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GROWING RACIAL  
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# Patience and determination required to delivery services to all

It is now 18 years since the end of apartheid ushered in the new era and with it, the hope of a better life especially for the poor majority. The expectations from a new democratic country were high; realising the pent-up frustrations associated with the apartheid policies of legally enforced segregation on the basis of race, job reservation, and abject poverty.

The first post-apartheid President of the Republic of South Africa, in opening the 1995 session of parliament, appealed to the public to be patient because the government did not have adequate financial resources to address all the needs of the impoverished. He also reminded those who wanted to strike that this would only destabilise the country.

The message fell on deaf ears, judging by the 1995 nurses' strike for better pay soon after, which paralysed the health care system, prompting the government of the day to call in the defence force to provide services to hospital patients in order to save lives. Countless strikes continue to this day.

Since 1994, the government has initiated major restructuring, introducing the Reconstruction and Development Programme with a focus on meeting basic needs such as housing, water, electricity, education, health, transport, jobs; building the economy; developing human resources that were neglected during the apartheid era; and democratising the state and society.

Many changes have taken place since 1994. Four administrations have managed this country, ensuring houses were built, clinics were erected where none existed before, social grants were provided to cushion the poor against hunger; electricity was installed, piped water and to a lesser extent sanitation was made available. But this cannot be enough given the backlog, which is to be balanced against the available financial and human resources.

In this issue of the HSRC Review, the authors report on the findings of a repeat national cross-sectional study of public perceptions of the government's delivery on social services and have found interesting results, some of them contradicting the popular view that government has failed and in some cases confirming those concerns.



In a nutshell, the authors conclude that the public is reasonably satisfied with the government's performance on social grants, education, electricity, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS (60% or above), but in other areas the performance is considered dismal, notably housing and job creation. Most of the reported perceptions have remained stable, but in some instances, for instance in the areas of HIV/AIDS and crime, changes were positive and significant.

Progress is lacking in two areas, namely housing and job creation, both difficult to achieve. It is unlikely that government will ever provide enough housing for all, even with the best intentions. To own a house one needs income to pay for rates, electricity and maintenance. Without a job, it is unlikely that the poor can maintain the RDP houses. With the economy of Europe still in a slump, the prospect of job creation is minimal. What we need are entrepreneurs who don't stand in unemployment lines, but create jobs for themselves and others by producing goods for sale on the African continent, where economic growth is happening.

Public perceptions are important in gauging public levels of dissatisfaction with the government. Some may argue that public perceptions may not reflect reality, as reported in the authors' finding that 'discontent with service delivery has not yet translated into clearly discernible patterns of political action'.

But for how long will South Africans who have not yet tasted the fruits of freedom wait for change? As long as the government continues to make progress, the public may maintain their patience. For this to happen there needs to be a sense of urgency to deliver good quality services to all and reduce the disparities in access to resources. Corruption also has to be rooted out in the public and private sector; in this way more financial resources will be available for further improvement of the lives of many who are left behind.

Dr Olive Shisana

# New@HSRC



**Dr Rushil Ranchod** has joined the Education and Skills Development programme as a post-doctoral fellow. He holds an MA in International Political Economy from Newcastle University (UK), an MPhil in African Studies from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and a PhD in Geography from Durham University in the United Kingdom. Before

joining the HSRC in July 2012 he has worked as a guest lecturer and researcher at UCT and as an academic tutor and researcher at Durham University.



**Dr Jaya Josie**, a senior research manager in the Economic Performance and Development research programme, obtained a PhD in Public Finance and Administration at the University of the Western Cape. Before joining the HSRC he was a researcher and part-time lecturer at the School of Government, University of the Western Cape and also served as a commissioner of the Financial & Fiscal Commission (FFC) and as a director of

Development Economic Services at Ernst & Young, SA.

## Monitoring ill health and death among pregnant women and infants

A new project, due to start soon, aims to strengthen the existing surveillance system and strategies for monitoring maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

South Africa is one of the countries with unacceptably high maternal and child mortality rates despite highly acclaimed health policies and programmes. An estimated 1 600 to 3 700 women and girls die every year and 32 000 to 111 000 women and girls become disabled due to pregnancy related complications.

Children under the age of five years constitute about 33% of deaths that occur in South Africa with 44% of these being infant deaths. Evidence shows that there are gaps in the current maternal and child mortality surveillance system and that the data it yields is frequently inaccurate.

An improved surveillance system will estimate the maternal-mortality ratio on a yearly basis from an enhanced death notification system; data capturing from the birth notification system that includes factors associated with birth outcomes will be improved; birth and death notification data files will be linked to estimate infant and neonatal mortality rates annually; and birth files will be linked with deaths of women of reproductive age to identify deaths occurring during the 12 months after a live birth.

The improved surveillance system will also capture maternal deaths due to non-pregnancy related causes in pregnant women.

After an extensive information-gathering process by the research team, the project will be piloted in selected areas to determine its relevance and validity in strengthening the surveillance system. Inadequacies in the system will be identified and corrected and the revised system will be implemented.

## The role of civil society in healthcare access

Civil society organisations have contributed to public health for centuries, but in recent years their role has become more prominent and their influence has had a profound impact on health policy and issues. A new study will examine the strategies employed by civil society organisations involved in HIV/AIDS advocacy and compare these with strategies used by organisations dealing with advocacy on non-communicable diseases.

The study aims to examine the political and social context of healthcare provision in South Africa; explore the strategies used by HIV/AIDS civil society organisations in advocating for access to treatment and other services; explore the strategies used by civil society organisations representing non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes in advocating for access to treatment and other services. Other aims include comparing the effectiveness of the strategies of the different civil society organisations in ensuring access to healthcare.

This project is currently in the implementation phase and will be completed in June 2013.

# Youth alternative development project

A group of interns at the HSRC is embarking on a highly innovative short project that seeks to tackle an old problem in a new way. The objective of this project is to give a group of young unemployed graduates an opportunity to formulate an alternative model of development that would generate inclusive economic growth without hurting the environment.

A major outcome of the study, entitled the Youth Driven Development project, or HSRC YDD, is to come up with suggestions for employment opportunities that are inclusive and recognise the problem of high youth unemployment. The resulting model will reflect the aspirations and hopes of the young generation and will form part of an alternative development agenda to be considered by policy makers in the South.

The main activities of the research project include conducting research as a team

with other young people; undertaking research that gives rise to a youth driven development model; establishing a platform where other young people can contribute to the development of such a model; and generating new concepts of development.

The project will take seven months to complete. The researchers originally targeted 100 young people to participate in the Facebook discussions and by the end of August 152 participants had joined in the discussion.

The members of the team, led by chief researcher Steward Ngandu, are junior researchers Lizzy Mabotja, Hlokoma Mangqalaza, Molemo Ramphalile and Fezile Mdluli.

The team invited young readers to join their Facebook group to participate in discussions by commenting on the topics to be covered



*Social media research – the YDD team from left, Fezile Mdluli, Molemo Ramphalile, Hlokoma Mangqalaza and Lizzy Mabotja*

during the course of the research project, post their views, pose questions and suggest possible solutions to the challenges currently facing South African youth.



[www.facebook.com/groups/hsrcydd/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/hsrcydd/)

## The Policy > Action Network adds children policies to its range

The Policy Action Network is broadening its scope by adding PAN: Children, an initiative in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD) in the Presidency.

The website [www.pan.org.za](http://www.pan.org.za) was established by the HSRC as a network to support the policy community by sourcing information on social policy with the aim of contributing to greater participation in policy processes. Now PAN: Children, which was launched on 31 August 2012, consists of an online platform to be complemented by dialogue and capacity-building activities which will provide a policy-oriented knowledge hub on child rights in South Africa.

The knowledge hub aims to help reduce disparities in child rights and well-being by

providing high quality, timely information to support policy and practice in relation to children and youth. Importantly, it will strengthen the dialogue between suppliers and users of child-related evidence in order to bridge the gap between the information needs of policy and decision makers in South Africa and evidence offered by research and evaluation bodies.

PAN: Children aims to

- bring together the best available knowledge on the situation of children in South Africa, with a particular emphasis on the drivers and determinants of inequities in the realisation of child rights;
- provide practical understanding and advice on designing, implementing and evaluating policies and programme interventions to address child poverty, inequities and



systemic bottlenecks by drawing on national and international good practices and lessons learned; and

- improve linkages between researchers and policy makers and planners and to improve the capacity of both researchers and policy makers to engage with each other on issues around child rights

PAN: Children contributes to both HSRC and UNICEF's positioning in a broad societal role and aims to become a premier dissemination and knowledge-sharing platform providing a unique service and functioning as a gateway to publications from similar organisations.

For more information, visit



[www.children.pan.org.za](http://www.children.pan.org.za)

Community libraries have a vital role to play in the battle against illiteracy, alliteracy and social exclusion

*The opening of a new library in a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal.*  
©John Robinson – Africa Media Online



# COMMUNITY LIBRARIES tackle inequalities in South Africa

Community libraries can play an important role in tackling inequalities in South Africa by making a wide range of amenities accessible to the financially challenged. *Nampombe Mnkeni-Saurombe and Nomusa Zimu* analyse the achievements and challenges of the Department of Arts and Culture's (DAC) conditional grant community library project.

Community libraries are internationally recognised as social institutions that can effect social and economic transformation in society. In South Africa, this is clearly recognised by the government's provision of a conditional grant for the development of community libraries in the country.

The aim of this project, started by DAC in 2007 and which will continue until 2013, is to develop informed citizens who are able to participate in the global information and knowledge economy. DAC plans to achieve this aim by transforming urban and rural community library infrastructures, facilities and services with special emphasis on previously disadvantaged communities.

We conducted a literature review on issues pertaining to community libraries and their role in the fight against inequalities in society and analysed minutes from meetings on reports from provincial and national DAC offices – in this instance meetings of the conditional grant community libraries project held in Parliament in April 2010 and May 2011 (available online on Parliament's website).

## Successes

Minutes from parliamentary meetings indicate that, to date, 25 new community libraries have been built and 116 community libraries upgraded through the project. The upgrading included providing facilities for the visually impaired, boosting collections to reflect diversity in South Africa, hiring and training staff, as well as upgrading or installing information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure.

## Challenges and opportunities

*Illiteracy and alliteracy* (a lack of interest in reading and using available resources) are major challenges in our society. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations' 2009/10 education report, about 2.9 million people over the age of 15 in South Africa were unable to read and write.

*Social exclusion* is not only financial poverty but can be described as an environment where people or areas face a combination of problems such as unemployment, poor skills, discrimination, low incomes, poor housing, a high crime rate and family breakdown.

*Information and communication technologies (ICT)* and the digital divide are synonymous. Lack of connectivity prevents people, especially in rural areas, from utilising ICTs for work, educational and other purposes. In 2007, only 6% of people had access to the internet from home.

## Conclusion and recommendations

Community libraries have a very significant role to play in these situations. To measure the effect of the project and whether it succeeded in fostering social inclusion in the long term, it is necessary to undertake comprehensive empirical research.

Strong policy is essential to cater for all the needs of the library information services sector, its services and implementation, and the finalisation of the draft South African Community Library and Information Services Bill will go a long way in providing a legal framework for uniform standards and norms countrywide.

