

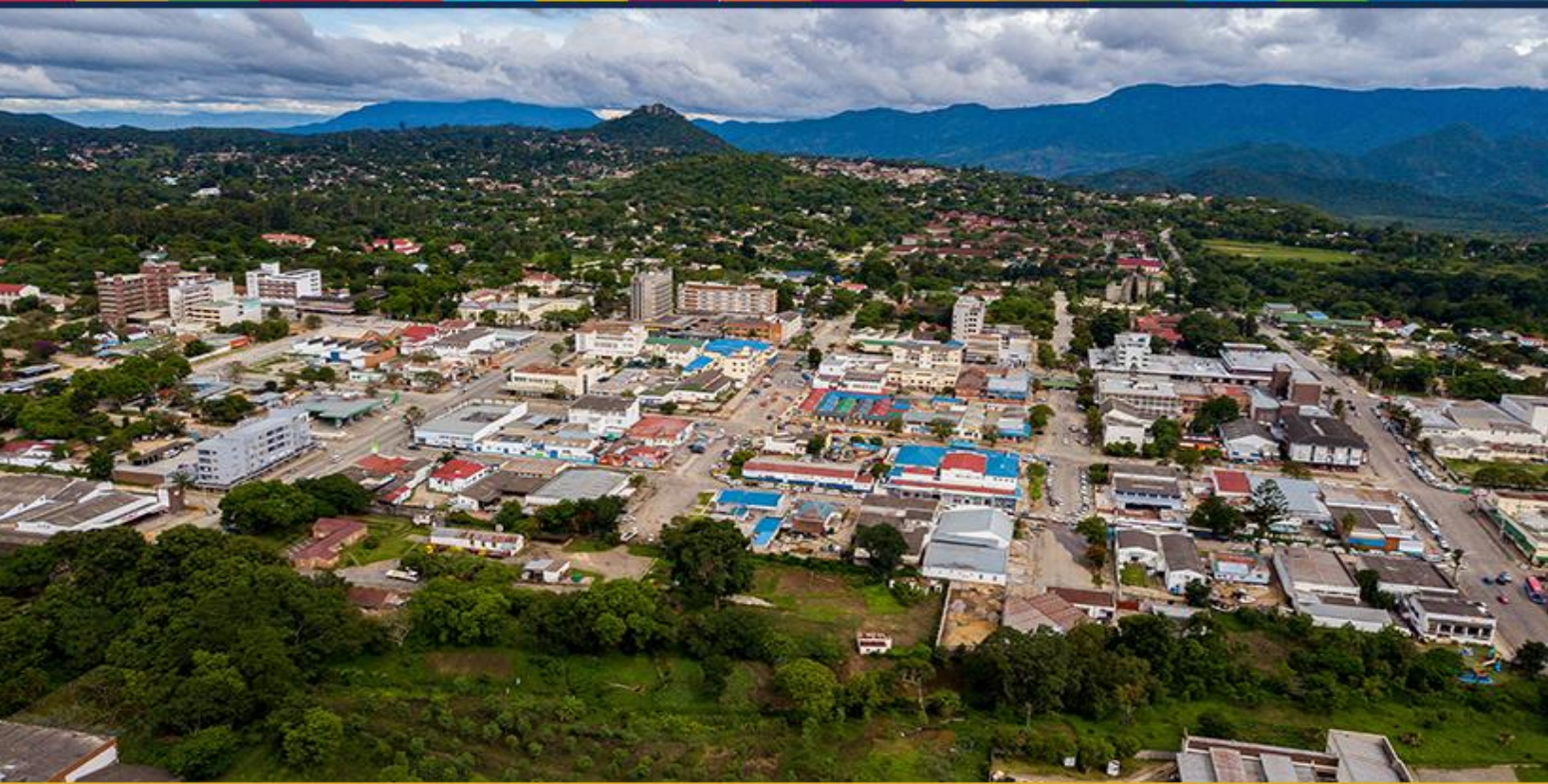


CITY OF MUTARE

# VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW 2024



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS



"The Jewel of the East & Zimbabwe's Gateway to the Sea"

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report on the SDG Review of the City of Mutare has been prepared by the City of Mutare with guidance from Government of Zimbabwe – Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and Ministry of Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. Initial training on VLR was also received at a Workshop held in Kadoma, Zimbabwe coordinated by UN DESA and UNCRO. The process of developing the report involved engaging a wide range of stakeholders, such as the City Council, Civil Society, the private Sector, and Academicians.

### Disclaimer

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While all efforts have been made and due care has been taken to ensure the accuracy in the analysis and compilation of data and information in this report, the City of Mutare is unable to guarantee complete accuracy. Readers are deemed to have waived and renounced all rights to any claim against Council, its officers, or agents for any loss or damage of any nature whatsoever arising from any use or reliance upon such data, information, analysis or compilations. Information is presented at the time of writing (latest June 2024).

### Acknowledgement

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## PREFACE

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The City of Mutare has joined other global cities around the world that are working to localize and streamline the SDGs into their strategies and plans. City of Mutare has been working towards this end for over a number of years, aligning all its programmes and projects with the SDGs to ensure that the local agenda is properly interlinked with the Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) 2021-2025, Africa Union (AU) Agenda 2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I am honoured to present City of Mutare's first Voluntary Local Review (VLR), documenting our remarkable journey in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in which the performance of the city is reviewed against selected SDGs from the 2030 Agenda in an evidence-based and actionable approach. With this report, the focus is on the key priorities for the City, as reflected in the City's current long term plan – the Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2025, Master Plan and other development programs and projects.

This report provides an overview of our progress and challenges in such areas as Health, Education, Gender equality, WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Governance and Environment. It highlights the diverse range of partners and organisations dedicated to shaping the future of Mutare and creating a sustainable world. It also reflects our unwavering commitment to addressing global challenges through collaboration and partnership. The report also offers an opportunity to accelerate successful programs that can be followed and replicated by other Cities. Equally, the report aims to inspire actors in the City to deepen alignment of the work to the SDGs and to encourage everyone towards making that. This is a moment of pride, both in submitting the first VLR of the City of Mutare, and to do so simultaneously with the third VNR of Zimbabwe.

This ensures streamlining and complementarity between plans at the local and national levels, but also shows commitment to the global agenda at all levels. By applying the guidelines of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, we will be working towards an inclusive city, leaving no one behind and ensuring that all neighbourhoods and communities in Mutare have equal access to services and are considered in the planning process, and also in the expected benefits from living in the city.

The UN has designated the 2020s as the Decade of Action. Sustainable development is of utmost importance to me and my fellow Councillors and all the Management and employees of the City Council, Government, Residents and Stakeholders who are working to achieve the vision of Mutare as a smart, modern, sustainable and resilient city. With this in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest thanks to all of the city's employees and all stakeholders who are helping in various ways to drive development and sharing their expertise and experience.

Our work is far from finished, though. Even if there is still more to be done, we have already embarked on a journey and we are determined to keep serving. We understand that sustained effort and collaborative efforts are necessary for achievement of sustainable development. To further support our shared objective of creating a more sustainable world by 2030 and beyond, we hope that the City of Mutare will serve as an inspiration for ongoing efforts to find locally and internationally sustainable solutions.

**Simon Chabuka**  
**Mayor**  
**City of Mutare**

# CITY OF MUTARE SDGS OVERVIEW



This report marks the inaugural Voluntary Local Review (Review) conducted by the City of Mutare. Its purpose is to assess the progress of the local council in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Review provides an opportunity for all residents of the City to evaluate the current situation, analyze implemented actions, and gauge their effectiveness in striving for a better sustainable future for the entire community.

The City has made significant strides in implementing the SDGs, particularly in transforming the city into a smart, modern, sustainable and resilient city. The integration of the SDGs into the City's 5 Year Strategic Plan, has played a vital role in shaping the concept of sustainable development and serves as the foundation for progress in the city. This progress has been accelerated and guided by the Presidential "Call to Action - No Compromise to Service Delivery" Blueprint, which all local councils in Zimbabwe have adopted. The city's approach to SDG implementation is collaborative, involving Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) from the Government of Zimbabwe, City Council Departments, NGOs, Private Sector, Associations and the local community. The City Council acts as a leader, enabler, or supporter in various programs and projects related to the SDGs in the City. The governance structure, planning documents, and strategic direction governing the City.

The City Council strongly support the implementation of the SDGs. Notably, the City has demonstrated notable progress in SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean

Water and Sanitation), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

The City Council is presently engaged in some ambitious development programs and projects. These include investment in city infrastructure projects targeting water and sanitation, education, and health, upgrading of social amenities including parks and stadiums, digitization of Council services and operations, road and fire-fighting equipment recapitalization and strengthening of internal control systems.

