go directly to China just to get a cheaper option or a cheaper value. We want to make sure that everybody in the supply chain has some benefit for the work that we are doing. So when we get a big corporate order and we place an order for cotton or we place an order for anything, our first choice is a South African company that produces it locally.

And if not, if it is a more elaborate product or something that isn't produced here, a South African company that goes and gets it for us. And in so doing, everybody benefits. We talk about three wins.

A win for the brand or Africa Made Only and Production Streets. A win for the South African economy and a win for the suppliers that we want to deal with. Everybody benefits because you're not breaking that supply chain by going direct to the source in order to try and maximise your profits and your margins.

You're making sure that you have an inclusive local economy that everybody wants to work within and that everybody benefits from.

**[Speaker 2]** (9:21 - 9:44)

And so you mentioned cotton. Is there a percentage? So what's the percentage of your products that are perhaps 100 percent organic materials?

Do you have those figures or are you trying to aim for maybe a certain percentage of organic materials in your products?

**[Speaker 1]** (9:44 - 11:00)

Ideally, we would love it to be 100 percent locally produced cotton or African produced cotton at the very least. You know, that's always not the reality. I mean, there's a percentage I couldn't really tell you.

But as I mentioned, what we want to do is we'll use a local resource to source it for us. And then we'll ask where it comes from. And then we'll go through the process of elimination of where we would want to get the product from.

We might say to them, OK, we'll go through the steps. Have you got something that's made locally? Yes.

And then we have to tick the boxes off. And then we go, no. OK, where's the next best place that we can get it from that you can get it from for us?

And they'll go, OK, let's look at Mauritius. OK, Mauritius is in the SADAC region. So, cool, we did this for a client last year where we couldn't find something locally because it was a speciality product or speciality material.

And we decided to use Mauritius because it's a part of the SADAC region. So we decided to keep it in the family, if you will.

**[Speaker 2]** (11:00 - 11:01)

Or regionally.

**[Speaker 1]** (11:02 - 11:35)

Regionally. And then as a last resort, if the client is requesting a particular, I guess, unique product that can only be made throughout the world, then we look at the different regions. We try to look at who we think best fits some of our values. Because the rest of the world doesn't produce garments the way that they should be.

**[Speaker 2]** (11:35 - 11:45)

And what sort of clients are you hoping to attract? And what sort of values do your current clients sort of have in common with you?

**[Speaker 1]** (11:46 - 11:54)

So, at the end of the day, we want them to be championing local and locally produced garments. We want that to be important to them.

**[Speaker 2]** (11:54 - 11:59)

And these aren't necessarily South African businesses, but they might be based in South Africa?

**[Speaker 1]** (11:59 - 13:45)

Exactly, yes. And we want big corporates or big restaurant chains to produce the garments that their staff wear locally. And we want that to be important to them.

We want them to recognise the economic value to South Africa. And we want them to also see that, I guess, it's an elevation of their South Africanness and, I guess, the uniqueness. We don't all have to look the same.

We don't all have to wear the same shirt produced by a mass producer, brought in for very little and sold for very little. We want them to see value in paying a premium for the product. Because, at the end of the day, that premium gets passed on through the supply chain to our different suppliers.

From our, like I mentioned, our material producers through to our finishers. So, we're talking about embroideries, screen printing. We only use local suppliers for that who support our initiatives.

We want to see – most of the people who work with us are women. We want to see those benefits coming through to women in the workplace. So, yeah, it's really very much about adhering to our core values.

And our core values sit solely in our name. And we want that to be achieved as much as possible.

**[Speaker 2]** (13:45 - 14:07)

I think with now coming to your name, Africa Made Only and keeping things regionally, that obviously has an impact on your environmental or your carbon footprint in a positive way. Is there sort of any other way that you think that the company is reducing its environmental impact?

**[Speaker 1]** (14:08 - 14:12)

Yeah, I mean, I've never really thought – I mean, you mentioned carbon footprint.