*Authors: Nampombe Mnkeni-Saurombe, Department of Information Science, University of South Africa; Nomusa Zimu, HSRC Information Services.*

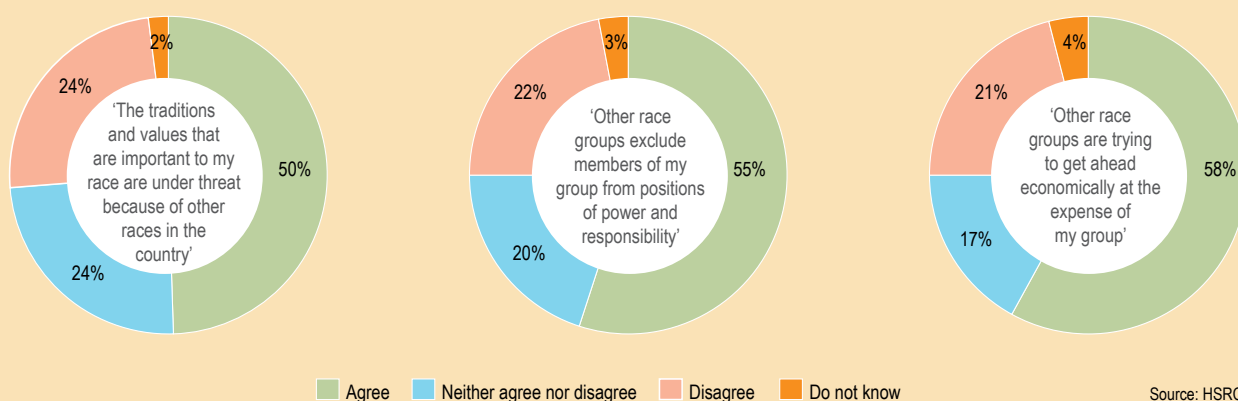
# SLOW WALK TO FREEDOM: Attitudes towards race relations



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South Africans are becoming more positive about race relations in the country, albeit slowly

Figure 1: Fear of racial marginalisation in the Rainbow Nation, 2011



**Race featured prominently at the recent Social Cohesion Summit in Soweto hosted by the Department of Arts and Culture. The summit highlighted the importance of improving race relations in the Rainbow Nation and raised questions about the extent of the country's progress towards racial harmony. To answer these questions, Steven Gordon, Ben Roberts and Jarè Struwig present findings from the annual South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), revealing signs of growing racial tolerance, especially among the young.**

The HSRC annually conducts SASAS since 2003. The survey series consists of nationally representative samples of South African adults aged 16 years and older living in private households. The authors examined SASAS data from the last five years to understand how perceptions of race relations have changed in South Africa. The sample sizes for the 2007 to 2011 surveys were in the range of between 3 000 to 3 300 participants.

### Feelings of racial marginalisation

Many South Africans seem to be afraid that their racial group's position – politically, culturally and economically – is under threat from other groups. In 2011, 58% of the population thought that people of other race groups were trying to get ahead economically at the expense of their own group (Figure 1). More than half (54%) thought that people of other race groups were excluding members of their own group from positions of power and responsibility. Finally, almost half (49%) believed that the traditions and values that are important to people of their race group are under threat because of the influence of other races.

Fears of marginalisation are shared by all race groups in South Africa, with a majority

in each group expressing concerns about the marginalisation of their own group. Given how widespread these beliefs are, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that 54% of South Africans felt that other race groups will never understand what members of their group are like.

### Can other races be trusted?

Trust is a central component of an individual's ability to form social relationships and reject harmful stereotypes. It is also considered indicative of social cohesion and therefore imperative to understand attitudes towards inter-racial trust in the country.

In 2011 SASAS asked respondents their level of agreement with the statement that 'people of different racial groups do not really trust each other'. While 64% agreed, only 19% disagreed and 15% opted for a neutral position. Furthermore, 51% agreed that 'people of different racial groups will never really trust each other', 20% were neutral and about a quarter (26%) disagreed. These findings indicate a disturbing level of distrust.

On a more positive note we found some indications that race relations have been

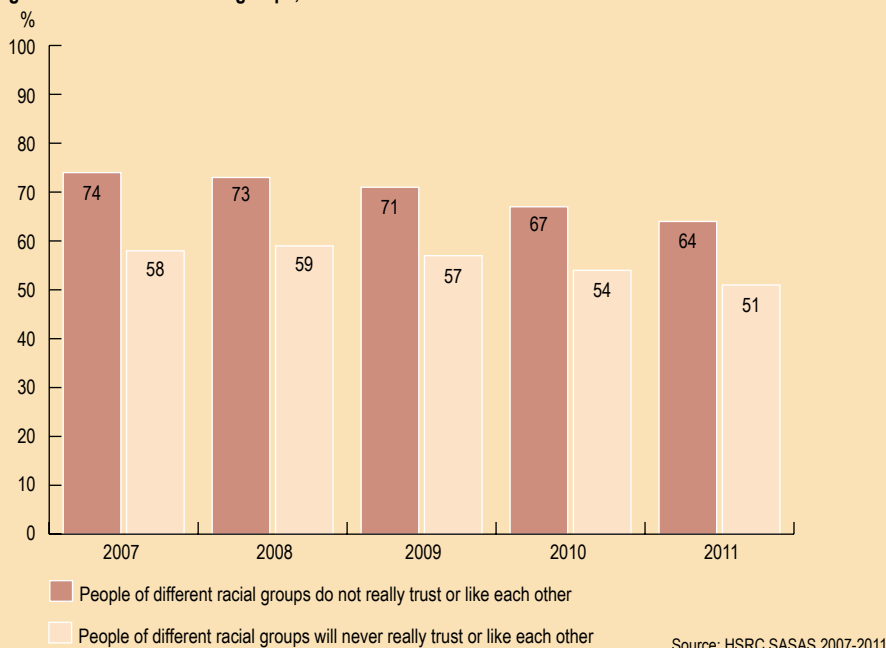
improving. South Africans were less pessimistic about race relations than in 2007, when almost three-quarters (74%) agreed that racial groups did not trust each other and 58% agreed that they will never trust each other.

Figure 2 on the next page suggests that South Africans are becoming more positive about race relations in the country, albeit slowly. Future work in this area will need to examine whether this is attributable to progress in social integration and the creation, since the end of apartheid, of more multi-racial workplaces, residential areas and schools. The positive trend observed could also be linked to efforts by government and civil society to promote national unity.

The improvement in positive attitudes towards race relations in South Africa is visible not only in the observed increase in trust; there is also a general feeling among the population that relations have been improving. Asked if race relations in the country have improved, stayed the same, or grew worse in the last year, more than half of all South Africans (51%) in 2011 indicated that they had improved, 32% indicated that they had stayed the same and only 15% felt they had deteriorated.

>> SLOW WALK TO FREEDOM: Attitudes towards race relations (continued)

Figure 2: Trust between race groups, 2007 – 2011



As Figure 3 shows, the majority of South Africans share the conviction that race relations have been improving year-on-year since 2008 (when SASAS introduced the question). The 2010 results stand out, probably due to the euphoric effect of the FIFA World Cup. The findings seem to suggest that the majority are optimistic about the nation's progress on race relations. Indeed, in 2011 only 12% believed that race relations in the country had deteriorated since 1994 with almost two-thirds (64%) stating that relations had improved.

Who is optimistic about racial relations?

Men and women did not differ significantly in their optimism about race relations in 2011. Race, however, was found to be a significant determinant of such attitudes. Black Africans were the most optimistic about race relations last year, followed by coloureds and Indians, with white South Africans as the least optimistic.

Encouragingly, there seemed to be a strong relationship between age and perceptions on improvement in race relations. For example,

of the nation's youth (those between 16 and 19 years), 61% believed that race relations had improved in 2011 and 73% felt that race relations had improved since the end of apartheid. This finding signals that young people are more confident about progress in race relations in South Africa, an important indication of the country's movement towards the goal of racial harmony.

A class bias was noted with those with high living standards were more likely to be pessimistic about race relations than those with low living standards. The nation's rural residents were significantly more optimistic than their urban counterparts. Urban dwellers were almost three times more likely than their rural counterparts to believe that race relations had worsened in 2011.

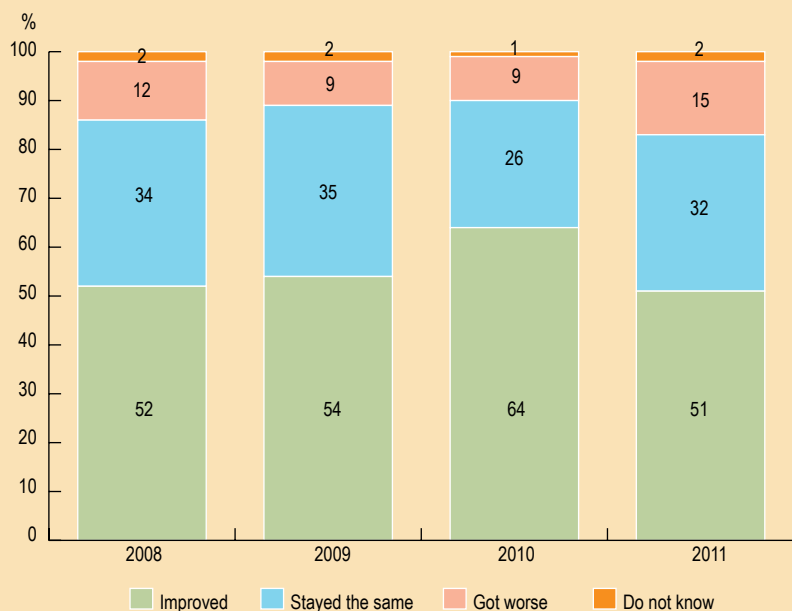
Optimism about race relations may also be related to the government's efforts to promote equal opportunities. In 2011, those who believed the government was working hard to ensure that people of all races had equal opportunities for jobs, housing, and education were more than twice as likely to believe race relations had improved.

Conclusion

South African society has made significant progress in building racial harmony. Yet, despite the recognition of improvement in race relations on a year-on-year basis, a considerable proportion of South Africans continue to feel threatened by other race groups. This raises concerns about interracial trust, a finding that lends support to investing in further social cohesion research in South Africa. Research findings about interracial trust – and distrust! – emphasise the need for greater social dialogue on issues of race

Expressions of racial distrust emphasise the need for greater social dialogue on the issue of race as well as ongoing monitoring of societal change and progress in this area. This need has been acknowledged by President Zuma and the government is currently finalising preparations on the National Strategy on Social Cohesion and Nation Building. Nonetheless, if South Africa is to arrive at the future envisioned by former President Nelson Mandela, we as citizens must play a decisive role alongside government efforts to build a socially cohesive nation.

Figure 3: Have race relations improved in the last year? 2008 – 2011



Authors: Steven Gordon, Master's intern; Ben Roberts and Jarè Struwig, SASAS coordinators, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery research programme, HSRC.



# ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

## Perceptions of service delivery

As the third decade of democracy in our country draws near, issues of service delivery continue to be vigorously discussed and debated in the media, among policymakers and in communities alike. In this article, *Hangwelani Hope Magidmisha, Ben Roberts, Steven Gordon and Jarè Struwig* examine satisfaction with government provided services over the last decade, profile socio-demographic differences in such perceptions, and explore the relationship between service delivery attitudes and measures of political support and action.

Since its inception in 2003, the HSRC's annual South African Social Attitude Survey (SASAS) has asked representative samples of adults aged 16 years and older to evaluate government performance in relation to certain public services and priority areas.

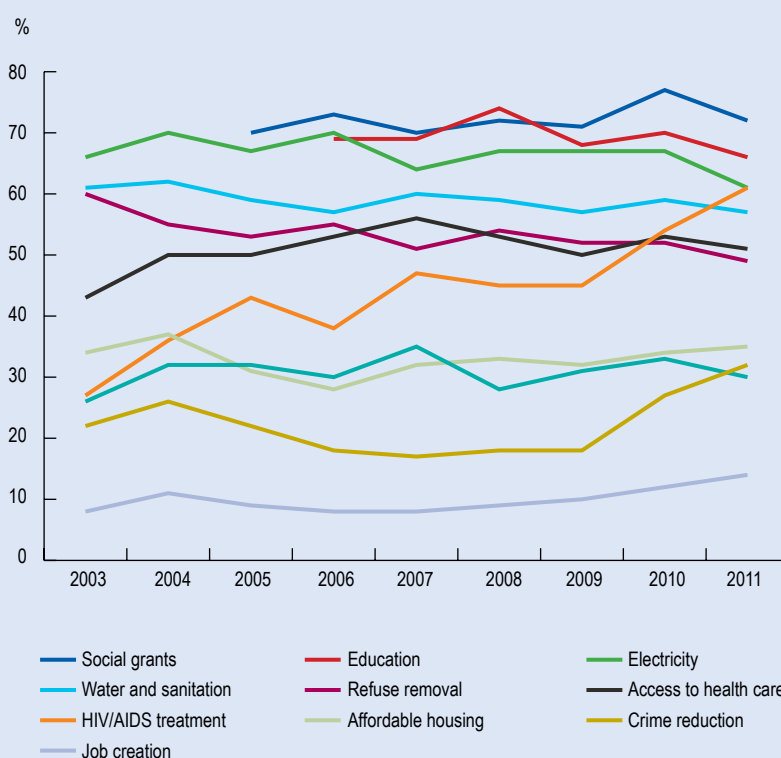
These include education, electricity, water and sanitation, refuse removal, health care and HIV/AIDS treatment, social grants, low-cost housing as well as crime reduction and job creation. Question responses were captured using a five-point scale ranging from 'very satisfied' to 'very dissatisfied'. The number of respondents in each survey from 2003 to 2011 ranged between 2 500 and 3 300.