While the City of Mutare showcases improvements in these areas, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the City Council in achieving specific SDG targets, as highlighted in the report. The City Council's jurisdiction primarily provides city services such as Water and wastewater management, solid waste management, urban planning, local business regulation, safety maintenance, beautification, and economic support. Additionally, some of the SDG targets may be outside the specific context and profile of the City Council. However, despite these limitations, the City Council plays a supportive role wherever possible to facilitate progress towards other SDGs.

**K. B. Chafesuka**  
**Town Clerk**  
**City of Mutare**



## CITY OF MUTARE PROFILE

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### **Mutare: The Gateway to the Sea**

Mutare, also known as Kumakomoyo in the local language, meaning "Place of Many Mountains," is a vibrant City located in a bowl-shaped valley between the Bvumba Mountains, which delineate the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Often referred to as the "Gateway to the Sea," Mutare is the third largest city in Zimbabwe with a population of 224,802 according to the 2022 Census. It serves as the provincial capital of Manicaland Province, with over a million people in its surrounding areas.

Historically known as Umtali, Mutare is just eight kilometers from the Mozambique border and lies 265km east of Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. It's strategically positioned at latitude 18°58'0" and longitude 32°40'0", encompassing an area of 16,290.75 hectares. The city has shown significant population growth over the decades, increasing from 69,621 in 1982 to 187,621 in 2012, with growth rates of 89% in the first decade and 43% in the following one.

The city's location in the high rainfall region of Manicaland makes it uniquely positioned in an elevated part of the district, enhancing its appeal as a trade and travel hub. Mutare is a critical point for commerce, connecting Zimbabwe's interior to the Mozambican port of Beira via the Beira Corridor, which is only 290km away. This connectivity is supported by highways, pipelines, and railways, making Mutare a pivotal point for transportation, telecommunications, papermaking, food processing, and forestry.

Mutare not only thrives economically but also culturally, serving as a gateway for tourists heading to the Eastern Highlands, Gorongosa National Park, and the coastal areas of Mozambique. Its nickname, "Gateway to the Eastern Highlands," reflects its role as a starting point for these scenic and adventurous trips.

Mutare is a continuously evolving city that places its citizens at the heart of its development strategies, leveraging its geographical and economic advantages to foster growth and connectivity.



# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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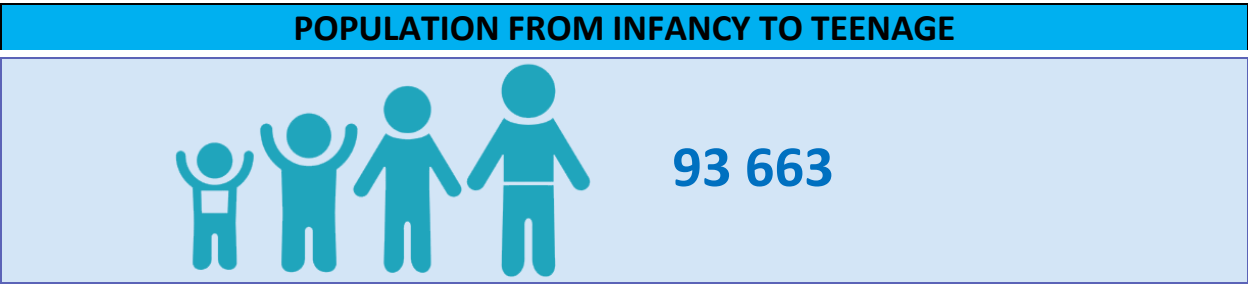
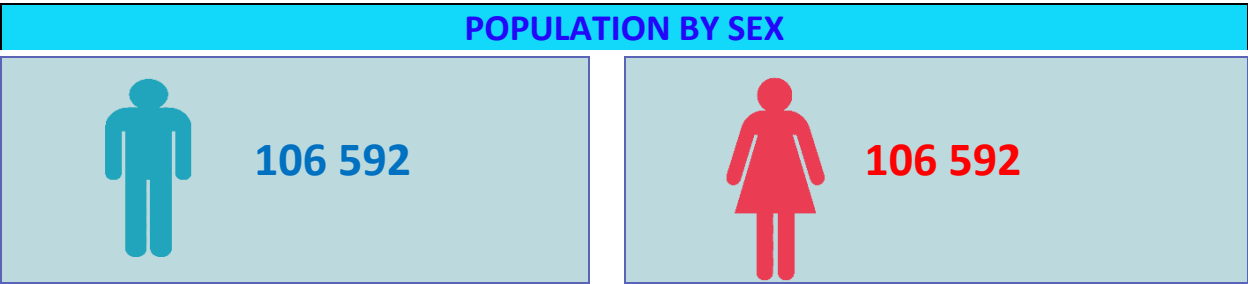
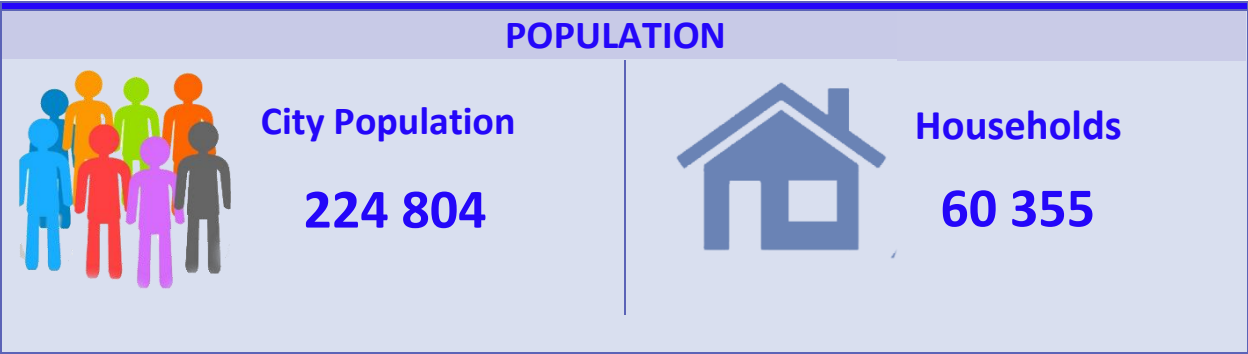
The City of Mutare (known as Umtali until 1982) was established in Penhalonga in 1891 and relocated to Old Umtali in 1893, which is located about 14 km north of the current city center. The City was relocated to its current site for the third time in order to be closer to the Beira–Bulawayo railway line after it was built in 1896. From a small town governed by a Sanitary Board in 1897, the city expanded to become a major Municipality by 1914, and in 1971 it was granted city status.

The term "Utare" or occasionally "Nyautare" in Chimanyika, which means "a piece of metal," is the source of the name. The name was derived from the Gold deposits found around the Mutare River and Penhalonga.

From a small town governed by a Sanitary Board in 1897, the city expanded to become a major Municipality by 1914, and in 1971 it was granted city status. From a small town governed by a Sanitary Board in 1897, the city expanded to become a major Municipality by 1914, and in 1971 it was granted city status.

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# DEMOGRAPHICS





# INTRODUCTION



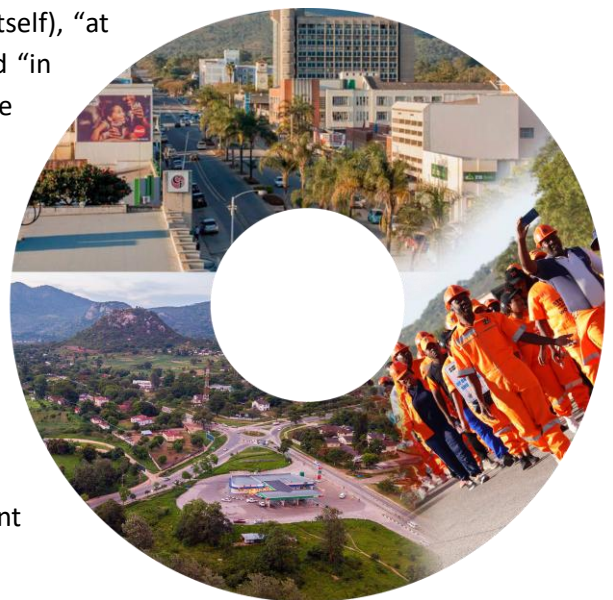
In 2015, the UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the 2030 Agenda, the global community agreed on a framework for a worldwide transition to sustainable development. The 17 SDGs are translated into greater detail in 169 targets, covering the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability.

To render visible the progress made towards achieving the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda calls for regular reviews. At national level this takes the form of Voluntary National Reviews (VNR). The VNRs are presented annually at the UN High-Level Political Forum, the central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.

Anchored on the vision 2030, the Government of Zimbabwe has demonstrated its commitment to move the country, “Towards a prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030.” The Vision represents an overarching framework to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Africa Union (AU) Agenda 2063. The vision is being implemented through the National Development Strategy (NDS1) covering the period 2021-2025 and this is hinged on an Integrated Results-Based Management (IRBM) framework for concrete deliveries.