**[Speaker 2]** (14:14 - 14:15)

Or waste reduction?

**[Speaker 1]** (14:16 - 16:13)

No, I think it's important because at the end of the day, the product's not travelling from China to get here. The product's travelling from the Eastern Cape to get to the Western Cape. And that distance is shorter.

So, at the end of the day, I've never really thought, well, we're actually having that kind of impact. And we also reuse everything. So, at the end of the day, we'll create one product, and then we'll use the waste to create something for our T-shirts.

And we'll use the waste to create a hoodie. We try to make sure that we don't waste a single thread or a single piece of fabric that gets used. We then create products to meet that need.

We have a product called the patchwork hoodie. And basically, we take all of our pieces of sweatshirt that we've collected over six months, and we send it to an artist who's a quilter. And he quilts it together for us into one big piece, and then we use it on our patchwork hoodie.

And we sell that to the public. Or we offer it to our corporates as a special garment that's been produced locally, that has so many hands touching it at the end of the day. Because of the amount of work that's gone into quilting those pieces of fabric together.

And then having it made up in Lavender Hill. And then having it sent to Ndebeni to be embroidered. Buying the packaging locally and trying to, as best we can, if the client's willing to pay for it, to buy biodegradable bags.

Last year, for a client of ours, we did biodegradable bags that cost the client a little bit more. But at the end of the day, you can put those bags in the ground.

**[Speaker 2]** (16:14 - 16:16)

So you provide your clients with that option?

**[Speaker 1]** (16:17 - 17:05)

Yes. We've tried as best as possible to move away from plastic packaging. But at the end of the day, it's down to the corporate client, what they're willing to pay for and what's important to them at the end of the day.

Sometimes you try to lead with a sustainable option. But then at the end of the day, it's down to their budgets as to whether they go with it. And we're willing to be malleable in that sense.

But we'll always offer something sustainable first in terms of our packaging and our use of paper. We have tags that go on the garments. We'll use local suppliers for that and try to use a sustainable product.

**[Speaker 2]** (17:06 - 17:20)

Are you aware of some of the ratings or certifications in South Africa for more sustainable or more locally made products? Are there certifications like that?

**[Speaker 1]** (17:21 - 17:48)

Yes, I'm aware of some of the ISO ratings which are achievable with the right amount of money and the right amount of budget. We're not there yet as a business. I don't think we're there in terms of our size in order to afford achieving those ratings, which would obviously open up many, many doors for us.

But I'm not sure that we're there yet.

**[Speaker 2]** (17:49 - 17:59)

Can I ask maybe what are some of the hindrances for small businesses to get to those sort of ratings, to be able to participate in that?

**[Speaker 1]** (18:01 - 19:10)

I'm obviously not that close to it right now, but at the end of the day, there's a cost involved. And there's a legitimate amount of R&D, research and development following. I believe they come into your business and they watch you do business for a while, which is fine by us.

But it's not something that we've really approached just yet. But that will open many doors for us because some of the bigger corporate companies or some of the governmental businesses maintain that you should have all of these ratings in place. But there hasn't been a subsidy, if I might be mistaken, in terms of allowing really small community-based businesses who do quite big work to be able to get those qualifications easily.

It's always felt to me like an undertaking on its own.

**[Speaker 2]** (19:11 - 19:58)

And it sounds like cost is a very big factor in terms of becoming a bit more sustainable. So, as you said, offering more sustainable packaging or getting into these ratings. Are there other challenges that represent real obstacles for small businesses to becoming more sustainable, either by reducing the environmental impact, like maybe the types of products they use, or even affecting how their social impact?

Like you said, cheap labour, whereas obviously you focus on local labour. Can you think of any other challenges that you're experiencing, even just being in South Africa, being a business in South Africa itself?

**[Speaker 1]** (20:01 - 21:40)

Yeah, I think there are various challenges. There's systemic challenges. There's historical challenges. There's governmental issues. There's corruption. There are power utility issues, which are quite well broadcasted.