### Satisfaction with services

The survey results reveal a considerable pattern of variance in the way the public perceives government performance across the ten dimensions examined.

In late 2011, a significant majority of South Africans voiced satisfaction with social grants (72%) and education (66%). Slightly lower shares offered their approval of state efforts on electricity provision (61%), HIV/AIDS treatment (61%) and water and sanitation (57%). About half were positive in their rating of access to health care and refuse removal (51% and 49% respectively). The areas of greatest public concern were job creation (14%), crime reduction (32%) and low-cost housing (35%).

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction with different areas of government performance, 2003 – 2011 (% satisfied or very satisfied)



Source: HSRC SASAS 2003-2011

When contrasting the government emphasis on reducing backlogs and providing basic services to all citizens with the incidence of protest action in recent years, a fundamental question raised is how and to what degree have service delivery performance ratings

changed over the last decade? Figure 1 shows that satisfaction levels have fluctuated within a fairly narrow range and the ranking of services has not changed appreciably over the decade.



Photo: David Hemson

Discontent with service delivery has begun to erode public confidence in political institutions and leaders

However, we wish to highlight two notable exceptions. Firstly, there has been a dramatic improvement in assessments of the fight against HIV/AIDS between 2003 and 2011, with the share of adults satisfied with HIV/AIDS interventions more than doubling over the interval (from 27% to 61%). Secondly, there has been a notable rise in confidence in the state's crime reduction efforts from 2009 onwards (18% in 2009; 33% in 2011).

There has also recently been a modest decline in satisfaction with education and electricity. This will need to be monitored, particularly given the increasing attention being devoted to the state of education in the country as well as rising affordability and quality considerations in the domestic energy sector.

### Service delivery and deprivation

To understand who feels satisfied with services in South Africa, the question responses were combined into a single service delivery index. The scales were reversed and summed, and then transformed into a 0 – 100 score, where '0' represents 'very dissatisfied' and '100' 'very satisfied' with services. We have focused on the 2006 – 2011 period as all service delivery items were included in these surveys.

The average service index scores based on a set of personal and household-level features for both the 2006 – 2011 period and for 2011, suggest that there is minimal, yet statistically significant gender-based difference in satisfaction, with women offering lower evaluations. Equally, there are modest race-based differences, with black Africans less satisfied compared with other population groups over the period. Yet, in 2011, this difference was not evident.

There is substantial variation in service satisfaction based on socioeconomic status. The mean satisfaction score for those with high living standards is 1.5 times greater than those with low living standards (38 versus 56). In addition, those subjectively reporting that they are 'very poor' tend to have service satisfaction levels that are 1.6 times lower than those classifying themselves as 'wealthy' (36 versus 59). This suggests that there is an association between service delivery perceptions and social disadvantage.

Class-based differences are again present when examining the data from a spatial perspective. Provinces such as the Eastern

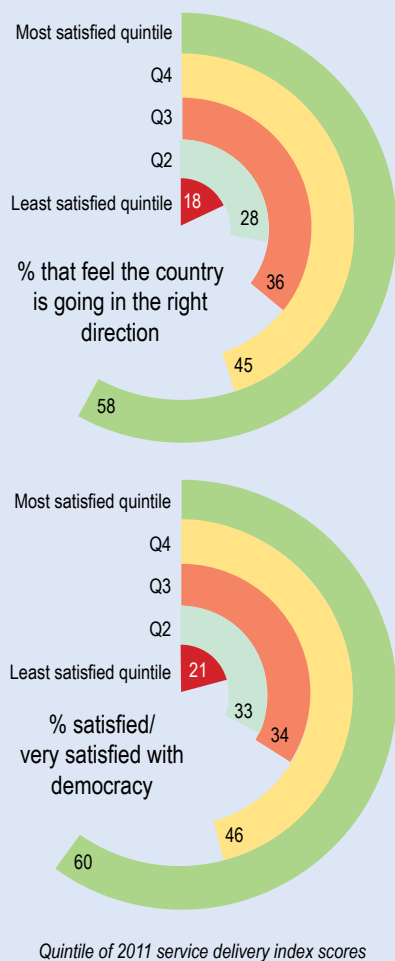
Cape, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo tend to report the lowest service delivery scores. Also, residents in formal urban areas generally report greater service delivery satisfaction than those in informal urban settlements and rural areas. Those based in traditional rural authority areas are the least content with services.

### Consequences for political support and behaviour

Satisfaction with service delivery appears to influence political attitudes. We took the service delivery index scores for 2011 and categorised them into five equal groups (or quintiles). We then analysed the data to see if there were differences in relation to views on democracy, confidence in political institutions and leaders.

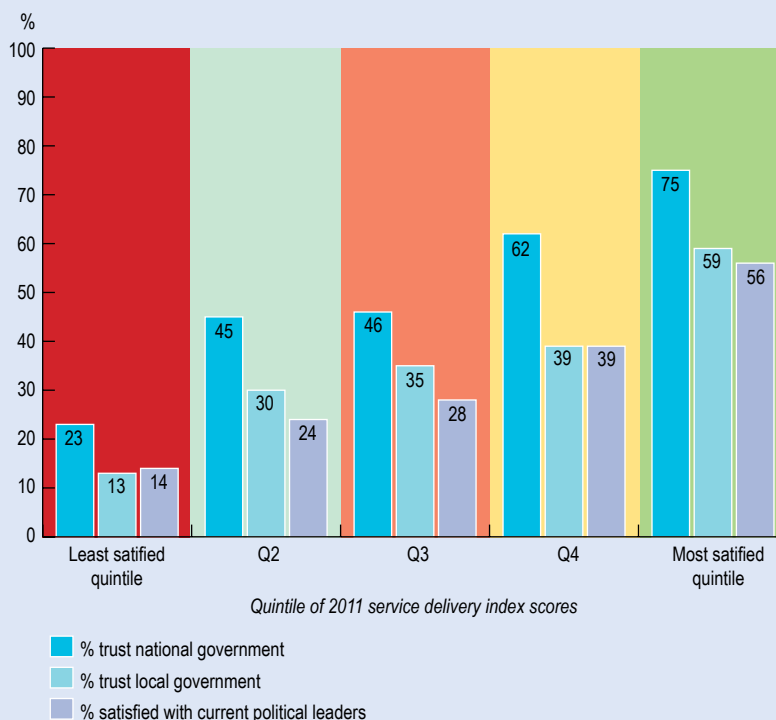
Figure 2 shows that those with lower satisfaction scores are less satisfied with the way democracy is working in South Africa compared to those with higher scores. Similarly, those that are less content with

**Figure 2: Views on democracy by level of service delivery satisfaction, 2011 (%)**



Source: HSRC SASAS 2011

**Figure 3: Confidence in political institutions and leaders by level of service delivery satisfaction, 2011 (%)**



Source: HSRC SASAS 2011

service delivery are more inclined to feel that things in the country are going in the wrong direction.

We also find that discontent with service delivery has begun to erode public confidence in political institutions and leaders. As the level of service satisfaction increases, so does trust in national and local government and support for the country's political leadership (Figure 3).

Given the attention devoted to service delivery protests in recent years, we also examined the relationship between service perceptions and political behaviour. Unlike political attitudes, discontent with service delivery has not yet translated into clearly discernible patterns of political action, irrespective of whether one examines voting intention, contacting political authorities or engaging in mass demonstrations.

### Concluding reflections

Patterns of service delivery satisfaction over the last decade have typically varied within a narrow range, with state responses to demands for job creation, crime reduction and housing provision being the most critically evaluated. The public acknowledge the progress made regarding the HIV/AIDS

pandemic and ensuring personal safety.

Levels of service delivery discontent relate to patterns of inequality in our society. Those with higher levels of deprivation exhibit greater dissatisfaction with service delivery.

The analysis further demonstrated that such discontent is adversely impacting on indicators of political support. These include general views on the nature of our democracy, and specific assessments of confidence in political institutions and leadership. Surprisingly, perceptions of service delivery have not yielded strong distinctions in reported political action.

These findings emphasise the importance of investing in pro-poor interventions that address social inequalities in keeping with the spirit of the Freedom Charter. It also points to the consequences of not fulfilling the expectations that citizens have of our democracy, especially in areas that touch on fundamental constitutional rights.

*Authors: Hangvelani Magidimisha, PhD intern; Ben Roberts and Jarè Struwig, SASAS coordinators; and Steven Gordon, Master's intern, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery research programme, HSRC. This publication was supported by an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Pathfinder research project grant.*

# Examining viable options for STATE PROCUREMENT of services

*This report was funded by the CEO of the HSRC, Dr Olive Shisana*

**The rise of the so-called ‘tenderpreneur’ has received much attention in the popular media with calls lamenting and questioning the advantages of the current system of public procurement. The alternative seems to suggest direct state procurement of services. Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu makes some suggestions in a new study.**

There is increasing public awareness that tenders have created a class of rent seekers, the so-called ‘tenderpreneurs’. These sentiments allude to some of the inherent weaknesses of the tender process to procure government services. These concerns can be framed into three arguments in favour of the direct provision of services by the state.

The first of these arguments relates to the perceived role of government; arguing that by calling for tenders the state has effectively abandoned its responsibility in the provision of basic services. The second argument asserts that tenders are responsible for corruption (rent seeking), whilst the third argument affirms that reducing every government service to a tender reduces the state’s ability to create jobs.

Much has been written on the first two arguments, especially on corruption in public procurement and the mechanisms needed to prevent it from happening. However, very little has been done to test the validity of the third argument, particularly in a country like South Africa where the challenges of widespread unemployment demand the effective use of every rand spent.

To this end, the HSRC undertook a study to address the third argument. Specifically, it sought to assess the employment impact of shifting production from private providers to the state.

## **The developmental aspect of public procurement**

Although public procurement has come under the spotlight, in South Africa there is an argument that government procurement can be used to leverage employment and to create a more inclusive post-apartheid business landscape. This can be done by targeting and giving preference to suppliers

from previously disadvantaged groups and those companies that meet a range of black economic empowerment (BEE) objectives.

To this end, government procurement can be seen as taking a developmental role, a line of argument that is consistent with the notion of a developmental state. In such an instance, proponents of job creation through public procurement will caution that policymakers should be wary of claims about direct state provision creating ‘more jobs’ than procurement through tenders.

## **Direct state provision vs. tender procurement**

This dichotomy raises the possibility of different employment effects from the two methods of service provision. There is a perception, at least in the public debates in South Africa, that the mode of delivery itself can contribute to employment creation. We could characterise this view as microeconomic.

It is sometimes felt that different patterns of delivery modes of direct state service provision have different consequences for employment creation and that government should use its own machinery as a tool to tackle unemployment. Although this view is not widely found in the literature, partly because of a general scepticism among economists that the effects will be insignificant and that there are huge problems of government failure, it nevertheless merits consideration. Even if this option has relatively little impact on job creation, it will be an important finding, making clear the limits of microeconomic intervention.

There is prima facie plausibility in the argument as, while many of South Africa’s economic problems emanate from the

size of the budget deficit, levels of unemployment cannot be explained simply by inadequate aggregate demand. From a macroeconomic point of view, an additional rand of domestic expenditure has the same impact regardless of where it is spent and by whom.

However, it is likely that a given amount of public money spent on, say, tenders will have a different impact on national employment than when spent on, say, education or agricultural extension directly. The difference will depend on the linkages between the receiving sector and the rest of the economy, the effects on demand and consumption patterns, the consequences for imports and exports and so on.

## **Modelling public procurement**

This study looked at the extent to which government could create more jobs by shifting from a system of public procurement to direct state provision of goods and services. A computable general equilibrium (CGE) model was used to simulate a shift from public procurement to direct state provision.

CGE models are well suited to analysing counterfactuals and provide a laboratory where impacts can be traced throughout the economy. While a partial equilibrium framework, such as a cost-benefit analysis, can give some insights into the impact of such a shift, it will not tell us what the net impact on the whole economy might be.