In light of the 2030 Agenda, and of the New Urban Agenda adopted at the Habitat III conference in 2016, it is clear that cities have a critical role to play in delivering sustainable development through SDG localization, measuring, and monitoring. As a result, 65% of the 169 SDG targets could not be achieved without the involvement of local governments. Accordingly, the 2030 Agenda underlines the key role to be played by local authorities and the importance of cooperation between different levels of action and actors. Local actors are called on to identify and implement action required at local level based on the global goals. This is known as localizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Three main areas of responsibility may be addressed: “at local level for local level” (measures that impact the municipality itself), “at local level for the world” (local measures with a global impact), and “in and through other countries” (measures that are realized worldwide and in conjunction with other municipalities). Municipalities thus play a pivotal role as trailblazers for change and as the level closest to citizens.

This recognition permeates policy and practice in the City of Mutare. The City Council’s Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2025 is a deliberate response by the City of Mutare to put in place a policy framework for improved service delivery aligned to the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), while simultaneously addressing the global aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063.





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





# 3

## GOOD HEALTH AND WELL - BEING



**S**ustainable Development Goal 3 focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for everyone at every stage of life. Good health is essential as it empowers individuals to reach their full potential and actively participate in social development. In the context of Mutare, this goal translates into actions like increasing the number and accessibility of health facilities, enhancing their capacity to serve the population, and implementing effective measures to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases. These efforts are crucial for improving the overall health outcomes and quality of life within the city.

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

City Health is dedicated to delivering comprehensive healthcare services that encompass various aspects of health management. This includes not only treatment but also proactive measures aimed at maintaining and improving health. The City Council focuses on an integrated care model, which involves the provision of promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services. This holistic approach ensures that individuals, families, and communities receive well-rounded support tailored to their specific health needs. The primary objective of Mutare City Health is to significantly reduce morbidity (the incidence of disease) and mortality (the incidence of death) associated with all diseases. By addressing health issues through a multifaceted strategy, the organization aims to enhance overall community health outcomes. Through its commitment to integrated care, Mutare City Health strives to create healthier communities by effectively managing diseases and promoting wellness across all demographics.



## Coverage/ Density per health center

The City of Mutare is committed to enhancing public health, improving living conditions, and ensuring quality healthcare for its residents. The local authority operates nine (9) health facilities alongside one (1) municipal hospital, strategically located throughout the city to fulfill the requirement of having one health facility for every 10,000 residents.

To further this commitment, the City of Mutare has set an ambitious goal of constructing a new health facility each year. In 2021, the City successfully completed and inaugurated a new Clinic in Gimboki suburb. Looking ahead, there are plans to finalize and open the Hobhouse Polyclinic in 2025. Additionally, significant renovations have been made to existing facilities such as the Sakubva Outpatients Department (SOPD) and Dangamvura Polyclinic, with support from the AIDS Health Foundation (AHF). This strategic approach not only aims to meet current healthcare needs but also anticipates future demands by expanding access to essential health services across the community.

## Reduce maternal mortality and neonatal mortality rate

All the health facilities provide antenatal services with two specific locations, Dangamvura Polyclinic and Sakubva Maternity, providing delivery services. For complicated cases that require specialized care, patients are referred to Sakubva District Hospital. In 2023, there were a total of 3,220 first Antenatal Care (ANC) visits and 8,342 repeat ANC visits. Additionally, 1,470 cases were referred to other facilities for further management.

Daily sensitization sessions are conducted at Clinics and by Community Health Workers to emphasize the importance of early booking for ANC and ensuring safe deliveries at health facilities. To facilitate access to these services, a one-time fee of US\$30 is charged. This fee encompasses all necessary health services from as early as 12 weeks of pregnancy through to six weeks of postnatal care. During this period, mothers undergo screening for tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV/AIDS. If any diseases are detected, appropriate treatment is provided, including the initiation of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy for those who test positive for HIV/AIDS.

## Reduce Under-5 Mortality Rate

The National Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) provides essential vaccinations for children under five years of age, targeting diseases such as measles rubella, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis and tuberculosis. This program is crucial in safeguarding the health of young children and preventing outbreaks of these infectious diseases.

In addition to the routine vaccinations provided through the EPI, supplementary immunizations are conducted as part of national health initiatives. These additional vaccination campaigns aim to enhance immunity levels within the community and address any gaps in coverage. All necessary antigens for immunization are procured from district stores, ensuring that healthcare facilities have access to the required vaccines. This systematic approach to supply chain management is vital for maintaining consistent vaccine availability.



To achieve higher coverage rates for the EPI, immunization services are extended to outreach locations and healthcare facilities. This strategy ensures that even those in remote or underserved areas have access to vaccinations. Community outreach efforts and social mobilization play a significant role in promoting awareness about the importance of immunizations. These initiatives also address emerging health concerns, fostering a better understanding among parents and caregivers regarding vaccination benefits.

At the end of the year 2023, two rounds of Polio Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) were conducted, achieving a coverage rate of 80.3%. These targeted campaigns are essential for maintaining high immunity levels against polio within the population.

Growth monitoring is a crucial strategy for children under five years old, promoting optimal growth. Community health workers monitor growth metrics and conduct educational sessions on infant feeding practices and malnutrition. In 2023, there was a significant decrease in severely underweight children, indicating the effectiveness of growth monitoring and health education efforts in improving child nutrition and overall health outcomes in the community.

### Fight Communicable diseases

City of Mutare has a designated hospital that specializes in the admission and treatment of patients with infectious diseases. This facility serves individuals referred from both Mutare Urban and the surrounding Mutare district. The hospital is equipped to handle a range of infectious diseases, including cholera, typhoid, chickenpox, rabies, tuberculosis (TB), and measles. In 2023, the hospital admitted patients suffering from various infectious diseases such as COVID-19, TB, rabies, chickenpox, measles, and diarrheal diseases like cholera and typhoid. The total number of admissions to the hospital for these conditions was 342. Out of these admissions, 327 patients were successfully discharged, 5 patients were transferred to Victoria Chitepo Provincial Hospital for further care. Unfortunately, there were 10 recorded deaths attributed to cholera, TB, and rabies during this period. This data highlights the critical role that the designated hospital plays in managing infectious diseases within Mutare City and its surrounding areas.

In 2023, Dangamvura Clinic reported the highest number of diarrheal cases among children under five, with 402 cases. This is largely due to the clinic's service area, Gimboki, which lacks safe water sources and proper sewer reticulation systems. This creates an environment conducive to waterborne diseases, increasing rates of diarrhoea among vulnerable populations, especially young children.

The number of cholera cases significantly increased in 2023. The majority of cases were reported in November, while the first case was recorded in February. High population mobility, porous borders that allow people to migrate freely, and harsh weather disasters like droughts are some of the causes of this surge. By the end of 2023, five people had died as a result of the cholera outbreak.

In response to this public health crisis, City health authorities implemented several measures aimed at controlling the outbreak:



- **Health Promotion Activities:** These programs concentrated on informing communities about cholera prevention, emphasizing hygiene practices to curb the spread of the disease.
- **Early Diagnosis and Treatment:** By quickly diagnosing and treating cholera cases, health services were able to decrease the mortality rates linked to the illness.
- **Active Case Finding and Contact Tracing:** Health workers diligently searched for new cases and tracked down contacts of confirmed cases to halt the spread of cholera.

The Red Cross and Mercy Corps were among the organizations that were instrumental in assisting local health initiatives. Among their contributions were educating medical personnel to improve their ability to handle cholera cases and supplying crucial supplies including critical medications, protective gear, and kits for non-food items needed to control outbreaks. This collaborative effort between local health departments and international partners was instrumental in mitigating the impact of the cholera outbreak throughout 2023.

With the support of World Vision, City of Mutare has established a Public Health Emergency Operating Centre (PHEOC). This initiative is crucial as public health emergencies stemming from various threats remain a significant concern across all cities in Zimbabwe. To comply with the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR), the City now boasts a fully operational PHEOC, essential for strengthening health systems by preparing for and responding to public health emergencies. The PHEOC serves as a central hub that coordinates efforts related to preparedness, surveillance, response, and recovery from such emergencies. In addition to establishing the PHEOC, World Vision has played an instrumental role in facilitating training sessions, community engagement initiatives, and dialogues aimed at combating the cholera outbreak. These efforts are vital for enhancing community awareness and resilience against public health threats. Through these comprehensive measures, including the establishment of the PHEOC and active community involvement, Mutare City is better equipped to handle public health emergencies effectively.

### Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

A total of 849 institutional deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel in 2023. It is noteworthy that 8.95% of live births occurred before the mothers arrived at a health facility. To address this issue, healthcare workers and community health workers are actively educating expectant mothers about the importance of visiting health facilities on time to ensure safe delivery. In order to reduce the rate of early births, further education is required to improve maternal and child health.

