

## HEALTHY LIVESTOCK PROMOTES THE HEALTH OF THEIR KEEPERS

In 2014 the Human and Social Development (HSD) programme of the HSRC conducted a pilot study that addressed the human and social dimensions of rural livestock farming systems and the relationship to household food security, socioeconomic development and improved livestock health in rural developing farmer households.

The pilot study found that the percentage of cattle farming was high (95%) and contributes to keeping the wolf from the door (also read article 'Conversation on policies: healthy livestock act as security against hunger').

The study was conducted in two small-scale livestock farming communities along the Mpumalanga-Limpopo and was aimed at providing a preliminary picture of small-scale livestock farming communities.

The findings from the pilot study will be used to draw links between the social and socioeconomic

dimensions of farmers' lives and their animal health practices and to upscale the project to four more provinces - the Eastern Cape, Free State, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Mpumalanga - over the next three years.

Leading up to this HSD has engaged in a series of policy dialogues.

The intention with the policy dialogues was to create a forum where relevant stakeholders, including government, researchers, animal health practitioners and farmers, could explore ways of integrating learning into delivery systems and contribute to the implementation of the National Research and Development Strategy and the new 10-Year Innovation Plan.

The first policy dialogue, which took place on 11 May 2015, addressed the topic, 'Primary animal healthcare in the context of disease prevention and scaling-up for small-scale farmer communities: research, policy and delivery'. Discussions focused on

policy interventions for the livestock sector, especially in rural areas. Challenges in primary animal health care and particularly challenges with the provision of state veterinary services in South Africa were also examined.

The second policy dialogue examined the topic 'New generation vaccines and animal health in Africa: research, policy and delivery'. Discussions concentrated on the acceptance and trust of vaccines by farmers and livestock keepers, the role and capacity of the state in vaccination programmes, the social acceptability of new generation vaccines, and the relationships between vaccine manufacturers and the communities they seek to reach.

Participants at both dialogues included animal health specialists, senior government officers, researchers, funders and representatives of various veterinary associations.



## A generation apart? Youth attitudes towards social inequality

*Prof. Sharlene Swartz, acting executive director of the Human and Social Development research programme at the HSRC with children from the Ogwini Technical Comprehensive High School in Umlazi*

Despite depressing poverty, unemployment, corruption and greed that besets their societies, young people who participated in a recent roundtable to discuss youth attitudes towards social inequality, exuded a sense of inspiration, hope and responsibility. **Alude Mahali** and **Ben Roberts** provide an overview of the event at the World Social Science Forum 2015.

The roundtable, supported by the Department of Science and Technology and organised by the HSRC, included five high-school learners from Ogwini Technical Comprehensive High School in Umlazi, six current students/recent graduates of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and six young scientists from two HSRC research programmes.

The 17 panellists were presented with six guiding questions to which they were required to answer three. Questions addressed expectations, agency, governance, civil society, community, individual imaginings and ideas for the future; all under the umbrella of inequality in South Africa.

As spectators entered the room, the youthful atmosphere was energised with Kwaito music blaring from the speakers and pop music videos projected onto the screen, while an exhibition of art by learners from Ogwini High School was on display.

After the introduction of the speakers sitting in a semi-circle, gifted poet and UKZN student Sanam Sitaram, welcomed the audience by reciting a poem written specially for the gathering. Sanam's refrain 'Have dreams they said when we were children' set the tone for the posing of the first round of questioning.

### Global hopes and fears

What makes you worried about where we are in the world at the moment?

What brings you hope about where we are in the world at the moment?

In this discussion poverty arose as a major concern, including what Zibuyile described as 'poverty of the mind', is the moral bankruptcy, corruption and greed in society that is as damaging as economic poverty.

Youth unemployment was commonly mentioned, as were problems with the structuring of the labour market, such as the failure to acknowledge experience, and the increasing importance of social capital and networks in getting ahead. A perceived over-emphasis on the quantity of jobs created, instead of employment quality, was also expressed.

Other notable concerns included the continuing fight against HIV/AIDS among young people despite the availability of information. And they mentioned domestic violence, child abuse and reservations about the efficacy of campaigns to address these societal challenges. Basic needs featured prominently, including access to water, sanitation, food security, health care, together with the poor implementation of existing policies.

'Poverty of the mind' is the moral bankruptcy, corruption and greed in society is as damaging as economic poverty



On a more optimistic note, Steven Gordon (HSRC) credited participant for articulating their views and attempts to hold elected officials and political parties accountable, while Hangwelani Magidimisha (HSRC) identified the youth panel as an example of a hopeful happening.

Another participant drew attention to the advancement of women in different professional spheres. Overall, these questions provided the young people with the opportunity to voice their anxieties and doubts about some issues affecting the country, as well as their aspirations. Sanam’s poem echoes this state of unease:

What happened to humanity?  
Did god stop caring  
Or did we stop creating  
Instead of stopping the hate and the raping of  
innocence  
Scraping by with just enough to curb the hunger  
pangs with a few cigarettes  
Which at one point in American history used to be  
called torches of Freedom  
But when did we start lighting cigarettes and stop  
lighting the way?  
Or was it always that way?