The central argument addressed by the study was the claim that arose from public debate which asserted that reducing every government service to a tender reduces the state’s ability to create jobs and enriches a few. The study modelled the reduction in government procurement for a few services such as the construction of roads.



**Results**

The results of the study showed that, given government’s existing skills composition, there is a relatively larger increase in the demand for semi-skilled and high skilled labour with a corresponding increase in the income of the households that receive factor payments from these workers. Thus low income households do not benefit from the shift. The private sector demand for labour falls, for all skill categories, in road construction and the sectors that supply its intermediate inputs. In addition, due to broader economy-wide adjustments, the demand for low-skilled labour also falls in gold, other mining, wood, metal products, machinery and equipment and electrical machinery sectors.

For the rest of the sectors, demand for labour increases relative to the base scenario. The results suggest that a shift away from

public procurement to direct state provision negatively affects employment in the private sectors where government used to procure its goods and services. However, this fall in labour demand in roads and its related sectors is outweighed by the increase in demand for labour in all the remaining sectors, stimulated by the increase in government activities, and the net effect is an increase in the aggregate demand for labour for the whole economy as seen in Table 1 below.

The employment impacts are driven by the fact that government is assumed to use its current labour skills composition. The effects of relaxing this assumption are not assessed in this study; allowing government to change its skills composition would probably alter the change in the pattern of demand for both skilled and unskilled labour.

**Policy implications**

The results of the study indicate that there are some trade-offs. Due to broader economy-wide adjustments, employment is negatively affected in the private sectors that used to provide road construction services to government. Although the shift seems to create some positive impacts, the disproportionate impact on household income that benefits middle and high income households more than their low income counterparts, has serious implications for income inequality. This means that such a policy intervention would not be pro-poor unless the skills composition of government employment was to change.

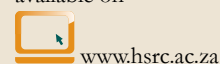
*Authors: Professor Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu, executive director, Economic Performance and Development (EPD) research programme, HSRC; Stewart Ngandu, chief researcher, EPD; Vandudzai Mbanda, PhD intern, EPD.*

**Table 1: Change in total demand for labour, by skill level**

Total	Business as usual	No procurement (Roads)	% variation
High skilled labour	244 027	248 210	1.7
Semi-skilled labour	286 689	291 605	1.7
Low skilled labour	161 340	161 867	0.3
Informal skilled labour	36 039	36 039	No change

Source: Simulation results

The report Direct State Provision of Goods and Services vs. Tender Procurement, by Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu, M, Stewart Ngandu and Vandudzai Mbanda is available on



# TECHNOLOGY

## helps put food on the table

**The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform introduced the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) in August 2009, with the aim of bringing about co-ordinated and integrated agrarian transformation to benefit rural communities. In a study to identify technologies available for rural development and initiatives that involve technology, it was found that the implementation of the programme leaves much to be desired. *Tim Hart* reports.**

Between July and October 2010, a multidisciplinary team of researchers, led by the HSRC, conducted a scoping study to identify technologies available for rural development and to develop baseline information on technology-oriented initiatives in eight pilot sites across eight provinces: KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Western Cape, North West Province, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and the Free State.

This study provides relevant information about the initial implementation of the programme.

### **Technology for rural development**

For the purposes of this study technology was defined as any tool or technique, product or process, physical equipment or method of doing or making by which human capability is extended. Thus 'technology' includes process technologies, which lead to higher productivity or improved quality of a product; product technologies, which create new products and transaction technologies, which facilitate co-ordination, information sharing and exchange among market participants.

As such, a new technology can relate to innovations in respect of product, process, services, support technology, or institutional strategy. Both 'hard' and 'soft' technologies and innovations are recognised.

### **Profile of technologies included in the study**

Many of the 113 identified technologies were common across the pilot sites (e.g. home gardens, mechanised agriculture, brick making, and ventilation in pit latrines). Of the 64 projects that received government and non-government support and made use of 'modern' technologies, 25 were either initiated by the CRDP process, or were existing activities supported by the government as part of the CRDP. The latter were usually pre-existing provincial government or municipal projects that were receiving further funding and support. The remaining 39 projects were initiated prior to the onset of the CRDP.

The 27 local initiatives were privately managed enterprises using 'modern' technologies and included mechanised agriculture, hammer-mills, and chemicals to produce detergent. In many instances the 22 technologies identified as indigenous knowledge or local practices referred to animal traction and transportation,



Multi-purpose water wheelbarrow for washing clothes and carrying water home. Photo: Mandla Msibi.

indigenous livestock rearing, and craft and clothing manufacturing, which made use of 'traditional' equipment or clothing styles.

We found technologies across agriculture, mining and minerals, manufacturing, ICT, renewable energy (e.g. biogas, solar panels, wind mills), natural materials to generate income using technology, and services (housing, sanitation and transportation).

## Key research findings

### Types of technologies

Many technologies were introduced before the launch of the CRDP and some of these are now supported in terms of the CRDP, while others were not. Technologies used in agricultural production tend to predominate at every site, while different types of agricultural technologies and practices were often found in different sites. Very few sites had mining activities, but where these did exist, technologies were similar across sites and largely consisted of simple hand-held tools.

### Commercial enterprises

Key lessons and principles regarding commercial enterprises can be drawn from self-initiated enterprises (technology initiatives) undertaken without any government or donor support. Many of these appeared to be economically sustainable, often because they were operated by an owner who employs others as required. Some could do with support, however such support should be done carefully so as not to create expectations of long-term support and ultimately dependency on government for the sustainability of the enterprise. The support should also be provided in such a way that ownership/decision making remains firmly in the hands of the participants and is not transferred to government officials.

### Effective monitoring and evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has also been identified as a key requirement for the implementation of sustainable development interventions. The M&E process needs to go beyond financial expenditure and number of people benefiting. M&E must consider the long-term sustainability of the initiatives and the impacts that they have on people's livelihoods. Greater participation of all stakeholders, including the beneficiaries, will support this process and will thus fulfil one crucial purpose of the eight pilot sites, which is the development of lessons

...decision making should remain in the hands of the participants and not be transferred to government officials



Water cooler, as an example of the 'evaporative cooling system'. Photo: Tim Hart

and best practice to ensure the effective implementation of the programme at the other proposed sites.

### Consult, consult, consult

Community consultation is crucial to success, but this is limited and little attention is paid to diversity and heterogeneity among community members. Rather, the prevailing process is to implement technologies decided upon from outside the community with the hope that local people will buy into these ideas. Local initiatives on the whole seem

to be largely unacknowledged. Steps should be taken to ensure that any technologies used are the most suitable for local social, environment and economic circumstances.

### Financial viability of projects

There is a need to revisit the financial viability and models used in many of the commercially oriented projects, regardless of whether or not these are large- or small-scale endeavours. At present most new and existing projects do not appear to be achieving their desired financial expectations.

## >> TECHNOLOGY helps put food on the table (continued)

These range from sustainability of the project (many of which are dependent on government for infinite support), large numbers of participants associated with projects on relatively small areas of land, or of limited scale and finite markets.

### Recommendations to improve effectiveness of technological initiatives

Based on the findings of the audit a number of elements appear to impact on the

effectiveness of the use of technology at the CRDP pilot sites.

#### Need to use effective social facilitation processes

Social conditions at a particular place can fluctuate dramatically over time and these changes and their implications for development cannot be understood through once-off assessment exercises using a standardised questionnaire. The significance of ongoing social facilitation

and communication cannot be emphasised enough.

#### Commercially oriented projects should consider existing conditions and challenges

There is often an over-emphasis on the commercialisation of every project, while scant attention is paid to prevailing social and political circumstances, existing resources and income, as well as abilities determined by education, the effective integration into externally managed 'projects', and the roles and responsibilities of project participants now and in the future.

#### Build institutional, technical and non-technical capacity of project beneficiaries

When considering the up-scaling of technology projects, careful planning, development interventions, and more funding should first be carefully considered. All these aspects require thorough analyses. Importantly, addressing issues at community level only will be sufficient or effective, particularly in the case of commercially oriented interventions. Such interventions need to take into account the broader economic opportunities and the reality of effectively integrating the community-based enterprises within the broader economy where this is necessary. This means addressing structural barriers to integration and not merely the provision of project financing, associated technology and skills.

#### Encourage and support entrepreneurs

Many CRDP interventions bear the hallmark of 'income-generating, poverty-reduction projects', which in principle are meant to function like enterprises but which often do not. A critical distinction is that poverty-reduction projects tend to be group-based, whereas spontaneous enterprises tend to be led by a single individual or household, or in some cases small partnerships of individuals who are well acquainted with one another.

The preference of government and often NGOs for supporting groups is largely based on the idea that this is the only way of reaching large numbers of people. Support to group initiatives may be more successful where these initiatives are driven by an individual who is employing people and creating local jobs.

#### Alternative project models

Consider alternative project models better suited to a particular enterprise than the traditional group-based approach. Seek



Maize hippo mill – privately-run enterprise with no government support. Photo: Mandla Msibi

Most new and existing projects do not appear to be achieving their desired financial expectations



out and support partnerships with private partners who can provide technical expertise and a reliable market

One area where there is still a great deal to learn is that of partnerships. Many of these partnerships have not fared well. Interpretations vary as to the reasons for this, but part of the problem stems from the fact that, at the end of the day, the 'community partner' consisting of beneficiaries is still often a sizeable group, which is heterogeneous in terms of both aspirations and abilities. A potent antidote to the problems associated with group-based income-generating projects is to not focus excessively on income generation in the first place. While it is understandable that government would wish to focus on establishing projects aimed at income generation, improving services or access to information can often benefit far larger numbers of people at more modest cost.

#### Monitoring and evaluation system

Establish a monitoring and evaluation system that allows for challenges to be identified and addressed so as to ensure that projects have the desired impact

Monitoring and evaluation of technology projects and interventions seems to be frighteningly lacking in most instances as very few and limited records are available. The prevalent concern seems to be the financial accounting of the government job

creation and budget expenditure with scant regard to other aspects of the interventions. As a result it is unclear how lessons can be learned from the pilot sites that will ensure improved roll-out to other proposed sites.

Market requirements and standards are especially important in planning and implementation.

#### In conclusion

Many of the pre-CRDP interventions appear to have either collapsed completely, are struggling to survive, or remain fairly dependent on government financing for functioning. Few successful and interdependent economic interventions have resulted from previous programmes, and almost no growth is evident – on the contrary, in terms of active participants, most have shrunk. For some, the operating costs using existing technology and infrastructure are high, making their financial sustainability within fluctuating markets a concern. Market requirements and standards are especially important in such planning and implementation. Revisiting business models, ideas and support of these are important for strengthening the current CRDP process.

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*The authors acknowledge the financial support of the Chief Directorate: Technology, Research and Development (CD:TRD) of the national office of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.*

Audit results on technological initiatives for rural development: evidence from eight comprehensive rural development programme pilot sites, by authors Mr Tim Hart, senior research manager, Economic Performance and Development, HSRC; Dr Michael Aliber, senior research consultant, Brigid Letty, senior researcher, Institute of Natural Resources (INR), Mandla Msibi, research consultant, Mompoti Baiphethi, research consultant, and Zibonele Nxele, researcher, INR.

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Coke ball valve. Photo: Tim Hart



House thatched with reeds

# Effect of **CLIMATE CHANGE** on resource-poor small farmers

Climate change is a long-term process which is characterised by warmer than average temperatures or global warming; and rising frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, ranging from droughts to floods. *Peter Jacobs* and *Rehema Msulwa* investigated the interaction between climate change and primary agriculture in rural Limpopo and found accelerated declines in crop yield and more frequent livestock deaths since 2000.



Decline in crop yield and more frequent livestock deaths since 2000 were common indicators of the depressing impact of climate change on local agriculture

A cross-section of large-scale commercial and smallholder farmers in Mpumalanga and Limpopo account for most of South Africa's sub-tropical agricultural output. Floods devastated large parts of both provinces in February 2000. According to the 2001 Strategic Plan for Agriculture, losses sustained as a result of this extreme weather event translated into a fall in the annual gross domestic product of approximately 1%. This graphically illustrates the kinds of risks to agriculture flowing from climate variability and economy-wide spillovers that could result from extreme weather events.