### Reduce malaria incidence

City of Mutare is classified as a malaria zone, and there was a notable increase in the number of malaria-positive cases in recent years. The peak incidence of these cases occurred during the months of January and February.

In response to this surge in malaria cases, the local health department has undertaken a series of aggressive measures aimed at mitigating the impact of malaria. These measures encompass a combination of physical, biological, and chemical strategies designed to control mosquito populations and reduce transmission rates through:



- **Larviciding:** This method entails the application of larvicides to water sources to kill mosquito larvae before they develop into adult mosquitoes that can spread malaria.
- **Environmental Manipulation:** This approach involves modifying the environment to discourage mosquito breeding, making habitats less suitable for mosquitoes.
- **Community Education:** It's vital to educate the public on malaria prevention. This education covers how to avoid mosquito bites and the importance of early symptom recognition to curb transmission.
- **Use of Larvivorous Fish:** Introducing fish that eat mosquito larvae into local water bodies acts as a natural control mechanism, reducing the number of larvae in the environment.
- **Physical Measures:** Physical interventions like clearing streams are used to maintain water flow, avoiding the formation of stagnant pools where mosquitoes could lay their eggs.

As part of these comprehensive malaria control strategies, a total length of 327.4 kilometers of streams was cleared, trenched, and de-silted throughout 2023. This effort aims not only to improve water flow but also to minimize potential breeding sites for mosquitoes. Through these concerted efforts combining various intervention strategies, the City of Mutare is actively working towards controlling and reducing malaria transmission effectively.

Africa University and the City of Mutare are also partnering to conduct comprehensive studies on vector mosquito species in the city. This partnership assists in making informed decisions about intervention strategies and funding requirements. The partnership is a significant step towards improving public health outcomes by focusing on targeted research on vector mosquitoes, which will inform decision-making processes related to intervention strategies and financial planning.

### Reduce mortality rate attributed to Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Hypertension and diabetes are the leading chronic conditions affecting populations, with urban areas showing high rates. The City health department is focusing on raising awareness about these conditions and promoting preventive measures within communities. The initiative educates individuals about lifestyle modifications like diet, physical activity, and regular health screenings to mitigate risk factors. The emphasis on awareness and prevention is crucial in addressing the rising incidence of these chronic diseases. The aim is to reduce the burden of hypertension and diabetes in urban populations by fostering community engagement and providing resources for healthier living.

To promote awareness and increase demand for HIV testing and counseling (HTC) services, all clients are provided with essential information regarding HIV. Every health facility is mandated to offer HIV counseling and testing to all eligible individuals. This process includes linking all recipients of care to ongoing monitoring through viral load assessments and screening for other comorbidities, ensuring a holistic approach to patient health management.

All health facilities actively conduct screening for tuberculosis (TB) and initiate appropriate treatment for diagnosed patients. In addition to treatment, contact tracing is performed to identify individuals who may have been exposed to TB. Those identified as contacts are offered TB prophylaxis to prevent the disease's spread.



### Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis

The pharmacy department at the Sakubva Clinic in Mutare City ensures the availability of medical supplies and sundries for all hospitals and medical facilities. They purchase medications from the national pharmacy (Natpharm) and maintain inventory management. In 2023, 70%, 50%, and 45% of medications were classified as vital, essential, and necessary respectively. To address supply shortages, the city actively purchases medications not provided by Natpharm, selling them on a cost-recovery basis. This ensures the financial sustainability of pharmacy operations while maintaining patient accessibility.

### Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe WASH services).

The City health is actively engaged in waste collection across the city, ensuring that refuse collection adheres to a well-maintained schedule. Currently, our refuse collection coverage rate is around 90% for occupied properties. In addition to this, we are supported by three Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that provide effective street cleaning services throughout the city. These groups play a crucial role in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in our urban environment.

The Environmental Section conducts comprehensive water quality monitoring. In 2023, a total of 127 water samples were collected specifically for bacteriological analysis, while an additional 29 samples were gathered for chemical analysis. The collected water samples are subsequently forwarded to the laboratories of the Government Analyst and Africa University for thorough examination and testing.

Many of the diseases related to water and sanitation remain prevalent in areas such as Federation 2 and Mahalape, often referred to as dysfunctional settlements due to a lack of basic services. These communities do not have proper water supply or sewage systems, forcing residents to use pit latrines for sanitation and draw drinking water from shallow wells. This setup significantly jeopardizes public health, as the absence of adequate sanitation and the reliance on potentially contaminated water sources have led to an increase in cholera cases. The combination of poor hygiene and polluted water fosters conditions ideal for the spread of infectious diseases.

## Emerging issues

**Cholera Outbreak:** Although there were no reported cholera cases in 2021 and 2022, the City, along with the rest of the country, faced a significant cholera outbreak. This resurgence highlights the persistent vulnerability of public health systems to waterborne diseases, necessitating improved sanitation, water quality monitoring, and emergency response strategies to prevent future outbreaks.

**Staff Attrition:** The City has been grappling with a high rate of staff attrition, particularly in the healthcare sector, with the loss of 17 registered nurses in 2023 alone. This significant turnover impacts the quality of care and the capacity to respond to health emergencies, underscoring the need for better retention strategies, including competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, and improved working conditions.



**Drug and Substance Abuse:** Drug and substance abuse have been on an alarming rise within the City and across the country. This increase poses challenges not only to public health but also to law enforcement and social services. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach including prevention programs, treatment facilities, community education, and stricter enforcement of drug laws to curb the spread and impact of substance abuse.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Invest in and construct additional health facilities to address the increasing demand.
- Offer competitive remuneration to retain and attract health care workers.
- Provide financial support to supplement drug supplies from Natpharm.
- Ensure there is sufficient equipment for all health facilities.
- Acquire an adequate number of service vehicles and necessary equipment.
- Increase investment in combating drug abuse, including the construction of rehabilitation centres.





# 4

## QUALITY EDUCATION



**T**his goal aims to ensure that everyone is able to complete primary and secondary education, and that children have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education. In Zimbabwe the education sector is mainly financed by the central government. However, Councils play a key role as provided for in the Urban Councils Act (Cap 29:15) in providing Education facilities including construction of Primary Schools. The targets that are relevant to City of Mutare are increasing the coverage of schools.

### INDICATORS

#### Target 4.a

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

Education is of vital importance to the opportunities every person has to live a good life and be in good health, and is an important factor in efforts to reduce inequality. Schools must assist students and apprentices to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to successfully manage their own lives, participate in work and be part of the community. Students and apprentices must learn to think critically and act in an ethical and environmentally-conscious manner, and have the right to involvement and co-determination. Quality education also involves



enabling citizens to acquire relevant skills for employment in the workforce. Many people with a low level of education find it hard to remain in stable employment

### Access to safe and healthy education infrastructure

One of the goals in the Council Master and Strategic Plans is to increase the coverage or density of primary schools per residential property. In terms of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (Chapter 29:12) for every 500 residential properties, there should be a Primary School.

The City, for the period 2021-2025 has targeted to construct new primary schools with universal designs which are child, disability and gender sensitive. To achieve this goal, Council is working with private developers such as individual investors, churches, corporates and the government (utilization of Inter-governmental fiscal transfers). Council has also come up with a ring fenced education levy to cater for the development of education infrastructure. This has seen Council constructing a new School in Gimboki suburb in 2023, which is the first primary school in an area with over 5,200 residential properties. Council utilized both the Education Levy and the Devolutions funds from Government to construct the school. Further the City targeted to construct another new school in Chikanga area in 2024.

As of 2024 coverage is at 47.7% which is an increase from 45% in 2021. By 2025, the coverage of primary schools is expected to increase to over 50%. Council is also renovating existing schools to make them child, disability and gender sensitive thereby adapting universal designs.

## CHALLENGES

Despite significant investments in new school construction by the City Council, Government, and private developers, the provision of quality education still faces substantial challenges, as outlined below:

- **Demographic Pressure:** The demographic structure of Mutare presents a unique challenge. According to the 2022 census, the city's population is almost evenly split between youth and adults, with a high birth rate contributing to this balance. Specifically, 41.66% of Mutare's residents are under 17 years old, which is the primary school-going age. This demographic skew places immense pressure on the educational system.
- **Teacher-to-Student Ratio:** The current teacher-to-student ratio in primary education (Grades 1 to 7) stands at an average of 1:55, significantly higher than the national standard of 1:40. This imbalance means that teachers are stretched thin, reducing their ability to provide personalized attention and support to students, further impacting educational outcomes.
- **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Many schools in the City Mutare particularly Primary Schools suffer from inadequate infrastructure to accommodate the large number of students enrolled. This includes insufficient classrooms, poor sanitary facilities, and lack of space for extracurricular activities, all of which contribute to a substandard learning environment.
- **Impact on Education Quality and Inclusion:** The strain on resources and infrastructure has broader implications. Overcrowding and poor facilities lead to compromised educational quality. Moreover, critical issues like gender equality and social inclusion are often side-lined. There's little room for specialized



programs or attention to the diverse needs of students, including those from marginalized groups, which could lead to educational disparities.

