HARVESTING CHILDHOOD:
Causes, nature and impact
of child agricultural labour

HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO
Dr Olive Shisana

The 3rd SA AIDS Conference: what now?

IT WAS A GREAT HONOUR for me to serve as chair of the 3rd South African AIDS Conference. With the assistance of a very able team, including Bridgette Prince of the HSRC and Pieter Swart of the Dira Singwe Board as well as track chairs, we mounted a truly successful conference. The theme of the conference was designed to help us build true consensus among the more than 4 000 participants from 60 countries. In fact, this is the first conference where the activists did not demonstrate. They played a critical role in both organising the conference and speaking at it.

AIDS conferences are usually big events which people attend in order to obtain the latest research information, share ideas and network with other people and organisations dealing with HIV and AIDS. This year, in a session called exchange encounters, we added a track to the scientific programme that accommodated non-scientists who wanted to exchange views on critical issues. It proved to be very popular. We also convened a pre-conference meeting in which we identified the areas of the National Strategic Plan on HIV, AIDS and STIs 2007–2011 (NSP) in which there was disagreement on how we should implement the intervention. South African scientists, activists, government and non-governmental organisations discussed these issues until they reached consensus.

Out of these consensus-building meetings, a draft Durban II Declaration on HIV and AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care (Durban II Declaration, in short) emerged. This was presented and debated at a roundtable at the conference. Participants' comments were incorporated into the Declaration, which was then handed over to the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) to assist in translating the *what* of the Declaration into the *how* of the NSP.

But we need to deepen our ambitions in order to face the wider challenge of how to take the Durban II Declaration forward. We need to build on the growing momentum in support of the implementation of the NSP.

The Durban II Declaration is a commitment to address the HIV and AIDS crisis through actions that are most likely to have a significant impact on fighting HIV and AIDS in South Africa. In the interest of fighting the epidemic collectively at various levels, the organisers of the South African AIDS Conference are calling on key role-players and leaders in the corporate health sector to support the following recommendations:

- Improving access to HIV testing and counselling through both provider- and client-initiated approaches;
- Introducing social and behavioural interventions, targeting HIV-positive and HIV-negative people.
- Promoting safe infant feeding practices;
- Expanding access to Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) for use by people of all ages;
- Encouraging male circumcision, which has been shown to reduce the risk of female-to-male transmission;
- Providing sufficient female condoms, supporting research into less expensive female condoms and promoting the use thereof through advocacy and education; and
- Conducting HIV-prevention research on microbicides and vaccines.

By supporting the declaration, you will encourage the implementation of these actions. Go to the conference website, www.saaids.com, from where you may submit your support using the on-line form and give your comments on the recommendations.

We have subsequently convened the final meeting and have agreed that many of the recommendations put forward in the NSP should be tackled by SANAC Research Sector because a lot of the issues fit logically within its structure. The meeting also recommended that SANAC should extend these issues to include other sectors of the organisation.

News**Roundup**

HOW WELL ARE OUR CHILDREN?

To know how children are doing and the extent to which policies and interventions are making a difference to their well-being and outcomes, a conceptually grounded and evidence-based approach to indicators and monitoring systems is essential, said Professor Andy Dawes at the launch of a book on monitoring child well-being at the Cape Town Book Fair in July.

He said South Africa has never had a consistent and comprehensive approach to monitoring the situation of children, and the primary objective of the book is to address these issues and fulfil the need for a sound monitoring system.

The book provides a conceptual framework and recommendations for a comprehensive set of indicators for monitoring the well-being of children (and adolescents) designed to contribute to the development of reliable indicator data at all levels of government.

'The book does not occupy a neutral space,' said Dawes. 'While we have tried to base the work on the best evidence around, our project has its ideological underpinnings in the child-rights ideology that is rooted in the South African Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, among other instruments.

'However, I should make it clear that the book does not purport to be the definitive text for monitoring children's rights in South Africa. That would be a task for child-rights lawyers and related specialists, which we are not.'

He explained that where the rights base enters the picture is when indicators are developed to monitor government's delivery of services to which children have a right and which are required to promote their well-being and development. A rights-based approach is also designed to hold duty bearers to account – those who are responsible for children, including parents, teachers, social workers and those at various levels of the policy chain in government.

To make the material more accessible, the authors have developed 14 core indicator sets, together with an explanation of how indicators work, and have placed them on the internet for free download (www.hsrc.ac.za).