We conducted a study exploring the interactions of climate change and primary agriculture drawing on evidence collected from resource-poor small farmers, community leaders and the non-farm unemployed in rural Limpopo, South Africa. Information was collected with the aid of mixed gender and age focus-group sessions for each rural social category – using sets of open-ended questions.

The purpose and scope of this study were to understand and document farming practices among resource-poor farmers in varied agro-ecological settings, their awareness and experiences of climate change and how they have been responding to climate change.

The relationship between modern agricultural systems and climate change is complex and therefore a domain of intense debate. Globally, agriculture might be responsible for 17 – 32% of global greenhouse gas emissions. According to available South African data, the domestic emission share of its farm sector falls between 6% and 14%, compared to 44% for other developing countries and roughly 6.3% for the United States.

The impact of agriculture on the environment has been occurring mainly through fossil energy-intensive cultivation systems, but also through the misuse and overuse of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers. Inorganic nitrogen additions to restore soil fertility have increased to levels that are ecologically unsustainable while the economic returns appear to be less lucrative than earlier forecasts. Farming methods and agro-sector waste have a significant weight in the greenhouse gas emissions from the pre-consumption segment of the global food system. A recent review of greenhouse gas emissions from concentrated animal feeding operations suggests that carbon emissions

from livestock farming might exceed those of the transportation sector.

## Methods

As an exploratory case study, our fieldwork was based on semi-structured key informant interviews and participatory focus group discussions, which helped us to collect in-depth and verifiable information on recent policy developments and to rapidly collect comparative evidence from different rural sites.

Key informant interviews were conducted with senior officials in the national Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and the Limpopo Department of Agriculture (LDA). In each interview, we explored issues such as where climate change fits into the work of the agricultural department; the key informant's awareness and understanding of the climate change-agriculture nexus; and a rapid evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of current agricultural policy responses to climate change (adaptation, mitigation and resilience issues).

Participatory focus group discussions were set up with farmers, non-farmers and community leaders. The study sites included the five distinct villages in Limpopo: Dzumeri (Giyani), an arid sub-tropical agro-ecological zone as well as Mothiba and Makhotopong (Capricorn), Vuvha (Thengwe Valley), Mashamba (Elim) and Sterkstroom (Thohoyandou), classified as sub-humid.

Focus group discussions with farmers were fairly well attended and varied between a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 18 participants.

## The policy environment

In the last decade, climate change has been moving towards the centre of South Africa's agricultural policy landscape, for example in the 2001 Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture, but the long-term response to climate change in agriculture needs to fit into and be consistent with the country's broader climate change commitments.

In 2001 the government adopted an overarching policy called the National Climate Change Response Policy. The core message of this policy statement is South Africa's contribution to the transition of the global economy to a low-carbon economy and climate-resilient society. Policy makers

are mindful that this challenge is inseparable from achieving key developmental goals: sustainable development, job creation, poverty eradication, and social equality.

## The farming environment

Resource-poor small farmers live in villages under traditional authority or ex-Bantustan tribal areas where freehold farmland titling is non-existent. Instead, the right to access and use land for farming is based on permission to occupy (PTO) certificates which the traditional chief allocates as the landholding custodian.

Farmland tenure is a critical determinant of how well any farming system operates and affects agricultural productivity; it is therefore a crucial factor to take into account when investigating climate change-agriculture interactions.

Farming generally takes place on relatively small plots of land with the average plot size per farm household ranging from roughly 0.5 ha to about 5 ha. Cereal crop cultivation and harvesting, specifically maize, dominate crop outputs across all research sites. Alongside maize production, which is the dominant staple food crop grown across all sites, some farmers also cultivate and harvest leafy vegetables, legumes and groundnuts.

Investment in capital-intensive farm inputs is minimal and non-existent in most cases. Water is vital in primary agriculture but the main supply sources are location-specific. Rain-fed farming is widespread in this area and evidence exists of water access through older communal irrigation schemes. It was common for farmers to store seeds for future planting and to use animal manure to sustain soil fertility. In virtually all cases where farmers bought inorganic fertiliser and genetically-modified seeds, they did so because extension officers advised and encouraged them to adopt these farm inputs.

## Awareness of climate change

The overarching goal of this study was to understand how rural communities – particularly resource-poor small farmers – cope with and respond to climate change. Probing the actual knowledge of these communities about this phenomenon was a critical step to gaining insights into local climate change adaptation and mitigation activities – especially agro-ecological (regenerative) farming based on indigenous knowledge.



Cut greenhouse gas emissions – prohibit unsustainable natural resource use practices: Interventions to cut greenhouse gas emitting activities covered varied types of natural resource uses and were not confined to climate-damaging agricultural activities. Communities generally did not know of any legislation to curb greenhouse gas emissions, except for a few traditional leaders who complained about the lack of enforcing mitigation laws. ‘Under our indigenous value system’, Mashamba community leaders explained, ‘wild fruit trees- Fig tree (Muhuyu), Marula tree (Mufula) and Musuma – were not allowed to be cut.’ The local authority has been arresting and charging wood cutters.

There is an urgent need to close the information flow gaps and losses between policy crafting and grassroots implementation. Appropriate mechanisms must be developed to transmit practicable knowledge from top-level DAFF scientists to extension officers interacting with resource-poor farmers by increasing frequency of sessions.

Climate change is a large-scale societal and human concern, yet deep analysis embedded in social structures and human behaviour is absent from almost all big analyses and debates. Instead, the dominant thinking on this subject concentrates on abstract techno-scientific fixes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions usually combined with economic calculus. Social dimensions of climate change receive virtually no attention and the need exists to dramatically raise climate change awareness through participatory approaches. Climate change must be addressed through social structures and human behaviour as well as abstract techno-scientific fixes.

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*Authors: Dr Peter Jacobs, chief research specialist, Economic Performance and Development, HSRC; Ms Rebema Msulwa, former Master's intern, HSRC, and currently pursuing a second Master's in Economics at the University of Manchester.*

**Note:** This is an overview of the findings of research completed in 2011 for COP 17, partly funded by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. Prof Jude Odhiambo at the University of Venda, Thoyoyando provided fieldwork support.

The concept ‘climate change’ per se was virtually unknown, even among farmers who reported regular visits from agricultural extension officers. The accelerated decline in crop yield and more frequent livestock deaths since 2000 were common indicators of the depressing impact of climate change on local agricultural outputs and productivity.

Accelerated deforestation to supply wood for energy, indiscriminate burning of bushes, industrial pollution and carbon emissions from cars featured among the key drivers of climate change.

### Responses to climate change

Rural communities voiced many immediate and longer-term interventions to counter the effects of climate change on their agricultural activities and local livelihoods – including adapting how they farm with an eye on cutting its carbon footprint. Although examples of how to respond to climate change were strongly rooted in local experiences, or indigenous knowledge, structured discussion of suggested interventions could be arranged under three themes.

Firstly, resource-poor farmers expressed a strong commitment towards adopting sustainable farming practices that are resilient to climate change. Secondly, there was support for prohibitive penalties on unsustainable natural resource use practices. Thirdly, a popular suggestion favoured intensified state activism (integrated and better coordinated) to promote local climate change adaptation and mitigation actions.

### Regenerating agricultural activities

The package for resource-poor farmers to regenerate their agricultural activities in the context of climate change should include the following:

Build climate resilient farming systems: To shrink the carbon footprint of agriculture there must be a switch ‘from industrial farming to conservation farming’. Conservation agricultural systems centre on zero-to-minimal tillage practices but often include innovations from integrated farming systems using animal manure as fertiliser and rotation farming which allows land to lie fallow. Water needs to be conserved and various water-harvesting techniques, as suggested by several farmers’ focus groups, can improve water access in areas without functional irrigation systems. Participants generally agreed that institutions are essential to transition to climate resilient farming systems – for local learning and sharing information and implementing climate adaptation and mitigation actions. The entrenched intergenerational knowledge transfer system has been and will continue to serve as a mechanism to exchange ideas and experiences on climate change and sustainable agriculture.

State-driven programmes to promote local climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts: Some communities have been receiving a range of climate-related services from government departments, usually as part of land-care and environmental education and training, whereas others receive absolutely no support. State support to help farmers cope with, and respond to, climatic events was widely perceived as inadequate, with frustrated farmers at Mothiba remarking that the Department of Agriculture has a reputation for ‘making empty promises’. Vuvha farmers called for regular community-wide environmental education but also wanted the approach and content – what climate change is and measures to ‘deal with things that bring about climate change’ – to be more preventative or proactive rather than reactive.

# Punching below their weight: YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS' RECENT VOTING PATTERNS

Tracking young people's election participation is one way of shedding light on the degree to which youth are choosing to engage with society and the national values embedded in the political system. *Duncan Scott, Mohammed Vawda, Sharlene Swartz and Arvin Bhana* present findings from work done for the most recent South African Status of Youth Report aimed at identifying key developmental issues facing young people between 14 and 35 years old.

The latest South African Status of Youth Report commissioned by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) focuses on issues identified in the National Youth Policy 2009 – 2014 for policy intervention. Taking these intervention areas as a starting point, the HSRC contributed four chapters to the Status of Youth Report. One of these, Social Cohesion and Civic Participation, focused in part on young people's involvement in local and general elections between 2006 and 2011. Drawing on voting data collected by the South African Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), this article describes four phenomena that have characterised the voting patterns of South African youth aged 18 to 34 over the past two municipal elections (2006 and 2011) and the most recent national election (2009). Though it is recognised globally that voter turnout is consistently lower in local than in national elections, data from the

2009 national election is included here to give a broad overview of young people's participation in elections over a six-year period. We do not compare the different types of elections directly.

## The majority of registered voters are young

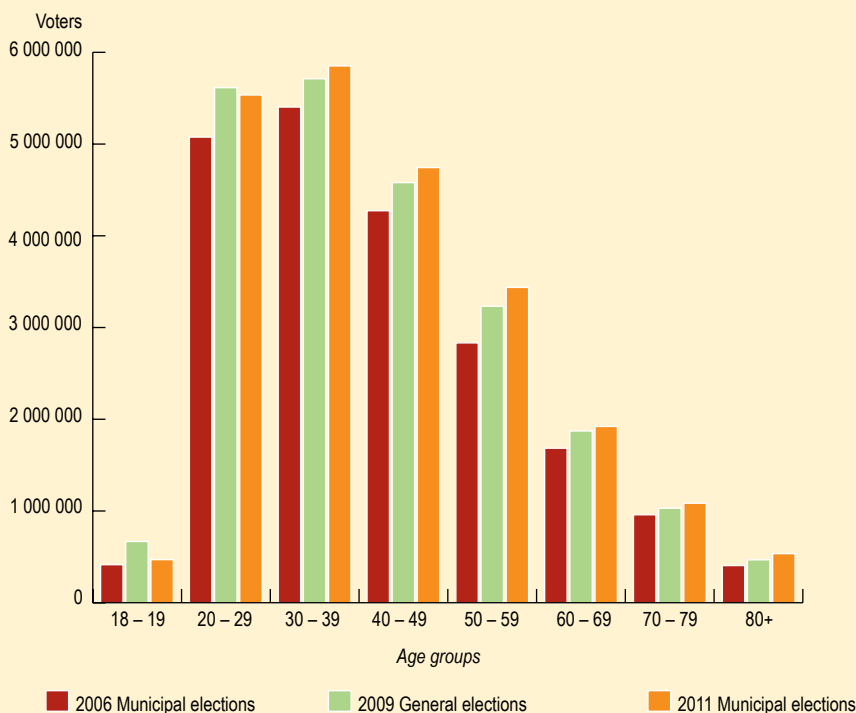
The first of these phenomena to emerge is that in each of the last three elections, young South Africans constituted the two largest blocs of registered individuals. Furthermore, a year-on-year increase in registered 30 to 39-year-olds, which is an 8.3% gain from 5.40 million in 2006 to 5.85 in 2011, reflected the sustained rise in registration numbers observed across most age groups.

The 20 – 29 group also followed this trend and in 2011 there were 9% more registered South Africans in that age group (5.53 million) than in 2006 (5.08 million), as Figure 1 shows.