We have something called load shedding. And for a legitimate period of time, we had periods during the day where we had no power. And so, as a small business, we had to find alternative energy options, like generators, and we had to pay for those as a small business in order to sustain our production and continue to produce locally.

We have all of those kind of things. We have public transport issues, but because we've chosen to be locally based, we don't suffer from that as much as other businesses do. Paying for public transport and getting to work is an economic issue for most labourers, if you want to call them that.

And, yeah, I think there are quite a few challenges. You know, certain size contracts we can't achieve because we don't have the ratings. And if we don't have the ratings because we don't have the money to invest in those ratings, you know, there's those kind of things.

I mean, if that answers your question.

**[Speaker 2]** (21:40 - 21:50)

OK, and what sort of support do you think either can come from governments or can come from corporates even to help support local businesses to becoming more sustainable?

**[Speaker 1]** (21:51 - 24:43)

I think at the end of the day, you know, the government tries its best to make it as easy as possible to start a business in South Africa. So for that, you have to commend them. There isn't a lot of bureaucracy in place in South Africa to creating a small business or an SME, as we call them here.

So for that, they have to be commended. From a corporate point of view, I think it just boils down to looking at the label inside your shirt or the label of your garment and looking where it's made. And choosing to rather purchase something that's made locally in South Africa rather than purchasing something that is made elsewhere.

You know, at the end of the day, corporate South Africa can do lunches at local small businesses as opposed to going to the McDonald's. They can, you know, they can, I used this as an example the other day, they can prompt their businesses that they work with to work with more local businesses. And where possible, and I guess it's always possible, you know, always choose a local business to do business with rather than getting the cheapest mass-produced thing from China, let's say.

Choose to purchase it and pay a premium for it in South Africa because then you see the benefit. You see how that community grows or you see how, you know, that your economy benefits from it. Every rand spent in South Africa on a South African business stays in South Africa.

But every rand spent on an international business ends up in that international economy. So it's just a change in your way that you're willing to do business and to not just always guarantee the bottom line is the mental shift that we would love to see. Because then our entire supply chain benefits from you investing. You don't have to completely invest. We don't need anyone to come in and give us a huge amount of money and say, you know, go and do this, you know. We need them to just buy from us, purchase. And that's, I feel, the biggest change that needs to happen.

**[Speaker 2]** (24:44 - 25:15)

Okay. Thank you very much, Ryan. I think that was all really, really inspiring.

And I think it also gave us a good foundation for the next section of the questionnaire and how we can really try and look at your sort of compiling what you've already said in terms of your social and environmental impact and really put that into a bit of a template for you going forward. But thank you very much for your time. And I look really forward to seeing what AMO does in the future and how you're going to keep on growing.

**[Speaker 1]** (25:16 - 25:22)

Thanks very much for your time and for prompting the right questions and for the opportunity to talk.

**[Speaker 2]** (25:22 - 25:23)

All right.

## Concluding Process & Evaluation

My learning goals and activities are a reflection of my layered progression in my sustainable development learning journey. I selected learning goals based on bridging both academic and professional gaps in my understanding of sustainable development. I believe I achieved my goals by not only gaining a new range of professional and technical skills such as research, analysis and consulting; but also a wealth of knowledge of new policies, concepts and frameworks and placing that new learning within broader sustainability debates while also realising the nuances and geographical blind spots. The diversity of my activities contributed to building a more nuanced, interdisciplinary view of sustainable development while catering for different audiences such as local residential communities and housing activists, small businesses from the global south and fellow students wishing to learn more about sustainable development. In future I would like to enhance my collaboration with other students, and believe this was too limited on my part, partly attributed to my traveling around for various reasons thereby limiting many of my options to online activities. Furthermore, I believe an organised physical workshop activity would have paired well with my learning goal 1, especially to present the poster product, and in hindsight I should perhaps have reorganised my activities better within my own schedule and between destinations to achieve this.