Monitoring Child Well-being: A South African rights-based approach, **by Andrew Dawes, Rachel Bray, Amelia van der Merwe (eds) can be downloaded for free, or ordered from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.**

Ms Amelia van der Merwe, a research associate of the HSRC and co-editor of Monitoring Child Well-being *with editor, Prof. Andy Dawes, a director in the HSRC's Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) programme, and Dr Cathy Ward, also from CYFSD at the launch of the book in Cape Town.*

NEW @ HSRC

PROFESSOR AKIM MTURI has been appointed as a chief research specialist in the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA). Before joining the HSRC he was an associate professor of demography at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban). He also held lecturing posts at the University of Dar es Salaam and the National University of Lesotho.

DR PETER JACOBS, formerly a senior lecturer in the Department of Economics at the University of the Western Cape, has been appointed on a part-time secondment as a research specialist in the Urban, Rural and Economic Development (URED) programme.

DR BONGANI BANTWINI has been appointed as a senior research specialist in the Education, Science and Skills Development (ESSD) programme. Before joining the HSRC he was a teaching instructor for an elementary science methods course at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

DR VINCENT AGU is the new director of the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA) network, bringing with him many years of experience with the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a focal point for NEPAD in Geneva, where he was responsible for building and maintaining partnerships and alliances with the African Union. Prior to that he was manager of the Community Health Cluster at WHO.

PROFESSOR MUKULO KONGOLO has been appointed as the director of Capacity Development at the HSRC. Before joining the HSRC he was Professor of Economics at the University of the Western Cape (Bellville) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus).

DR VIJAY REDDY, the acting executive director of the Education, Science and Skills Development (ESSD) research programme for the past year, has been appointed permanently in that position. She joined the HSRC in 2002 as chief research specialist and was later promoted to director of the then Assessment Technology and Education Evaluation programme at the HSRC, which was integrated into ESSD in 2005.

News**Roundup**

EU'S CONTACT POINT FOR HUMANITIES AT HSRC

Dr Christa van Zyl

Dr Christa van Zyl, the director and head of Business Development at the HSRC, has been appointed by the Department of Science and Technology as the National Contact Point (NCP) to provide guidance and assistance to South African participants in the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for two research themes, namely, *Socio-economic sciences and the humanities*; and *Science in society*.

The South African NCP Network consists of experts appointed because of their knowledge and experience of participation in European research programmes, as well as their understanding of South Africa's research strengths in the thematic areas they are responsible for.

The NCP Network is responsible for:

- Raising awareness about FP7 opportunities among the South African research community;
- Preparing the South African research community for participation in the FP7;
- Signposting concerns from the South African research community to the Department of Science and Technology;
- Advising, assisting and training South African FP7 participants with regard to FP7 rules of participation as well as strategic objectives;
- Marketing South African scientific and technological excellence in other FP7 participating countries; and
- Networking with counterpart NCPs in the European Union in order to assist South African FP7 participants in finding European partners.

The South African FP7 Network of National Contact Points is managed by the Department of Science and Technology's Unit Strategic Partnerships.

Under the theme *Socio-economic sciences and the humanities*, the objective is to generate an in-depth, shared understanding of complex and interrelated socio-economic challenges facing Europe, such as growth, employment and competitiveness, social cohesion and sustainability, quality of life, education, cultural issues and global interdependence, in particular with the view to providing an improved knowledge base for policies in the fields concerned.

Under the second research theme, *Science in society*, the objective is to build an effective and democratic European knowledge-based society, with an aim to stimulate the harmonious integration of scientific and technological endeavour and associated research policies into European society.

For more information, go to http://www.esastap.org.za.

WALKING A FEW STEPS WITH MOTHERS LIVING WITH HIV

Project Masihambisane, which means 'Let's walk together', is a new project that aims to test a 'mentor mother' programme, providing clinic-based support to improve the health and well-being of HIV-positive mothers and their babies during pregnancy and the first year of life.

The project leaders are Professor Linda Richter (HSRC) and Professor Mary Jane Rotheram of the Center for Community Health at the University of California, Los Angeles, and it is funded by the US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The project will be directed by Tamsen Rochat with support from Heidi Van Rooyen, both from the HSRC.

The intervention will be tested in eight primary healthcare clinics and participants will be from the Department of Health's prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes.