## EMERGING ISSUES

Over the last few years the City has experienced flash floods, cyclones which has resulted in the need to reconsider and ensure the construction of schools that are soundly built and proof against natural disasters as well as ensure the provision of and access to basic services and good indoor environmental quality especially in relation to air quality and dampness, opportunities of outside play.

According to ZIMSTAT, approximately 20% of young people aged 4-24 in the City of Mutare are out of school, highlighting an emerging issue that demands attention. Consequently, there is a critical need for the City Council to increase investment in vocational and skills training programs for these out-of-school youth.

## RECOMMENDATION

- Invest more in the construction of new Educational Facilities/Schools especially Primary Schools to match the demand.
- Upgrade and maintain existing schools to improve safety and ensure facilities are socially inclusive.
- Ensure schools are maintained in good physical condition through regular inspections and effective enforcement of regulations and standards.
- Strengthen Technical and Vocational Education - Develop and expand technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs to provide students with practical skills and knowledge aligned with the needs of the job market. This will contribute to reducing unemployment and promoting economic growth.





# GENDER EQUALITY



**S**ustainable Development Goal 5 is to achieve gender equality and strengthen the position of girls and women in society. Gender equality involves a fair distribution of power, influence and resources. Living a life free of violence and discrimination is a fundamental human right and is essential for human development and for society. An important objective for the City of Mutare is being a city without discrimination, a city where everyone is treated equally.

## INDICATORS

- 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- 5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

City of Mutare is a Centre of excellence in terms of Gender Mainstreaming. Gender is championed in the following ways:-



## Policy Framework

The City of Mutare has demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality through its comprehensive Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan. These plans are reviewed annually in conjunction with the city's Strategic Plan, ensuring alignment with both regional and national objectives. Key among these are the SADC Gender Protocol, National Gender Policy and Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy (NDS) 1, which guide the city's approach to gender mainstreaming.

### Gender Policy Framework:

- **Gender Policy and Action Plan:** This foundational policy not only outlines the city's commitment to gender equality but also sets actionable steps to integrate gender mainstreaming into every aspect of municipal governance and service delivery.
- **Sexual Harassment Policy:** Beyond the gender policy, Mutare has implemented a Sexual Harassment Policy aimed at creating a safe and equitable workplace environment. This policy is designed to protect employees from any form of harassment, promoting a culture of respect and dignity.

### Specific Gender-Inclusive Policies:

- **Council Housing Policy:** Defined under Paragraph 6.2, this policy explicitly upholds the National Gender Policy. It ensures that gender equality is a key consideration in the allocation of residential stands and housing units. This approach helps in reducing gender disparities in housing access, recognizing that equitable housing is fundamental to overall community well-being.
- **Council Informal Sector Policy:** Under Paragraph 9, this policy addresses 'Gender Dimensions', highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming in the informal sector. It considers the varied roles and responsibilities of men, women, individuals with disabilities, and the youth in the design, implementation, and allocation of informal sector spaces.

By integrating these policies, the City of Mutare aims to foster an environment where gender issues are not only acknowledged but actively addressed. The City of Mutare's approach to policy-making reflects a deep understanding of the intersectionality of gender with other social variables, striving for a holistic and inclusive municipal governance model. Through these policies, Mutare not only complies with national and regional mandates but also sets a benchmark for gender-sensitive urban planning and administration.

## Governance

In terms of governance, 28% (7 out of 25) of the Councillors in the Council are female. These women actively participate in all Council meetings and programs. Although there isn't a 50/50 gender split, it's significant that female Councillors chair key committees like Public Works and Town Lands, and the Environmental Management Committee. These committees are vital as they manage critical areas such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Roads and Infrastructure, Land Management, and other technical services. Additionally, male Councillors also support gender equality initiatives.

Regarding senior management, 45% (8 out of 18) of Senior Managers are female, while 55% (10 out of 18) are male. Among the 1703 employees at the Council, 575 are women, accounting for 34%, while 1128 are men, making up 66% of the workforce. Although the gender distribution does not achieve a 50:50 balance, the Council adheres to its Recruitment and Selection Policy and Promotion Policy, ensuring it operates as an equal opportunity employer.



These policies explicitly consider gender dimensions during the processes of recruitment and promotion, aiming to promote inclusivity and diversity within the organization.

### **Gender Responsive Budgeting**

The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, collaborating with Gender Links, has developed a Gender Responsive Budgeting Statement which mandates all local authorities to incorporate gender considerations into their annual budget planning. The City of Mutare, in line with this directive, crafts its budget in accordance with national provisions, government budget guidelines, circulars, and Council policies.

To tackle gender equality issues effectively, the City of Mutare has established a Multi-Sectoral Stakeholder Group. This group includes representatives from Civil Society, Youth, Women's groups, Persons with Disabilities, the Education sector, Small and Medium Enterprises, Residents Associations, and the Informal Sector. This diverse assembly ensures that the budgetary discussions encompass the needs of various groups including women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, orphans, and other vulnerable populations, thereby integrating these concerns into the city's annual financial plan.

Furthermore, the City of Mutare has implemented policies focused on social inclusion, including the Pro Poor policy, which offers direction and guidelines for tackling issues related to indigence, with a special emphasis on women, who are often the most vulnerable group. The Council ensures that specific gender-related events and commemorations are budgeted for annually. These include junior council events, and the observance of international days like International Women's Day, Youth Day, National Health Week, Day of the African Child, Girl Child Day, and World Children's Day.

In 2024, the Council's Gender Specific Budget has seen an increase to 4.31% from 1.5% in 2023, reflecting a growing commitment to gender-focused initiatives. Programs related to men's health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and maternal health are also included in the Council's health services budget.

To prevent gender-specific programs from being seen as substitutes for broader gender mainstreaming, the City Council integrates gender considerations into the budgeting process of every program, ensuring that gender equality is not an afterthought but a fundamental aspect of all municipal activities.

### **Gender Management Systems**

To effectively support gender-specific programs and ensure gender mainstreaming across all Council initiatives, the Council has established a well-trained Gender Team made up of Gender Focal Persons from each department. Additionally, among the Councillors, one is appointed as a Gender Champion, tasked with advocating for gender mainstreaming in political and policy-making spheres. The Gender Focal Person (GFP) aids in budgeting for these gender-specific programs, while the gender team actively participates in gender audits.

The Council supports maternity leave and provides breastfeeding hours for lactating mothers. The Travel and Subsistence policy further accommodates traveling mothers by ensuring accommodation and food provisions for their babysitters, which is both budgeted for and implemented. Financial assistance in the form of loans is also available for employees nearing retirement. Equal remuneration for equal work is also practiced for both women and men within the Council.

To combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the Council collaborates with several local stakeholders, including Simukai, PACDEF, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, and



others. Together, every year a 16 Days of Activism campaign is organised against Gender-Based Violence, featuring an annual 16km march to raise awareness about GBV and show solidarity with survivors.

For support and empowerment of GBV survivors, the City of Mutare has established a one-stop centre. Here, survivors can access comprehensive assistance, including reporting mechanisms, legal follow-through, and psycho-social support.

## Women Empowerment

The Pro-Poor Policy aims to establish a framework for identifying and managing indigent households, including socio-economic analysis and an exit strategy. This policy assists the Council in implementing women empowerment programs. It has been collaborating with a number of organisations such as Gender Links, to empower women and girls through self-help and livelihood projects for example horticulture, specifically mushroom farming, to foster gender equality. Additionally, when allocating workspaces to micro, small, and medium enterprises, the Council applies paragraph 9 of the Informal Sector Policy to ensure gender balance.

In a bid to create employment opportunities for vulnerable women, particularly widows, the Council has engaged Ward-based Community Based Organisations, each consisting of at least 20 women, for street sweeping and other cleaning services.

Despite supportive legislation and policies at both national and local levels designed to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, cultural and religious traditions in Mutare significantly hinder their full implementation. A deeply entrenched patriarchal culture persists among citizens, leading to widespread discrimination and violence against women and girls. Even though legal and policy frameworks are acknowledged, in private settings, cultural and religious practices often take precedence, exacerbating gender disparities and increasing instances of Gender-Based Violence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gender data collection must be robust to achieve gender equality and empower women.
- Further financing is required to promote Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and GBV Prevention and Response.
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms for duty-bearers to ensure that they comply with Gender Equality and Women's Rights.





# CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

**S**ustainable Development Goal 6 concerns the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Water and sanitation are fundamental to the health, sustainability, and development of any municipality. Water and sanitation are vital for health, dignity, and economic development in cities. They prevent diseases, manage waste, and enhance living conditions, and support education and economy. Neglecting these services can cause health issues, environmental harm, and social inequality, emphasizing their importance for community resilience.