## Youth voter registration remains stagnant

Despite this rise in voter registration numbers among youth, an appraisal of the mid-year 2011 population estimates (Statistics South Africa, 2011) reveals a second phenomenon, namely that the 2011 voters' roll for 20 to 29-year-olds represented only slightly more than 58% (1% higher than in 2006) of the country's 20 to 29-year-old population. Similarly, a comparison with mid-year population estimates in 2011 shows that just 76.6% (4% lower than in 2006)

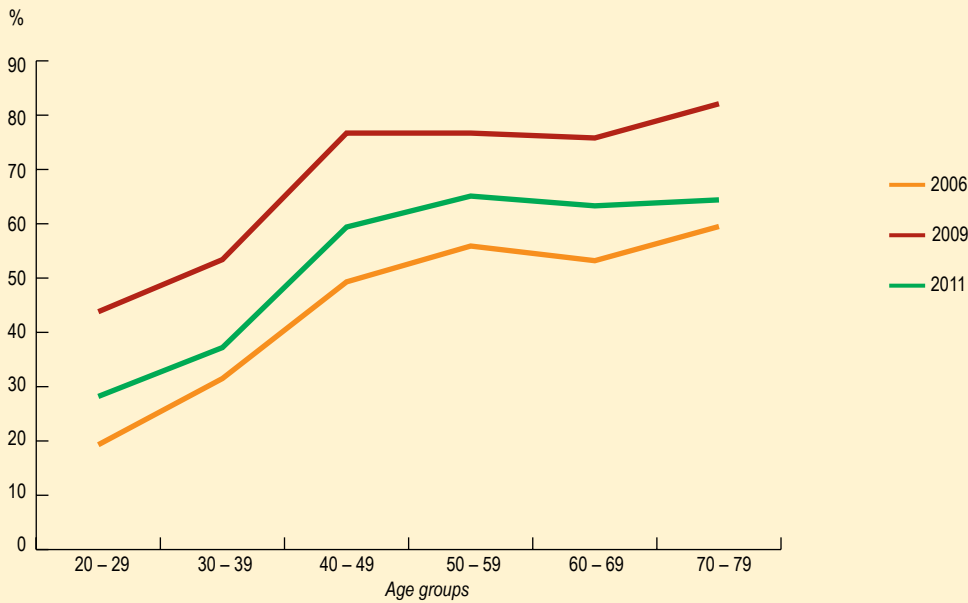
Figure 1. Estimated voter registration by age group: 2006 – 2011



Source: IEC (2006, 2009, 2011)

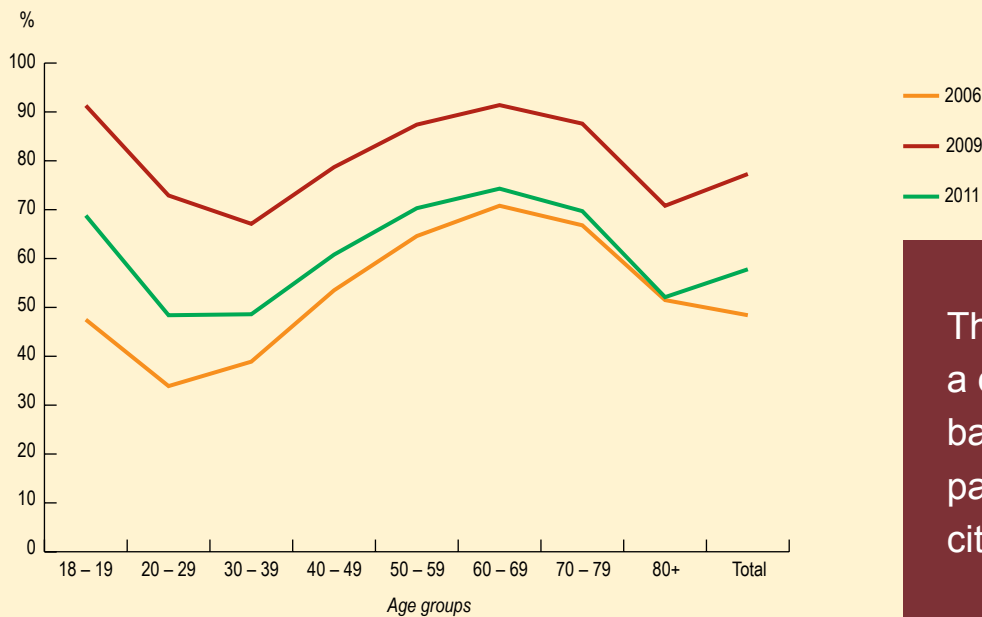
## >> Punching below their weight: YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS' RECENT VOTING PATTERNS (continued)

Figure 2. Voter turnout of different age groups as a percentage of total voting age population



Source: IEC (2006, 2009, 2011)

Figure 3. Turnout of age groups as a percentage of registered voters: 2006 – 2011



Source: IEC (2006, 2009, 2011)

The vitality of a democracy is based on the active participation of its citizens

of 30 to 39-year-olds registered to vote. In contrast, a registration rate of more than 90% is observed in the 40 to 49-year-old age group in 2006, 2009 and 2011. In summary, electoral data from the three most recent countrywide elections show that though voters' rolls have increased over the 2006 to 2011 period, the proportion of South African youth who register to vote has, in real terms, changed very little.

### Less than half the country's youth voted

This comparatively low level of young people's electoral involvement is even more starkly rendered when considering the voter turnout for the 2011 municipal elections as a proportion of the country's population as a whole: only 28% of the country's total 20 to 29-year-old population

participated in elections, as indicated by Figure 2. Correspondingly, only 37% of the 30 to 39-year-old group voted in 2011. The third phenomenon to emerge, therefore, is that the 20 to 29 and 30 – 39 age groups, incorporating the South African youth contingent, have over the past three countrywide elections shown the lowest levels of real participation in proportion to the total population estimate for each group.





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### Persistently low voting rates among the youth

The fourth phenomenon relates to the participation in elections of youth registered on the voters' roll. Remarkably, young people's turnout on Election Day itself shows the opposite trend to the registration numbers described in Figure 1. Figure 3 illustrates how, apart from the 80+ age group in the 2009 national elections, registered voters aged 20 to 29 years old and 30 to 39 years old have been least likely to participate on Election Day. In line with international trends, the most recent national elections drew notably more voters than the 2006 and 2011 municipal elections. However, only 72.9% of registered 20 to 29-year-olds and 67.1% of 30 to 39-year-olds voted in 2009; the proportion of these age groups were both lower, therefore, than the approximate national average of 77%. In 2011, the situation was similar when the turnouts of the 20 to 29 and 30 to 39 groups were both

more than 9% lower than the estimated national average of 58%. Regardless of the differences in national and local elections, with the exception of 18 to 19-year-olds, young voters are regularly less likely actually to turn out on Election Day than other age groups.

The most striking implication of these findings is that researchers and policy makers will need to address in depth the issue of low levels of electoral participation amongst youth. This is especially relevant when considering that young people aged 18 to 35 constitute a substantial proportion of the South African population. Since the vitality of a democracy is based on the active participation of its citizens, examining young South Africans' voting patterns provides a focal point for future research into the perceived legitimacy of the political system itself. Exploring questions such as 'What motivates young people to vote?' and 'Do youth today perceive election participation to

be as relevant as it was when the country held its first fully democratic elections in 1994?' will contribute to gaining an understanding of the ways in which contemporary South African youth interact with society and the issues that animate it. Figure 3 illustrates how the 18 to 19 age group had a consistently high voter turnout over the 2006 – 2011 period. The outcome of future research that foregrounds the questions mentioned above should contribute to interventions that seek to inculcate enthusiasm among these new voters. Nurturing young people's engagement as citizens and early political participation should also contribute to developing a constitutional connectedness within society, traditionally exemplified by the voting process.

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*Authors: Duncan Scott, researcher, Mohammed Vavda, researcher, Prof. Sharlene Swartz, research director, and Prof. Arvin Bhana, executive director, Human and Social Development, HSRC.*

The basis of the claim is that large corporations aided and abetted the National Party government in keeping the apartheid machinery running smoothly



The photograph was taken at the launch of the book – “All That Was Lost. Apartheid Violence: Third TRC participants speak” – Edited by Catherine C. Byrne, 2010.

## Apartheid victim group scores **SYMBOLIC VICTORY** against multinationals

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has left in its wake what *Villa-Vicencio & Du Toit* call ‘un-finished business’. This ‘un-finished business’ has now come back to haunt multinational corporations that are seen to have been complicit in supporting the apartheid government; and it comes in the form of litigation processes instituted by the Khulumani Support Group. *Narnia Bohler-Muller* looks at their success in seeking reparations.

Khulumani, an organisation that represents victims of apartheid human rights abuses who feel that they have not benefited from the TRC and other nation-building processes, takes the position that both reconciliation and reparations are necessary conditions for restorative, redistributive and social justice. The group therefore continues to petition the South African government and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJCD) to honour the payment of reparations to victims of apartheid crimes against humanity.

Over the past 11 years of its operations Khulumani has helped victims and survivors of apartheid-era violations to become self-reliant victors. Seventy-four per cent of their membership base of 54 000 are unemployed. Members report that their greatest need is for assistance and support to deal with interpersonal violence, in particular with domestic violence and its related challenges, including HIV/AIDS infection. Twenty per cent of their members openly state that they are affected by the pandemic.



The group was initially set up in response to the TRC hearings. Their humble beginning in 1995 was as a trauma centre where people could share their experiences in small groups in order to ensure that victim re-empowerment is in the hands of victims/survivors themselves.

### Legal actions against corporations

In 1973, the United Nations General Assembly opened the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid for signature and ratification. It defined the crime of apartheid as 'inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them', strengthening the group's case against multinationals.

The first Khulumani case (2002) was filed against a number of multinationals for 'aiding and abetting' apartheid crimes against humanity by allegedly supplying ammunition, technology, oil and loans to the National Party government.

The 23 corporate defendants included IBM, General Motors, Daimler-Chrysler, Rheinmetall Group, Shell, BP and Barclays Bank. The claim instituted against multinationals in the US is based on the 1789 Alien Tort Claims Act that provides for the rights of foreigners to institute lawsuits in the US for serious human rights violations.

Khulumani has alleged that the multinationals violated customary international law and a series of UN resolutions by aiding and abetting the crimes of apartheid, and that the defendants are liable to the plaintiffs for compensatory and punitive damages, as well as any other appropriate and equitable relief.

### Litigation and incomplete reconciliation

The South African government initially opposed the lawsuit (2003) because it was deemed to be political and not legal matters already dealt with by the TRC, and that using foreign courts to address matters central to the future of South Africa infringes on state sovereignty and would deter much needed foreign direct investment.

In the US, Justice Sprizzo dismissed the first case on the basis that the claims for

reparations would have serious consequences for US foreign relations and in particular commercial trade. The case then went on appeal. In October 2007, the US Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's ruling and held that companies may be held liable for 'aiding and abetting' a government's violations of international law. The case was referred back to the US District Court and is ongoing.

This litigation illustrates the 'unfinished business' of reconciliation in South Africa. For many victims and survivors the post-apartheid experience has become one of bitterness, broken promises and a sense of betrayal.

On 27 February 2012 a US court finalised a \$1.5 million settlement between General Motors Liquidation Company, formerly known as General Motors Corporation (GM), and the apartheid lawsuit claimants represented by Khulumani and those represented by Lungisile Ntsebeza. The settlement was made in 'good faith' and did not constitute an admission of guilt by GM. GM was accused of allegedly providing customised vehicles for the security forces to use in townships to stifle resistance.

Khulumani welcomed the decision and called on the remaining companies in the litigation – Ford Motor Company, IBM, Daimler and Rheinmetall – to also come to the table to negotiate a settlement.

### Litigation successes against human rights abuses

Recent development have strengthened the case of the apartheid litigants in the US. On 8 July 2011, in the case of *Doe v Exxon Mobil*, the DC Circuit Court in the US decided that 'aiding and abetting' liability is well established under international law. In this lawsuit, 15 Indonesian villagers from the oil-rich province of Aceh, Indonesia, claimed that during a period of civil unrest Exxon Mobil retained soldiers from Indonesia's military as guards for a natural gas facility in Aceh, despite knowing of past human rights abuses by the Indonesian army, leading to human rights violations against Aceh villagers. In its decision the court stated that the 1789 Act allowed corporations in foreign countries to be 'held liable for the torts committed by their agents'.

*Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum Co.* is another case in which the US Supreme Court must decide whether corporations

can be sued for violations of international human rights law. The case was brought by 12 plaintiffs from the Ogoni region of Nigeria against Royal Dutch (Shell) for its alleged complicity in serious human rights abuses. The plaintiffs allege that Shell aided and abetted the military dictatorship in Nigeria in the early 1990s, leading to arbitrary arrests, detention and torture. During this period, the Ogoni people protested against Shell's despoliation of the Niger Delta and demanded that Shell and the Nigerian government halt the destruction and share the benefits of Nigeria's oil wealth with the poverty-stricken Ogoni people. The claimants allege that Shell provided financial and other assistance to the military by brutally oppressing the Ogoni people.

These cases are very significant for the Khulumani South Africa Apartheid Litigation case as the basis of the claim is that large corporations aided and abetted the National Party government in keeping the apartheid machinery running smoothly, and should be held accountable for complicity in assisting with the perpetration of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity.

### Finishing the 'unfinished business'

While the legal procedures and negotiations with multinationals continue, Khulumani has called on the South African government to become a partner in the 'unfinished business' of restoring the lives and the losses of victims of apartheid-era crimes. In memoranda delivered to the DOJCD and the Presidency, the group requested government to 'join victims and survivors of apartheid gross human rights abuses to close the gaps in post-apartheid injustices'.

GM's largely symbolic reparations had very real benefits and set a good example of what can be done towards the attainment of socioeconomic justice by compensating victims of crimes against humanity and acknowledging their suffering, past and present, as they strive to better their own lives.

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*Author: Dr Narnia Bobler-Muller, acting executive director, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery, HSRC*

Read more on



[www.khulumani.net/khulumani/statements.html](http://www.khulumani.net/khulumani/statements.html)

# Let's talk about **HIV AND AIDS**

**A study of 15 schools in six African countries examined whether a process of dialogue between teachers, community members and Grade 6 learners could help build a participatory curriculum in HIV/AIDS and sex education that takes into account learners' knowledge of sexuality. *Duncan Scott, Sharlene Swartz, Colleen McLaughlin and Susan Kiragu* report that participants' attitudes towards the curriculum and each other changed over the year, but it involved developing strategies to transcend cultural barriers to learning.**

The African Sexual Knowledges study, conducted in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and funded by the Commonwealth Education Trust, focused on schools in South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, Tanzania, Ghana and Kenya. The first phase resulted in a book entitled *Old Enough to Know* (HSRC Press, 2012) and showed that Grade 6 learners living in poor communities invariably know more about sex than adults (including educators) and the school curriculum are willing to acknowledge.

In Phase 2, an innovative consultation process was designed to enrich the Grade 6 HIV/AIDS and sex education curriculum to address this gap between 'everyday' informal sexual knowledge and 'school-based' sexual knowledge.



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Learners' existing sexual knowledge should not be underestimated or ignored when planning sexual education

## Local culture was often cited as a barrier to speaking about sexuality, HIV and AIDS

### Methods

Drawing on results from Phase 1 research, we designed a toolkit for practitioners to give educators a starting point from which to consult Grade 6 learners on their informal sexual knowledge. We used these toolkits to gather information through activities suggested in the toolkit. Educators met twice in a term with a small curriculum development group (CDG) comprising four learners, two community representatives and an NGO-based HIV/AIDS consultant to act as a resource to the group.

The CDG was tasked with supporting the teacher in planning new, participatory curriculum activities. As a nodal point between the school and community, the CDG embodied the project's aim to begin a sustainable and careful consultative process that would require minimal external involvement, relying instead on local initiative. The data gathered using these methodologies, together with lesson observations, qualitative interviews conducted over the course of the year with each of the participants, and pre- and post-test questionnaires, helped to gauge the influence of the toolkit and consultative model in changing educators' approaches to teaching and the attitudes of participants towards sociocultural restraints. Though the impact of these interventions on individuals differed quite considerably between countries, initial analysis of results shows three salient findings.

### Finding

#### Cultural barriers between adults and children need to be overcome

A common theme among teachers, community representatives (often parents) and children was the frequent reference to local culture during interviews and initial CDG meetings as a barrier to speaking about sexuality, HIV and AIDS.

What differed across countries was the extent to which these traditions continued to limit relationship-building over the course of the project. Teachers in Botswana and South Africa, for example, appeared most restrained by culture. An illustration of how these mores impacted on the possibility of dialogue was the outcome of the first CDG meeting in a Langa-based Cape Town school. At the close of a strained 30-minute meeting, the life orientation educator declared with finality that the learners would not speak while teachers were present.

The tension between educators and learners never left the CDG entirely, but participants nonetheless became more open with each other as they met regularly over several months. The HIV/AIDS consultant, as a third party who could act as an intermediary between generations, proved to play a vital role in this transition toward listening to each other's opinions.

#### HIV/AIDS consultant a necessary presence

In South Africa, where trust between adults and children develops relatively slowly, the consultant acted primarily to overcome this barrier. While similar barriers existed to a lesser extent in Swaziland, educators there most valued the consultant's presence as a coach on issues pertaining to HIV and AIDS. While one Ghanaian teacher commented that the consultant was providing insufficient support, the consultant proved pivotal in providing educators with information and teaching material for lessons planned during CDG meetings. This trend was noted across the countries that the consultant, either as a specialist on HIV and AIDS or as an enabling third party, was central to the success of the process.

#### Improved confidence among some learners and teachers

Though the project was intended to impact all Grade 6 learners through improved HIV/AIDS and sex education lessons, a trend across countries was that the most significant changes were seen in children who were part of the CDGs. Several of these learners, though not all, reported increased confidence in sharing their experiences in their group, saying they had begun to 'feel free' among adults. Furthermore, some learners showed initiative in taking up a peer education role. In certain cases this took the form of informally engaging fellow Grade 6s. In other situations, educators gave the CDG learners opportunities in class to give feedback and take questions from their classmates.

Among teachers, instances occurred in each country in which educators indicated that the CDG process helped them to overcome a lack of confidence and gain teaching skills. One Kenyan teacher stated, 'I am a shy person. I didn't know I could organise and chair a meeting. I found now I can do it, I have the courage'. From the Swaziland site, one teacher who was particularly reserved at

the start of the study, was described by his head teacher at the conclusion of the project as having 'moved out of the cocoon'.

#### Opportunities for change

These three findings give an indication of the importance of opportunities for meaningful discussion between educators, learners and community representatives, both inside and outside the classroom. With respect to the implementation of the consultative process and use of the toolkit, it became apparent through interviews and observation that participants need support on several fronts if the process is to succeed. This is most true of the early stages, when teachers need to be prepared on how to lead the CDG meetings and develop confidence in using the toolkit.

While teacher preparation is primarily a researcher-based support initiative, educators in Botswana and South Africa expressed their desire for increased parent involvement in children's learning experiences. They indicated that parents' lack of interest in children's school lives often results in educators 'going beyond the call of duty for the sake of the kids'. The theme of teacher fatigue and isolation was borne out in one Ghanaian teacher's statement with regard to the project that 'everything is based on the teacher, it is up to the teacher to do everything'. Some teachers perceived the toolkit and CDG meetings as creating an added burden. This was a palpable obstacle to the creation of 'dialogic spaces'.

This project has taken the first steps in outlining the obstacles and facilitators of a community-based and teacher-led process of taking learners' sexual knowledge and pedagogical ideas into account when planning lessons. The themes that have emerged will contribute to future interventions and a revised and simplified toolkit. As an attempt to challenge the way that children's own sexual knowledge has been overlooked, the results of the ASKAIDS project indicate quite clearly that sociocultural barriers can be transcended, though these changes take time.

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*Authors: Duncan Scott, researcher, and Sharlene Swartz, co-principal investigator and research director, Human and Social Development, HSRC; Colleen McLaughlin, principal investigator and programme leader, and Susan Kiragu, researcher, Centre for Commonwealth Education at the University of Cambridge.*

# SOUND BUT FEASIBLE?

## revisiting authentic assessment

The multifaceted debate around educational standards and assessment has taken a notable turn. In recent decades, there is a renewed interest in assessment instruments known as 'authentic assessment', comprising elements markedly similar to outcomes-based assessment. *Ke Yu and George Frempong* take a critical look at the advantages and disadvantages inherent in this form of assessment.

Teachers have always used classroom tests and quizzes to check the progress of learners. When the stakes are higher, for example when a learner's fitness for graduation must be determined, an external test is usually administered.

External and highly standardised tests are often considered to be more efficient and cost-effective. Among the criticisms of this form of traditional assessment, the chief argument questions its validity in that it may not truly reflect learner competence. There are also doubts whether these tests, particularly when they involve mainly multiple-choice questions, could adequately assess higher-order thinking rather than merely rote learning and fact recall. These tests also often come at a high price, such as exacerbating exam anxiety and promoting the teach-to-test syndrome.

### Birth of the 'authentic' assessment

These concerns have led to the search for an alternative form of assessment and the birth of the 'authentic assessment' movement. Authentic assessment is a collective term referring mainly to diversification of assessment tools (tests, observations, portfolios, performance, projects, self-assessments, peer assessments and others). Although the concept itself is under constant redefinition, it is generally agreed that it presents assessment tasks in



Do classroom tests adequately assess higher-order thinking rather than merely rote learning and fact recall?

real-world problem contexts; the assessment is continuously re-distributing the high stakes involved in single assessments, and emphasises using the assessment to promote and facilitate learning instead of using it mainly for evaluation and monitoring purposes.

Authentic assessment involves promoting and facilitating learning instead of using it mainly for evaluation and monitoring purposes.

Grant Wiggins, an internationally recognised expert who has been working in assessment reform for more than 25 years, stresses the importance of recognising that competency is context-bound. To assume that all learners everywhere have the same 'knowledge' is to short-circuit a vital educational dialogue in a pluralistic and diverse society.

### Authentic assessment not widely implemented

However, despite the apparent logic underpinning this new form of assessment, despite various degrees of policy alignment in this regard, school leaving certificates in most countries still rely largely on traditional single, external and large-scale assessments. Some countries have also experienced a notable counter movement that promotes more centrally controlled, larger national assessments.

Classroom practices, according to many scholars, have also mainly manifested rigid application of certain practices, like compiling portfolios or using open-ended questions to replace multiple-choice ones, failing to reflect the true essence of the new assessment that aims at facilitating learning. The question is, why?

### Issues of reliability, accountability and cost-effectiveness

We argue that despite the obvious advantages of authentic assessment, it has not sufficiently addressed the reasons why traditional assessment has been widely used in the first place, namely, the concern over accountability, reliability, cost-effectiveness and competition.

Accountability, inevitably due to increasing pressure to demonstrate tax revenue, calls for benchmarks and common platforms where the functioning of schools, districts and provinces within the system can be monitored and their accountability demonstrated.

Reliability manifests in two ways. The first relates to teachers' objectivity, judgement error and bias that could have been exacerbated by the external accountability pressure. The second is a wide-spread observation that although teachers know the learners better and are therefore logically in a better position to provide accurate assessments, many are inadequately trained or ill-prepared for designing, conducting and recording assessments, particularly authentic assessments.

The increasing mobility of the world population is accompanied by pressures to standardise educational and qualification systems, including assessment systems, to facilitate education credit transfer, as well as to demonstrate the quality and competitiveness of a system to potentially attract pupils.

### Individualisation vs. competition

The prominence given to individualisation under authentic assessment implies that the more comparison and competition is removed from assessment opportunities, the more the focus could shift to progress rather than achievement or failure alone. However, competition is often believed to bring out the best in pupils. The removal of comparison and competition does not prepare learners for a society in which comparison and competition are the norm.

A deliberate avoidance of comparison could also provide weaker learners with excuses not to catch up, turning a social into an educational disadvantage, with the vicious circle of low expectation and low achievement. Meanwhile, the key danger in the area of competition, which is not competition itself, but rather lack of provision of support to the less competitive, is often not adequately examined, not only diverting the quest to facilitate healthy competition but also running the risk of missing the target completely.

Individualised assessment also means more work for the teachers. The perceived extra work and time required for the authentic assessment are regularly cited as the most important reason for its failure to be implemented in the classrooms. To expect a teacher to prepare individually-tailored assessments and to use that information to inform instruction is to expect individual tutoring.