Participants in four of the clinics will receive the PMTCT programme, while in four intervention clinics the mentor mother support programme will supplement the PMTCT programme. The intervention will be delivered in four visits during pregnancy and four visits after giving birth (which is similar to the scheduled clinic visits for healthcare) in a group-based programme. The intervention will focus on caring for one's health, parenting a baby, maintaining mental health and reducing HIV transmission. All participants will receive health information materials in both the control and intervention clinics.

The intervention's impact will be assessed over 12 months in an effectiveness trial. The hypothesis is that mothers living with HIV who participate in the intervention will demonstrate significantly improved

health-related knowledge, behaviour and support, and that over time, this will improve the mothers' and children's health and well-being.

The project team will be based at CYSFD's Sweetwaters site outside Pietermartizburg and will build on and strengthen the existing Project Accept site infrastructure.

Phase one of the trial – including ethics, community preparation and scoping, staffing and systems development – is currently underway. Fieldwork is expected to begin mid 2008.

For more information on Project Accept, go to http://www.hsrc.ac.za.

The ART of safe sex

A small study exploring perceptions of risk, safe sex and the severity of HIV and AIDS showed that people on antiretroviral therapy (ART) were less careful in practising safe sex. The study showed a need to communicate appropriate HIV-prevention messages to those on treatment, says study leader, VUYISWA MATHAMBO.

ART IS KNOWN TO REDUCE VIRAL LOADS, AIDS-related illnesses and deaths, and to improve the quality of life of those taking this treatment. But concerns have been raised about the perceptions of risk as well as the behaviour of those receiving ART.

The study involved a survey on sexual practices and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the past 2–3 months among 104 HIV-positive men and women who had been receiving ART for more than 6 months, and 111 HIV-positive men and women not receiving ART at the time of the study.

The demographic characteristics of both the treatment and non-treatment groups were similar. Most respondents were women aged 26–30, unmarried, with a secondary-level qualification and unemployed.

In both groups, the majority of respondents were told they were HIV-positive in 2004. This is indicative of the time at which the clinic started offering HIV clinical care. Although all respondents had disclosed their status in the treatment group, five had not done so in the non-treatment group, mainly due to the fear of discrimination.

Respondents in both groups were interviewed on their perceptions of the severity of HIV and AIDS and on how often they practised safe sex. Figure 1 below shows that a higher proportion of respondents in the treatment group compared to those in the non-treatment group viewed AIDS to be no longer a life threatening disease, and reported practising safe sex less often since starting treatment six months ago. Furthermore, a higher proportion of respondents in the treatment group disagreed with the statement 'being HIV-positive is still a big deal now that treatments are available'.
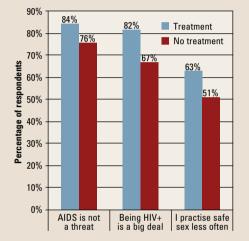

Figure 1: Perceived severity of HIV and AIDS by treatment group

While acknowledging the difficulty of linking risk perceptions and sexual practices, it was notable that some respondents had sought treatment for STIs in both groups in the past 2–3 months. Of the 69 respondents who had had sexual relations *in the non-treatment group*, it was worrying that 22 had sought treatment for STIs in the past 2–3 months.

Although only 9 (out of 71) respondents had sought treatment for STIs *in the treatment group*, it was noteworthy that 2 had sought treatment for 2 illness episodes during the period under review. The proportion of respondents seeking STI treatment in the treatment group could be suggestive of their improved access to reproductive-health services or of their reluctance to report these illness episodes since starting treatment.

It should be noted that the study site is located within a hospital founded on a Catholic ethos. As such, condom use was encouraged but condoms were not necessarily available at the clinic. Poor access to condoms within the clinic may have been a barrier to some respondents who wanted to practice safe sex but could not afford to buy condoms.

In seeking to protect patients and their partners from the risks of unsafe sex, health workers have to find innovative ways of facilitating patients' access to condoms and other forms of contraception, and of communicating prevention messages. It seems that telling HIV-positive sexually active adults to be 'well-behaved' is a bit short-sighted. ●

Ms Vuyiswa Mathambo is a research manager in the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) research programme. She conducted the study while in the employment of the Health Systems Trust, as part of the Treatment Monitor Project.

'We were told to be well-behaved so that we can live longer'.

Secondary prevention messages for heterosexual men and women receiving antiretroviral treatment

Mapping **communications access** in South Africa

Access to landlines and cellular phones is regarded as an important development goal for South Africa. In their study, ANDREW PATERSON, JOAN ROODT and GINA WEIR-SMITH found that the Limpopo Province has the lowest access to telephone communication in the country, whereas Gauteng and the Western Province have the highest.