## INDICATORS

- 6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed water services.
- 6.2.1.a. Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

Through its collaboration with Vitens Evides International (VEI) via the Water Operator Partnerships (WOPs) in the WaterWorX program, Mutare City is gaining from a range of capacity-building initiatives and expertise in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). These include the implementation of GIS systems, tariff and hydraulic modeling for water and sewer services, and institutional reforms. Additionally, several Non-Governmental Organizations, including Mercy Corps and Care International, are involved, primarily through grant funding, focusing on hygiene improvements like installing hand-washing stations in public places such as markets, clinics, and schools. The city is actively developing proposals to expand these partnerships and collaborations, particularly with development agencies.

### Drinking Water

The City of Mutare currently provides drinking water that meets the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) Drinking Water Regulations, despite challenges from climate change such as extreme precipitation that can



periodically affect water quality. The city relies solely on Lake Alexander (Odzani) and the Pungwe Basin for its water, with the Odzani Water Treatment Plant producing an average of 112ML/day against a demand of 87ML/day, offering a per capita supply of 400L/c/day.

Efforts are underway to rehabilitate the Odzani Water Treatment Plant, which has a design capacity of 62ML/day, to meet the growing water demand. Approximately 50% of the city's water meters are non-functional, prompting the city to aim to replace 3,000 meters annually to rebuild trust and improve billing accuracy. Importantly, the computation of Non-Revenue Water (NRW) requires validation through actual measurements, and the District Metered Area (DMA) approach is being implemented, with a goal to construct 4 out of 26 DMAs in 2024.

The city council has embarked on a significant initiative in partnership with VEI to extend water supply services to Gimboki, an area where over 5,200 properties currently lack access to piped water. This collaborative effort is set to substantially enhance the quality of life for residents by providing them with clean and reliable water sources. Upon completion of this project, the city-wide coverage for portable water connections is expected to rise from the existing 82% to over 90%, thereby moving closer to the goal of universal access to clean water. This improvement not only addresses immediate health and sanitation concerns but also supports broader socio-economic development by ensuring that water, a fundamental resource, is more equitably distributed across the urban landscape.

The city is also planning for alternative water sources by 2030 and updating its water and wastewater Master-plan to align with the approved Land Use Master-plan. New trunk networks are necessary to support the growing population due to urbanization, as existing networks are overloaded.

Mutare faces several challenges including high pressure, significant water losses, leaks, and aging infrastructure. The city's objective is to enhance water coverage, protect drinking water sources, and ensure its quality into the future. However, the dependence on a single water source and treatment facility poses a significant risk; any disruption could quickly lead to a lack of water for essential uses like drinking, sanitation, and fire suppression.

Additionally, a major issue is the high percentage of water lost between the treatment plant and consumer taps, with water loss estimated at 65% in 2023. This loss is partly due to the lack of meters at key points, complicating accurate NRW quantification. Reducing leaks is critical not only for health reasons but also to mitigate the substantial revenue losses.

## Sanitation

By 2030, Mutare plans to overhaul approximately 200 kilometers of its sewerage system, specifically targeting infrastructure that exceeds 70 years in age. Currently, the city replaces about 2 kilometers of sewerage annually, with plans to ramp this up to 5 kilometers per year by 2030. Additionally, the city aims to recycle at least 20% of treated sewage for non-potable applications, supporting the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action). An indicator of the affordability of clean water and sanitation in Mutare is the sewerage charges, which are currently higher than the national average.

## Water & Waste Water Quality

The Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) oversees water quality standards, while the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) monitors wastewater quality within its jurisdiction. As of 2023, the City of Mutare coverage rate for sanitation is at 82% that is properties connected to piped sewer systems and septic tanks. The remaining 18% of residents live in areas where private developers have not yet completed infrastructure services



or in dysfunctional settlements. The city is committed to elevating service standards across all areas with sewer reticulation.

In partnership with VEI, the city is fully equipping both water and wastewater laboratories. A new water laboratory is planned and expected to be commissioned by 2025. Additionally, the major Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) plant is currently being rehabilitated to enhance treatment processes and minimize river pollution.

## EMERGING ISSUES

Among the significant emerging issues in Mutare are climate change and the adoption of new technologies for upgrading treatment plants. While the City is eager to incorporate these modern solutions into its strategy, the financial demands of keeping up with technological advancements significantly exceed the available investments and funding. The Land Use Masterplan was revised in 2023, introducing new challenges that strain the city's limited resources for infrastructure upgrades. Additionally, natural disasters like El Niño have impacted water resources, while illegal mining in the catchment areas poses a risk of introducing new contaminants that could be difficult to treat with the current plant designs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It's crucial to reinvest in the aging and deteriorating infrastructure to enhance Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services. Acknowledging the reality of climate change, it's imperative to implement mitigation and adaptation strategies, including the reuse and recycling of water for non-potable purposes. Suggested applications include watering stadia, school grounds, beautifying the city, and industrial uses. These measures would significantly aid in managing water demand and conserving the limited water resources available. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to invest more in reducing Non-revenue water, which includes not only the replacement of outdated or faulty meters but also the installation of new pressure reducing valves. These measures are crucial for minimizing water loss due to leaks and unauthorized consumption. By enhancing the accuracy of water usage measurement and controlling the pressure in the distribution system, the city can significantly improve water management efficiency, ensure a more equitable distribution of water resources, and ultimately decrease the financial burden on the local water utility, leading to sustainable water use practices.





# 11

# SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**S**ustainable Cities and Communities Sustainable Development Goal 11 concerns making cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Sustainable urban planning is very important to the City of Mutare. This is particularly relevant to housing supply and land management. Most aspects pertinent to SDG 11 are within the purview of the local authorities of the City Council. Cooperation with other actors, e.g. from Government, business, the housing sector, and private developers, is absolutely essential.

## INDICATORS

- Target 11.1** Ensure Everyone Have Access to Adequate, Safe and Affordable Housing
- Target 11.6.1** Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities
- Target 11.7** Provide Universal Access to Safe, Accessible and Inclusive Green and Public Spaces

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

Adequate housing that is secure and has dignity is a fundamental right for every citizen. The Constitution of Zimbabwe, in Section 28, identifies shelter as one of the national objectives and the City Council is mandated to provide safe, affordable and quality human settlements. The City Strategic Plan, has prioritized citizens access to affordable and quality settlements. Ensuring adequate, safe, and affordable housing for all residents is also a shared objective with the city, Government and the Private Sector. At least 2% of the +30,000 applicants on the waiting list were allocated land (stands) by various private developers in 2023.

### Upgrading of existing Rented Houses in Sakubva

The City Council currently has 3,755 rental apartments in its inventory, many of which are dilapidated, especially



Sakubva, which was built in 1925. Structural issues in council-rented properties have long been a significant concern for tenants. In response, the Council initiated a repair and maintenance program in 2023, successfully addressing 456 out of a planned 500 houses.

In addition to housing repairs, the City Council also focused on improving public amenities by rehabilitating public toilets mostly in Sakubva. In 2022 and 2023 Council renovated nine toilets, in Muchena, Sakubva.

A key strategy for urban improvement is the Sakubva Urban Renewal Project, which has been elevated to National Project Status. This project involves demolishing dilapidated structures and building high-rise apartments that will house up to 50,000 people upon completion. Alongside this, the Homeownership Program aims to transform 905 properties in Maonde, Mundembe, and Muchena, allowing current tenants to upgrade to homeownership.

Despite these initiatives, the challenge of providing affordable and quality housing in the city persists. The housing backlog is substantial, with approximately +30,000 applicants still on the Council waiting list, and an average of 1,000 new applicants joining annually. Factors such as land scarcity, a growing population, high construction costs, and fluctuating availability of housing finance continue to impede progress in housing development.

### **Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities**

The City is mandated to collect refuse every week from residential and industrial areas (depending on the volume of waste generated), and every day from commercial properties. In 2022 and 2023, the City Council invested heavily in the procurement of Refuse and Skip Trucks, procuring a total of 6 new compactors and refurbishing existing trucks. The city had 13 trucks as of 2023 as opposed to the optimal number of 11 trucks required by the city.

Due to the recapitalization of refuse trucks, in 2023, 4,405 loads of waste, averaging 21,584.5 tonnes, were gathered and transported to the dumpsite. This was an increase from 2022, when 3,781 loads, averaging 18,526.9 tonnes, were collected. The 2023 collection included 2,578 loads of domestic refuse and 1,261 loads from commercial and industrial sources throughout the city. Additionally, the skip truck serviced skip bins, resulting in 1,019 loads being delivered to the dumpsite during that year.