**Learning goal 1: The building of a Just City: Understanding the shortcomings and recuperative strategies being put forward by the EU parliament, researchers/academics and NGOs to address the lack of affordable housing in Europe, complemented by lessons learnt from Global South.** Learning goal 1 aimed to broaden my contextual knowledge of a topic I am quite familiar with in order to draw contrasts and integrate knowledge streams from various contexts. Activity 1 facilitated in understanding the shortcomings in current EU urban planning approaches and how those affect affordable housing development while also providing perspectives from NGOs, academics and researchers. On the back of the master Housing and the City course, this broadened my knowledge of new concepts and approaches pertaining to spatial justice, while challenging my own positioning as a sustainable urban planning and design professional. I also thoroughly enjoyed the collaboration with fellow sustainable development students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds which added greatly to the holistic understanding of my goal. Activity 2 provided a technical element considering current EU housing policy, its application and implementation and realities faced by various EU member states. Contrasting this with housing crises in the global south, illuminated the difference in drivers as well as potential opportunities and best-practice. The Monopoly Poster and Manifesto products act as learning tools, providing a concise critique of housing commodification while also translating the complexity thereof into an accessible manner for students but also EU residents, to advocate for improved housing circumstances and spatial justice.

**Learning Goal 2: To learn critical skills in the intersection of economic growth and sustainable development through the ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) framework.** Learning Goal 2 was specifically selected to explore the economic dimension of sustainability which I have not previously engaged with prior to and during the master course, and which challenged me beyond my comfort zone. I deemed this necessary to be a more well-rounded sustainability practitioner, especially in light of current orienteering towards economic

growth models. Although my activities may be seen only as an introduction to the economic dimension, with considerable more learning to do; they were rich and rewarding and allowed me to sharpen and activate new technical skills related to ESG and sustainable business development such as consulting and evaluation. Activity 3 enhanced my understanding of ESG through learning new concepts, ESG frameworks, KPIs and tools and contributed to consulting skills through the technical application thereof in a case study comparison report. What was particularly compelling through the double materiality assessment, was the trade-offs between social, environmental and economic risks. It revealed the limitations of ESG and the risk of greenwashing while also highlighting its lack of inclusivity for smaller businesses, especially those from the global south. Activity 4, in response, was used to put my new knowledge and technical and consulting skills to the test through drafting a sustainability policy for a small business from the global south, allowing me to connect sustainable theory in a real world example. This learning activity was a type of action research based on learning while doing. Developing a simple sustainability commitment template highlighted the need for more accessible, flexible and adaptable pathways for small businesses who are often excluded from ESG and similar frameworks more applicable to the global north.

The activities provided a greater understanding of how the global north may set specific standards that are frequently unattainable by the global south due to infrastructural and socio-economic limitations which could lead to widening inequality. Furthermore the global south is creative in its navigation of its challenges and therefore has a wealth of knowledge and best practices/innovation which should be integrated into global sustainable development frameworks such as inclusionary housing policy or sustainable business reporting. Overall, my learning journey demonstrated that sustainability is not only about achieving environmental outcomes, but also about how we define value, structure participation, and ensure equity in our cities, institutions, and economies. It furthered a holistic understanding of sustainability as pertaining to its social, environmental and economic dimensions. Going forward, I intend to advocate for more context-sensitive and socially-just approaches in both policy and professional spaces, particularly those that foreground the lived experiences and innovations of vulnerable communities and those in the global south while also advocating for more inclusive sustainable practices.

The portfolio course presented a valuable opportunity to utilise knowledge from the sustainable development master course to explore different avenues and career trajectories. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, pushing my professional boundaries to obtain new skills and knowledge for better-informed decision-making as a future sustainable practitioner. The course is therefore also a valuable bridge between student and professional life with the ability to demonstrate a portfolio of work to future employers.