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION of the population does not have equitable access to information and communication technology (ICT). Therefore, the pattern according to which ICT access – and usage – is distributed between different areas (rural–urban), and demographically between different socio-economic classes (rich–poor) is of critical importance to development.

ICT, which includes telecommunications, computers, the internet and other electronic devices, is also important to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGI-SA), launched by government in 2006. President Mbeki identified a group of key factors which affect the goal of achieving 6% economic growth and halving unemployment and poverty in South Africa by 2014. One of these factors is the cost of telecommunications.

To develop appropriate strategies and policies to achieve the above, there must be a clear understanding of where we are now and what we need to do. Achievements must be measured against defined aims for generating ICT access, where access refers to 'the ability to use a communication network at a reasonable distance and at an affordable price, which provides relevant information and has the necessary capacity'.

We aimed to establish how many people have access to landlines and cellular phones by calculating the proportions of households that have access to telecommunications per municipal area, based on data derived from the South African Census of 2001 and the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) conducted by the HSRC in 2003. Using Geographical Information Systems (GIS), a form of computer software that describes data in map form, we can show what proportions of the population resident in a particular municipality have access to telecommunications. From this, we can develop a picture of the relative difference in access to telecommunications across the 262 local municipalities in South Africa which enables us to make an important contribution to public understanding of the spatial dimensions of telecommunication access between South African urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

The maps shown here indicate how particular local authorities are placed in respect to telecommunication access for resident populations.

ACCESS TO LANDLINES

In the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, the percentage of households with access to fixed lines is higher than the national average. Limpopo has an exceptionally low average access, compared to the other provinces (Table 1).

Population size, population density and income levels can strongly influence access to landline infrastructure. Within provinces, landline access is unevenly distributed, with higher concentrations of access in the metropolitan areas and major cities with good infrastructure and higher household income levels, such as Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Kimberley, Johannesburg and Pretoria. In these cities, between 25.01% and 59.96% of households have access to landlines (Figure 1). Provinces where higher proportions of the population reside in urban or metropolitan areas, such as Gauteng, may have higher average levels of access to telephone communications.

The overwhelming majority of municipalities have landline access ranging between 3.5% and 25% with a large group located between 3.5% and 8.5%.

In municipalities located in rural areas, where the majority of people are black and have low household income, only 0.03% to 3.50% of households have access to landlines. Examples of these municipalities include: Kagiso municipality and Moshaweng municipality in the North West, Umhlabuya-lingana municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, Maruleng municipality in Limpopo, and Bushbuckridge municipality in Mpumalanga (Figure 1).

Table 1: *Comparison of household access to telephone communications by province*

Province	Percentage households with cell phone	Percentage households with landline	Difference in percentage
Gauteng	48.7	28.5	20.2
Western Cape	46.7	55.3	-8.6
North West	35.3	15.0	20.3
KwaZulu-Natal	35.2	31.7	3.5
Free State	33.9	21.8	12.1
Mpumalanga	26.3	17.6	8.7
Limpopo	26.1	7.1	19.0
Eastern Cape	25.7	15.9	9.8
Northern Cape	20.1	20.0	0.1
National average	33.1	23.6	9.5

Source: Calculated from SASAS 2003

ACCESS TO CELL PHONES

Data on provincial access indicates that mobile phone technologies enable services to be provided to both densely populated areas and rural areas. The provinces are ranked in Table 1 in order of level of household cell-phone access: Gauteng, the Western Cape, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State have a higher average household access to cell phones than the national average. Mpumalanga, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape are below the national household average. The Eastern Cape was the only province where only one in five households had access to cell phones.

Average household access to cell phones is higher than the average access to landlines in all the provinces, except in the Western Cape where landline access is around eight percentage points higher than cell phone access (Table 1).

Both high cell phone and landline usage in Gauteng could possibly be attributed to a higher income level in the province than in other provinces. The high cell phone uptake in the North West and Limpopo could possibly be attributed to relatively low fixed line availability in these provinces.

Further analysis would be required to establish the conditions that give rise to these patterns. However, they were probably influenced by household income, availability of landlines, population density, market size, or a combination of these and other factors.

In the majority of municipalities, between 20% and 30% of the resident population have access to cellular phones. Furthermore, in a relatively large number of municipalities, access to cellular phones is between 30% and 40%. This reveals that municipalities generally have higher levels of cellular phone access than landline access, which corroborates the national averages shown in Table 1.