While the City Council has made commendable strides in ensuring that refuse collection occurs on schedule, providing a foundational level of cleanliness and hygiene for the city's residents, several critical challenges persist that undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of waste management practices. The primary disposal site currently in use is not engineered to modern standards, leading to several problems. Without proper lining, leachate containment systems, or gas management, there is a heightened risk of environmental contamination. Leachate, the liquid produced when water percolates through waste, can seep into groundwater, posing health risks. Additionally, the lack of proper gas collection systems means methane and other greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

Furthermore, while through support from UNDP, the City has constructed a recycling facility which is yet to be furnished with the requisite equipment, the recycling rate in the city remains dismally low, largely because of insufficient infrastructure and equipment to support recycling activities. There's a noticeable lack of recycling bins, collection points, and processing facilities. Beyond infrastructure, there's a significant gap in public education regarding the importance and methods of recycling. Without campaigns or incentives to encourage recycling, many residents opt for the convenience of general waste disposal.



## Provide Universal Access to Safe, Accessible and Inclusive Green and Public Spaces

City of Mutare is actively working towards ensuring universal access to safe, accessible, and inclusive green and public spaces. The City Council has recognized that most parks in the city have dilapidated and aged and in need of rehabilitation.

A prime example of the City's efforts to enhance access to green and public spaces is the revitalization of the Main Park and Aloe Garden. This 35.57-acre recreational park, established more than a century ago, requires updates and new amenities to meet the current demands. The rehabilitation project will incorporate soft and hard landscaping techniques that promote sustainable and smart practices, contributing to low-carbon initiatives. The park will develop into an urban oasis for exploration, adventure, and reconnecting with nature. Restoring the park's natural landscape, reviving the Aloe garden and waterholes, covering more ground with trees, and developing distinctive leisure areas are all part of the restoration.

A Children's Park will also be established in the Park's other phase. To gather ideas for the Children's Nature Park's designs, the City Junior Council launched a visual art (drawing and painting) competition for children of all ages. The Children's drawings will inform the final designs for the Park. By involving children directly in the design process, it will foster a sense of ownership and community pride in the park's development as well as an educational platform where children can learn about environmental stewardship, landscape design, and the importance of public spaces.

The City Council recognizes the importance of parks and recreation, as well as the necessity of building additional parks in residential areas while renovating the existing ones. Many parks in old suburbs, such as Sakubva, have deteriorated and are not functional, while recreation centers have yet to be built in new suburbs. In addition to many other advantages, Parks and Recreation Centers contribute significantly to the promotion of Community Wellness and Health, Artistic and Cultural Initiatives, Economic Advantages, Urban Greening, Connection Areas, and Child-friendly Play Areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Importantly key efforts are being put in place by the City Council to address the shortage of land for housing development. The City Master Plan has been approved by the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and will see the City area increasing from 16,700 hectares to 31,600 hectares.
- Invest more in rehabilitating Recreational centers and constructing new ones in new suburbs.
- Conduct feasibility studies on designing disposal sites suitable for the City Council.
- Educate the public on recycling and invest more in recycling infrastructure and equipment.





# 15

## LIFE ON LAND



**S**ustainable Development Goal 15 is to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss. City of Mutare is greatly impacted by human activities and the encroachment of nature, just like any other city. Densification, prolonged periods of high population growth, and widespread use of green spaces all have a significant negative influence that can deteriorate ecosystem services and biodiversity.

### INDICATORS

**15.2.1** Progress towards sustainable forest management

**15.4.1** Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

City of Mutare has launched a number of programs to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation. The benefits that trees provide can help cities and countries meet 15 of the 17 internationally supported United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Trees promote health and social well-being by removing air pollution, reducing stress, encouraging physical activity, and promoting social ties and community.

Reforestation stands as a remarkable solution to multiple environmental challenges. As we witness the impact of deforestation on the environment, it becomes imperative to prioritize reforestation efforts.

The City has embarked on an ambitious green initiative through a series of strategic programs aimed at significantly enhancing its urban forest cover. The City Council has committed to planting no fewer than 5,000 trees annually. This initiative is not just about numbers but also about ensuring the right species are planted in appropriate locations to maximize environmental benefits like air purification, shade provision, and ecosystem development.



The city has launched programs specifically targeting schools and institutions, recognizing the educational and community benefits of tree planting. Through these initiatives, the City Nursery supplies saplings and provides guidance on tree care, turning students and staff into stewards of their environment. This fosters a culture of environmental consciousness from a young age, teaching the importance of green spaces in urban settings. Beyond academia, the city extends its tree donation program to various other sectors including hospitals, Government offices, and private businesses. This broad approach ensures that green spaces are not just a privilege but a norm across different aspects of city life.

A pivotal part of the City's strategy involves updating its Housing Policy in 2020 to mandate tree planting on private properties. Property owners are now required to plant a certain number of trees based on the size of their land or the number of units in residential complexes.

## CHALLENGES

Despite the notable achievements mentioned earlier, the city of Mutare is grappling with significant environmental challenges. Deforestation, along with illegal cultivation along stream banks and other unauthorized agricultural practices, has become rampant. This environmental degradation is starkly evident in Mutare's mountains such as Murahwa, Dangamvura and Christmas Pass, which have transitioned from lush, green forests to a stark, barren landscape. The pollution of rivers e.g. Sakubva River further underscores the city's ecological decline.

Mutare's rapid urban expansion adds to these issues by increasing the amount of impervious surface area each year, primarily due to new constructions and road developments. This expansion directly contributes to the loss of trees, exacerbating the problem of deforestation. The increase in illegal agricultural activities has also leads to significant water runoff during rains, which has resulted in frequent and severe flooding in recent years. Suburbs such as ZIMTA, Chikanga, and Dangamvura have been particularly hard-hit by these floods.

Moreover, Mutare's geographical vulnerability is heightened by its proximity to Mozambique, making it susceptible to cyclones. In recent times, events like Cyclone Idai have devastated the area, causing widespread damage to infrastructure and further complicating the City's environmental and social recovery efforts. The combination of natural disasters and human-induced environmental degradation leaves Mutare in a precarious position, continually facing the threats of both ecological damage and climate-related disasters.

## EMERGING ISSUES

Climate change continues to pose a significant threat to ecosystems and biodiversity. Changing temperature patterns, extreme weather events, and altered precipitation levels can disrupt ecosystems and contribute to the decline of certain species. This includes the potential shift or loss of habitats, affecting the balance of ecosystems. Agriculture is a significant driver of deforestation and land degradation. The promotion and adoption of sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices are emerging as crucial aspects of SDG 15, ensuring food security while minimizing environmental impact.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- An in-depth study is necessary to identify suitable tree species considering the local climate, soil type, and existing biodiversity. This would ensure that the trees not only survive but also enhance the urban ecosystem positively.
- There is need for the City Council to implement stricter regulations on land use, enhance reforestation efforts, and develop more robust flood management systems.
- Additionally, fostering community awareness and participation in environmental conservation could help in the long-term sustainability of Mutare's natural landscape.
- Embracing Technology in Reforestation and Environmental Management. For example, Drones can be equipped with seed pods for precise planting in hard-to-reach areas, reducing human labor and ensuring seeds are planted in optimal conditions.
- Infusing Food Security and Livelihood Programs into Environmental Management.
- Work with Governments and NGOs to ensure that reforestation and sustainable agriculture are part of broader food security and poverty alleviation strategies.
- Work with or collaborate with the private sector on environment management.





# 16

# PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



This Sustainable Development Goal concerns frameworks and conditions for a safe and stable society. The goal is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The relevant targets for the City of Mutare are combating corruption, to improve citizen engagement and participation on civic affairs, and to ensure accountable and transparent institutions.

## INDICATORS

- 16.5** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.6** Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

### Building Strong Institutions through Digital Transformation case of City of Mutare

Expectations around delivering efficient and effective service delivery models are shifting, with greater emphasis being placed on accountable and transparent institutions at all levels and it is becoming more essential than ever for local government to embrace digital transformation to meet the changing needs of citizenry, businesses, community stakeholders, and employees.

In the face of growing public demand for services, and given the magnitude of the urban production processes, certain sectors and services such as the development of infrastructure, access to urban land, handling of funds and contracts over public services are in the risk to be exposed to corruption, misappropriation and, even worse on terms of impact in the citizen: inefficiency and mismanagement, producing a tangible effect on the quality of services, eroding public trust in the accountability and legitimacy of the local government.



In the post COVID-19 it has thus become paramount for local government to adopt innovative measures to improve transparency and accountability in the provision of basic services. To strengthen its institutional and governance structure and systems the City of Mutare partnered with Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), Harare Institute of Technology (HIT) and the Zimbabwe Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, to harness digital tools and processes via implementation of the Local Authorities Digital System (LADS).

LADS a home-grown solution includes an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System and an Integrated Financial Management Information System that digitally connect local authorities for improved procurement, project management, risk management, compliance, financial performance, control expenditure, budgeting and financial reporting.