This is in direct contradiction to the important aim of education in the current age: namely education for all, targeting the inclusion of the largest number of learners so no-one is left behind. In addition, complexity – developing routine and habit – has been continuously identified as an important feature of classroom teaching. This again is at odds with the individualised element implied by authentic assessment.

### Inherent limitations in authentic assessment

Because of these reasons, we caution authentic assessment advocates to recognise the limitations of such a movement, and to address the important practical issues before advocating this form of assessment. Some of the practical matters we outlined include further exploration of the optimal balance between applied and abstract knowledge; the possibility of developing better authenticity in standardised tests, for example multiple choice questions that require high order thinking; engage in discussions on how to judge the quality of various authentic assessment activities; the quality of the teaching force, particularly in terms of their assessment skills; and the time teachers needed to implement authentic assessment.

There should also be greater clarity and explicit guidelines on the following questions:

- Should a teacher use the same or different assessment tools to collect various outputs?
- Should teachers vary the ways they record and report assessment information for each student?
- How long should assessment records be kept?

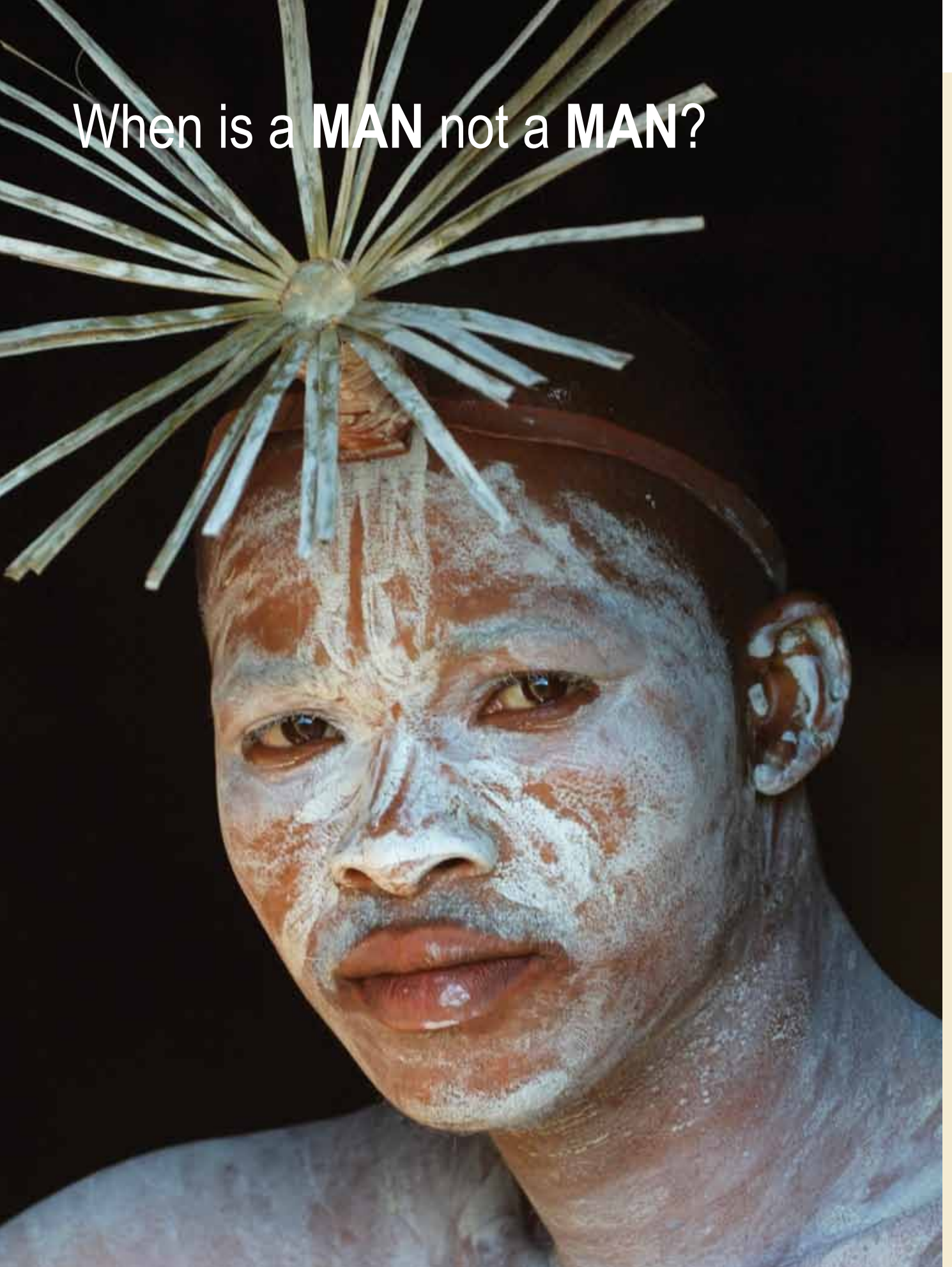
In summary, although authentic assessment sounds appealing, many theoretical and practical factors as outlined could hinder its wider application in education systems as well as in classroom practices. Because of this, we argue that some of these concerns should be addressed first for authentic assessment to acquire greater legitimacy and realising its potential.

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*Based on the paper of the same title in the journal Education as Change, 16 (1), 143-157*

When is a **MAN** not a **MAN**?



The important role the practice plays in linking individuals to their communities

## The re-introduction in some areas of traditional male circumcision contributes to exacerbating the problem of botched circumcisions, rendering its use as a method to reduce the scourge of HIV/AIDS ineffective, said *Thando Mgqolozana* at an HSRC seminar entitled, *A Man Who is Not a Man*, which is also the name of his book. *Mokgaetji Shadung* reports.

Every year around winter, many young men set off eagerly to the mountains to experience the long awaited ritual of circumcision in the 'traditional' way. Sadly, not all have a successful rite of passage into manhood. Horror stories of botched circumcisions and young initiates dying at the hands of careless and untrained surgeons are reported annually, yet the problem persists.

Questions of why and how these incidents are allowed to continue unabated are among the reasons why author *Thando Mgqolozana's* book on traditional circumcision and how this topic is often shrouded in secrecy, plays such a significant role in creating a better understanding of this cultural practice, albeit in the guise of fiction.

### Community perceptions of the initiate

At the seminar, attended by academics and members of civil society, *Mgqolozana* discussed the motivation behind his book, *A Man who is not a Man*. 'It was a compelling story within me that needed to get out,' he said.

In the book, *Mgqolozana* explores the journey of a young man into manhood and how the experience alters the way the community perceives him. The book explores the complexities and importance of undergoing a successful initiation, as well as how this ensures that young men gain respect from their elders, peers and juniors in their respective communities.

Having grown up in a village in the Ciskei, Eastern Cape, *Mgqolozana* understands all too well the subject of circumcision and how the topic may only be broached by other circumcised men. 'It is regarded as a business for men, thereby creating a divide in terms of gender.'

The veil of secrecy which often shrouds circumcision and how it is discussed in society has frequently caused a gender rift which has in turn made it difficult to address the problems that plague this traditional rite of passage.

'If you are not circumcised, you are regarded as a "sissy" or as not being enough of a man,' said *Mgqolozana*.

### Factors in botched circumcisions

Although male circumcision has been and continues to be practised in different cultures in South Africa, *Mgqolozana* argues that its re-introduction into certain cultures, specifically in KwaZulu-Natal, will not yield any new positive or significant results.

He said that all those advocating the re-introduction of traditional male circumcision only needed to observe the high number of botched circumcisions and deaths to realise that it is not a solution to the problem.

Rather, *Mgqolozana* believes that re-inspiring the tradition of male circumcision serves only to maximise the problem, thus rendering the effort to use it as a method to reduce the scourge of HIV/AIDS ineffective. 'No one talks about the monitoring and evaluation process,' he adds.

For *Mgqolozana*, the process of ensuring that an initiate's transition into manhood is a smooth one is often neglected because of the secrecy which surrounds the practice and the reluctance of some guardians or elders to take responsibility for ensuring that those who choose to undergo the ritual do not fall prey to inexperienced traditional surgeons.

He went on to suggest that the lack of early intervention for young black initiates was among the factors contributing to the increasing number of botched circumcisions annually.

### Positive benefits of circumcision

Even though the book explores some of the negative effects associated with some initiation schools, other panel members such as Professor *Sharlene Swartz*, of the HSRC, acknowledged the important role the practice plays in linking individuals to their communities. Some of the positive effects of initiation ceremonies highlighted by *Swartz* include education, a source of sexual information and guidance on how to treat women and older people, and respect for culture. It also assists in instilling moral

values, how to handle intergenerational contact and gender relations, and aids identity development.

*Swartz* asked key questions on the initiation process, such as how a cultural practice might be 'changed' to limit its risks while still maintaining its positive benefits; whose role it is to promote, critique, challenge or change traditional practices; and how roles as activists, academics and cultural gatekeepers might differ. Other participants in the discussion privy to the cultural practices of initiation ceremonies, specifically those in the Xhosa culture, pointed out that the support given to an initiate by his clan, especially from his paternal side, was crucial in determining whether an initiate's stay at the mountain would be successful or not.

Although all participants in the discussion had different views on their perceptions of *Mgqolozana's* book and the traditional practice of circumcision, there was a general agreement that the book helped to challenge and address meanings around young black men's transition into adulthood.

For some, like *D. Benita Moolman*, the book forms an important tool for feminist engagement with changing masculinities. In doing so, it challenges gendered transformation by focusing on 'changing masculinities' and transformation.

Either way, the book is integral to gaining insight into the complexities of traditional circumcision.

*Swartz* added that the book, although a work of fiction, offers an important contribution to multiple debates at multiple levels. She said the book would be useful in a school setting where learners would have the opportunity to talk about culture and transitions. This in turn would also serve as a mechanism to encourage reading among the youth as the topic would be an issue they would have tackled or experienced at some time in their lives.

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BOOKS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Crisis! What Crisis?

The multiple dimensions of the Zimbabwean crisis



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Sarah Chiumbu and  
Muchaparara Musemwa

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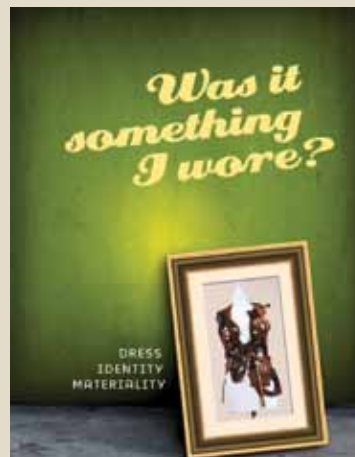
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*Crisis! What Crisis! The Multiple Dimensions of the Zimbabwean Crisis* argues that the Zimbabwean crisis is in fact a series of crises. From infrastructural problems and disease to a depreciating currency and an increasing muscular militarism, the citizens of Zimbabwe have faced an ongoing struggle to survive. The book explores the resilience of a people as they navigate the multiple challenges they face in the country of their birth. In an inter-disciplinary approach, the authors of *Crisis! What Crisis!* engage with issues as diverse as resource politics and livelihoods, migration and disembedding, language, and humour to demonstrate the ingenious ways in which citizens mediate the crisis. Typically, the book includes an exploration of how social media offer a subversive space that flies in the face of increasing restrictions placed on conventional media within Zimbabwe and the government's aggressive efforts to suppress freedom of speech.

'Sarah Chiumbu and Muchaparara Musemwa present an insightful collection which unsettles, provokes, challenges and enlightens its readers: a dazzling demonstration of courageous scholarship.' – Pumla Dineo Gqola, author of *What is slavery to me? Postcolonial/ Slave Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa*.

## Was it something I wore?

Dress, identity, materiality



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People often wear their causes on their t-shirts, in their choice of traditional attire or other garments, or by way of specific costumes, pieces of jewellery or particular accessories. In *Was it something I wore? Dress, identity, materiality*, the contributors explore the construction and performance of personal and social identities. The essays point to the significance of dress as material culture in social science research not only in their content but also in their focus on a variety of methodologies including memory work, visual studies, autoethnography, object biographies and other forms of textual analysis.

*Was it something I wore?* is one of the most compelling books I have read on any subject in a long time. A stunning multi-disciplinary collection of essays on the significance of clothing to understanding the complexities of individual, collective, and national experiences, this book illustrates in meticulous detail the many ways in which dress really matters. Quite a feat and what a read!

**Sandra Weber, Professor of Education**  
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