There was a set of municipalities where relatively high levels of household cellular phone access of between 40.01–60.72% of households were evident in 2003. These municipalities show high levels of urban economic activity, or are located in tourism intensive areas (Figure 2), namely, the Johannesburg, Cape Town and Tshwane metropolitan areas, and the Kopanong, Emnambithi-Ladysmith, Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn municipalities.

The use of cell phones in South Africa has enabled the servicing of large parts of rural areas at a lower cost than that of installing
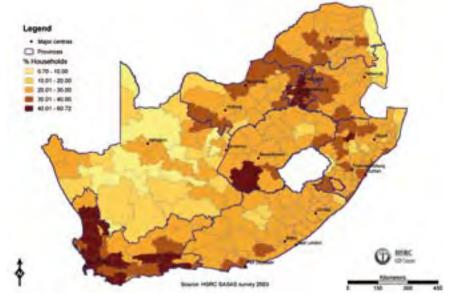

Figure 1: Percentage of households with access to landlines by municipality
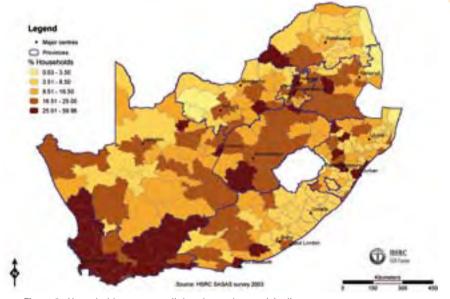

Figure 2: Household access to cellular phones by municipality

fixed lines. Because densely populated black South African townships are relatively easier to market services in and are more profitable to cover than rural areas, operators have focused most of their efforts in these areas.
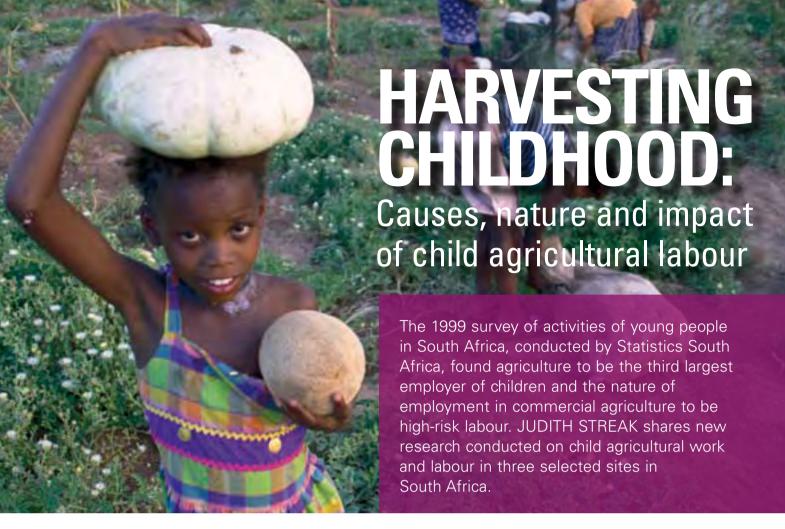
In contrast, there are a number of municipalities which have relatively low levels of household access to cell phones. In the following municipalities, an average of between 5–15% of households – or at best one in five – had access to cell phones. These municipalities also tend to be poorer:

- The Tsolwana and Inkwanca municipalities are situated in the Eastern Cape in the Oliver Tambo district municipality where 81.5% of the population lives in poverty;

- The Mbizana municipality is in the Chris Hani district municipality of the Eastern Cape where 75.7% of the population lives in poverty.

A critical access factor is the affordability of telecommunications. It is important to look into average household income in relation to fixed-line and mobile telecommunication costs in order to address telecommunication accessibility. ●

Dr Andrew Paterson is a research director, and Ms Joan Roodt a chief researcher in the Education, Science and Skills Development (ESSD) research programme. Ms Gina Weir- Smith is a chief GIS specialist in Knowledge Systems.

HARVESTING CHILDHOOD:
Causes, nature and impact of child agricultural labour

The 1999 survey of activities of young people in South Africa, conducted by Statistics South Africa, found agriculture to be the third largest employer of children and the nature of employment in commercial agriculture to be high-risk labour. JUDITH STREAK shares new research conducted on child agricultural work and labour in three selected sites in South Africa.