The City of Mutare has shown substantial advancement in employing Local Authority Digital Systems (LADS) for its day-to-day processes. The city currently operates several LADS modules, including debt management, payment plans, procurement, budgeting, and Bulk SMS for broadcasting statements. These modules have significantly boosted revenue collection from 33% in 2019 to around 67% by 2023. This increase in revenue has enabled the city to clear salary arrears, meet statutory obligations, and restart service delivery initiatives for example water provision and waste management.

In the realm of housing, the City's Housing Department utilizes modules such as Waiting List, Lease Management, Cemetery, and Registry. The adoption of these digital tools has transformed the housing delivery system by digitizing records, simplifying procedures, minimizing paperwork, and automating land allocation. This shift to digital has also curbed corruption in land management and expedited the handling of customer inquiries and complaints.

Furthermore, the integration of social media and mobile technologies, like the Mutare City Chat-bot on WhatsApp, has opened new avenues for online interaction. This includes budget consultations, feedback on council performance, and reporting citizen complaints, fostering greater public engagement, transparency, and democratic participation. These technologies have changed the dynamic from citizens being mere recipients of services to active participants and co-creators in municipal governance.

The LADS system also serves as an effective data collection and analysis tool. With capabilities in big data and AI analytics, it has enhanced decision-making and planning for the city. Modules like Tariff-modelling help in accurately calculating service costs, leading to appropriate tariff settings. Additionally, modules for stores management have improved resource management, reducing wastage and directing savings towards essential service areas.

The City of Mutare is leveraging Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to enhance transparency by cleaning its billing database and revitalizing long-lost infrastructure maps. This initiative not only aims to rectify discrepancies in billing but also to map out all council infrastructure comprehensively. The future plan involves making all this data available online, ensuring that every piece of infrastructure is accurately represented and updated, which will lead to more precise billing and improved municipal service delivery.

To further this engagement, the City Council has introduced various platforms for public interaction. These include social media, online tools like the chatbots and an official website, as well as traditional ward-based feedback and consultative meetings. These channels have significantly improved interaction between the Council and stakeholders, fostering trust within the community.



## Citizen Engagement and Participation

City of Mutare also established a Multi-Stakeholder Group that is comprised of key and relevant sectors to ensure that all stakeholders are properly consulted when conducting Council business. The Platform ensures effective public participation in planning and decision making as well as responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. It is also a platform for stakeholders to get informed feedback which reduces incidences of speculation which usually leads to mistrust.

Previously, there was a significant level of distrust among clients, stakeholders, and the Council in Mutare, evidenced by challenges such as reluctance to pay for services, with revenue collection efficiency at only about 33% in 2019. There was also resistance to engaging in key Council activities like Strategic Planning and Budgeting, which often led to legal disputes over budget approvals both before and after they were ratified by the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. However, recent years have seen notable improvements. By 2023, revenue collection efficiency increased to approximately 67%, thanks to initiatives like the Multi-stakeholder group and a push towards digitization among other strategies implemented by the City Council.

Further enhancing transparency and accountability, the City of Mutare established a Clients Charter, which details service standards for reference by the Council, its partners, and for evaluation by stakeholders and beneficiaries. An annual Client Satisfaction Survey, supported by GIZ and UMRRAT (United Mutare Residents and Rate Payers Trust), measures the city's performance. In 2023, this survey indicated a client satisfaction level of 54%, assessed by an independent consultant.

Despite the implementation of various engagement strategies such as ward-based consultation meetings, the deployment of Chatbots for interactive communication, and the distribution of surveys, the level of public participation in budget consultation processes remains disappointingly low. These mechanisms were introduced with the aim of making civic engagement more accessible and inclusive, allowing residents to voice their opinions on how municipal funds should be allocated. However, the turnout and response rates have not met expectations, suggesting underlying issues such as a lack of awareness, distrust in the process, or perceived inefficacy of public input in actual decision-making. This persistent low engagement underscores the need for more effective outreach, education on the importance of participation, and perhaps a reevaluation of how feedback is integrated into budget planning to enhance trust and encourage greater community involvement.

## Corruption Measures

Council, in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) has managed to set up an Integrity Committee whose cross functional role is to administer and oversee Council's ethics and compliance matters including assessing its ethical culture (including its Code of Conduct) ensuring that the highest ethical standards are followed, monitoring transactions or activities which could be in breach of the Council's Code or other applicable legal compliance requirements, receiving, reviewing and, where applicable, coordinating the investigation of anonymous reports or other complaints/concerns received via the Council's established whistle blower channels as well as providing support to help employees resolve ethical dilemmas and comply with the Council's Code and applicable laws. The Committee has come up with a number of policies which seek to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.



Council has also partnered with VEI under the WaterworX programme and with regards to strengthening internal systems, Council has managed to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all key service delivery processes such as Water Connections, Meter Reading and Billing among others. VEI is also co-funding the establishment of a call centre for the City of Mutare. The call centre is expected to reduce in-house communication costs, improve customer satisfaction and experience and provide vital information to and for residents.

Despite significant efforts to combat corruption in the City Council through oversight committees in this case the Integrity Committee, transparency initiatives, and adoption of anti-corruption related policies, these measures have not fully eradicated corrupt practices. The ongoing issue points to deeper systemic problems such as entrenched influence networks, weak law enforcement, and a culture that may have historically condoned corruption. To effectively eliminate corruption, more comprehensive strategies are needed, including digital monitoring of council operations, increased investigations, public education on corruption's effects, and collaboration for sharing best practices and support. These approaches would focus on both punishing corruption and preventing it through systemic and cultural changes promoting accountability and integrity.

## EMERGING ISSUES

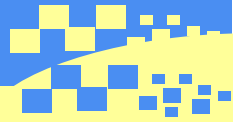
The rapid pace of technological advancement presents a significant opportunity to both enhance citizen participation and eliminate corruption within local government. By leveraging tools, AI for real-time data analysis, and digital platforms for broader community engagement, the City Council can foster an environment where citizens are not only informed but actively involved in governance processes. These technologies can streamline reporting mechanisms, making it easier to monitor and curb corrupt practices while simultaneously empowering citizens with platforms to voice their opinions, and hold officials accountable, thereby promoting a culture of transparency and integrity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a call center to provide a centralized communication channel for citizens to report issues, requests, request services and access information.
- To fight corruption effectively, oversight, accountability, transparency, and integrity promotion must be enhanced. This includes establishing legal frameworks and independent agencies and using technology for monitoring and reporting.
- To provide additional training to improve the effectiveness of the Integrity Committees.
- To further enhance the multi-stakeholder group, by broaden its composition through inclusion of additional marginalized communities and increase its capacity. This will amplify citizen voice in decision-making processes, ensuring a more inclusive and representative platform for dialogue and action.



# CONCLUSION



This VLR provides a comprehensive examination of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation within Mutare, analyzing both qualitative aspects (activities promoting sustainability) and quantitative measures (indicator analysis). It showcases the significant contributions of the City Council towards realizing the 2030 Agenda at a local level, adopting a holistic approach to sustainability. This review demonstrates how the global objectives of the 2030 Agenda can be adapted locally in both qualitative and quantitative dimensions to advance the SDGs.

This document marks the first VLR and the inaugural Sustainable Development Report for Mutare. It serves as a foundational step towards institutionalizing and mainstreaming sustainability reporting for future years, viewing reporting as an ongoing process that builds upon previous achievements. Apart from focusing on SDGs 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 15, and 16, Mutare is also engaged in activities that support the other SDGs.

The report fulfills three primary functions:

1. **Reflection on Progress:** It allows for a review of the progress towards sustainable development, presenting central activities such as strategies, projects, policy decisions, specific objectives, partnerships, and organizational structures. Indicators make these developments concrete, aiding in the identification of necessary actions.
2. **Communication and Transparency:** The report communicates the current state of sustainability in Mutare to policymakers and stakeholders, enhancing transparency and public engagement with the sustainability agenda.
3. **Steering Sustainability Management:** As an integral part of the local sustainability management cycle, reporting helps in evaluating the achievement of set objectives, initiating corrective actions where goals are unmet, and setting new priorities to enhance future action plans.

This VLR not only reflects on past and present efforts but also guides future planning and policy-making in Mutare, aiming for continuous improvement in sustainable development practices.

This Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a component of the expanding global VLR initiative, highlighting the pivotal role the City Council can have in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. Local efforts have been identified across all addressed SDGs, contributing to some of the 169 targets. This aligns with the widely accepted view that at least 65% of these targets will only be realized with active municipal involvement in both implementation and monitoring (as discussed in the Introduction). The VLR report significantly complements national and regional reports submitted to the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development by providing insights from practical local experiences. For the effective execution of the 2030 Agenda, integration across different governance levels— international, national, regional, and local—is essential.

Consequently, the City of Mutare is committed to continuing its journey towards enhanced sustainability. Central to these efforts is the application of the report's recommendations, as well as those outlined in the City's strategic plan and the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1).