But when god raised our cells from the ocean  
Each nucleus, a universe of rhythm  
Echoing the cycles of storms, she said  
You are too beautiful to be painted in one shade so  
I will craft a kaleidoscope  
And we thanked her for her gifts  
And forgot  
Dividing ourselves amongst ourselves between  
Races, and nations and classes and genders  
And patriarchal capitalist agendas  
Have dreams they said  
When we were children

‘But when did we start lighting cigarettes and stop lighting the way? Or was it always that way?’

**Poverty and inequality: personal impact and perceived responsibility**  
How does poverty and inequality - the huge gaps between rich and poor - affect you directly?  
Who is responsible (or to blame) for the fact that these differences and problems exist?  
How is answering this question about blame or responsibility helpful (or not?)

A second core theme of the roundtable discussion was the direct impact of poverty and inequality on young South Africans and perceptions regarding assigning blame for these

phenomena.  
For the Umlazi learners, disparities in living conditions within the township arose as a key issue; wealthier areas that resemble ‘suburbs’ are placed alongside informal settlements that do not have running water and proper sanitation.

Learners raised the matter of the misappropriation of government funds, which they felt should be used to improve community infrastructure such clinics, schools, libraries. Learners in township schools want to pursue technical degrees but are frustrated by a lack of school-based resources for scientific experiments and access to computers. These shortcomings contribute to a lack of confidence, feelings of inferiority and perpetuate educational inequality.

Then some township children are attending former Model C and private schools, which is a temporary solution to a persistent problem. The matter of other vocational possibilities was presented, i.e. young people in the township who may be talented in areas such as sports, arts or music, do not have access to soccer fields, tennis courts, ballet classes and musical instruments. A learner highlighted in-fighting among Africans and another participant added that lack of tolerance and acceptance contributed to the spread of xenophobia and homophobia.

Some township children are attending former Model C and private schools, which is a temporary solution to a persistent problem.

A UKZN graduate mentioned the burden of ‘black tax’, where young people have to take on the financial care of extended family members immediately after graduation. While this highlights the economic divisions among racial lines, young scientist Kombi Sausi (HSRC) believes individuals should accept responsibility for their communities and called for active citizenship while highlighting UKZN student Philisiwe Cengo’s NPO startup, Change SA, as a positive example.

**Generation of change?**  
What in your opinion should your generation be doing to fix what has been broken?  
How are you planning to be part of achieving this vision? What needs to change in what you are currently learning/studying/work to help you to reach the vision/aims you have described?

The notion of creating and supporting community and educational initiatives was the common theme in response to questions regarding actions that young South Africans can take to achieve change. Learners from the Ogwini

Technical Comprehensive High School called on their generation to participate more in community-based initiatives including community gardens, community clean-up programmes and recycling, such as Soul Buddyz and Junior Rangers. Another learner called for innovation among her generation and said young people should not be driven by fear and limitations. There was also a consensual call for young people to shift their mind-set and attitudes and participate in discussions about social issues; in effect, ‘decolonise the mind’.

The burden of ‘black tax’, where young people have to take on the financial care of extended family members immediately after graduation

Saffiya raised the critical point that people need to grapple more with the reality of the apartheid ideologies South Africans have inherited that will not be shed easily. This view was echoed by Sanam, who remarked that the forum made her middle-class privilege glaring and caused her to reflect. Another participant mentioned the Soweto student uprising of June 1976 as an example of the power of young people rallying together behind a common cause.

**Concluding reflections**  
Finally, there was an opportunity to hear from the audience. One spectator compared the resource constraints that the Umlazi learners face with the educational barriers that she faced growing up during apartheid. A delegate from Mexico drew attention to the similarities between South African and Mexican youth, and expressed her sense of the hopeful energy among this generation. Other reflections included discussion of the potential for social transformation embodied by the young panel, as well as the sense of hope, innocence and sincerity voiced by the participants.



A drawing by a budding artist from the Ogwini Technical Comprehensive High School in Umlazi

The overall sentiment from the panel and attendees was a sense of inspiration, hope and responsibility going forward. This was conveyed by Sanam in the following extract from her concluding impromptu poem:

We seek to find  
We journey to destinations  
But it is through journeys that we find what we seek  
And we learn to live what we speak  
You and I, we are a work in progress  
We are not the end. ■

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Roundtable Participants		
Ogwini Technical Comprehensive High School	UKZN students	HSRC young scientists
1. Zonke Ntombela	1. Ayanda Ngubane	1. Saffiya Goga
2. Mhleli Khomo	2. Liberty Mamba	2. Kombi Sausi
3. Thandiwe Nyawose	3. Philisiwe Cengo	3. Steven Gordon
4. Thulani Mthembu	4. Sanele Madlala	4. Hangwelani Magidimisha
5. Yenziwe Zungu	5. Ntombikayise Mabaso	5. Bongiwwe Mncwango
	6. Zibuyile Nene	6. Jakes Dipholo