THE STUDY, funded by the International Labour Organisation through the Towards the Elimination of Child Labour (TECL) Programme, investigated agricultural work and labour of all types – subsistence, privately-owned commercial, and community-owned commercial land. It also studied non-agricultural work activities of an economic and domestic kind among children in the age group 12–16.

The three study sites were:

- The Rawsonville area in the Worcester municipality of the Western Cape, dominated by the production of grapes for export and winemaking.
- The Msinga/Weenen border area in uThkela and uMzinyathi district municipalities of KwaZulu-Natal, characterised by mixed commercial farming on community-owned (mainly black) and privately-owned (mainly white) farms, as well as subsistence farming.
- The area north-east of Malelane in Mpumalanga, characterised by commercial farming, mainly citrus, bananas, mangoes and litchi, as well as subsistence agriculture, commercial farms mainly owned privately by white farmers,

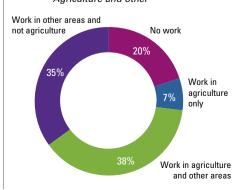with black community-owned commercial farms on the increase.

The South African government has ratified the leading international child-rights instruments relating to child work and labour. The Constitution affords all children the right not to work and a comprehensive set of justifiable socio-economic rights. In other words, cases that are capable of being decided by a court have been put in place.

The primary legislation governing child work and prohibiting child labour is the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) (No.75 of 1997). This prohibits the employment of children until the last school day of the year in which they turn 15, or if they have already completed grade 9 (and have turned 15). Government is obliged to implement a strategy to protect the rights of legally working children and eliminate child labour. A draft strategy, the Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA) has been developed (led by the department of labour) and is being considered by cabinet.

Child work was defined for the purposes of the study to include paid or unpaid employment in agriculture and other sectors as well as domestic activities. It refers to child

activities that are not in breach of the law and policy, do not involve hazardous conditions and are not detrimental to child well-being. Child labour, on the other hand, was defined as work that is in breach of the law (children working under the legal age) and policy, and activities that are hazardous and/or detrimental to child well-being.

The study method involved administering a questionnaire to around 1 300 children age 12–16 in 12 schools, focus groups with children and adults and interviews with adult stakeholders. A class questionnaire sample of 1 033 children was used in analysis.

Figure 1: Work activities of children: Agriculture and other

- Work in other areas and not agriculture — 35%
- No work — 20%
- Work in agriculture only — 7%
- Work in agriculture and other areas — 38%

CHILD WORK IN AGRICULTURE

The findings on the incidence and nature of child agricultural work were as follows:

- Incidence emerged as high: 45% of the total class questionnaire sample worked in agriculture in the past year, of which 50% worked in subsistence only, 15% in commercial only, and 35% in commercial and subsistence.
- Incidence and types of work varied across sites. In the Western Cape site, 17% of children worked in agriculture (privately-owned commercial); in the KwaZulu-Natal site, 91% (54% in subsistence and commercial, and 42% only in subsistence); and in the Mpumalanga site, 59% worked in agriculture (19% in subsistence and commercial, and 77% only in subsistence).
- Boys emerged as more likely than girls to work in commercial agriculture.
- Boys and girls emerged as equally likely to work in subsistence agriculture.
- Work in subsistence agriculture was found to occur mainly before school, after school, over weekends and during school holidays.
- The timing of child work in commercial agriculture was found to be similar, but peak season work emerged as more common.
- The study showed the difficulty of establishing reliable estimates of the average number of hours worked by children. It found work in private commercial agriculture to be haphazard but intensive.

The findings on the incidence and nature of non-agricultural child work activities were as follows:

- Children working in agriculture were found to carry a high burden of non-agricultural work activities – economic (such as washing cars and selling sweets) and domestic. Domestic work in own homes was found to be extremely common but the study also revealed high incidence of domestic work in other peoples homes (60% of sample).
- Work in school gardens is common.
- Girls emerged as more likely than boys to do domestic work and boys more likely to do economic work.

The dominant cause of child work in agriculture was poverty. Children working in agriculture were found to have fewer assets, more hunger, higher parental unemployment

What children say about causes

'We don't' have enough money for food and clothes… Some of us give all our money to our mothers for food when we work' (Boy, Western Cape site).

'Because we are suffering and we need money, we go and work on a farm, but it is not a nice job' (Youth, Mpumalanga site).

'I help with the vegetable garden and after harvesting we sell and eat some of the veggies' (Girl, Mpumalanga site)

What adults say about causes

'Most children do some kind of work…They are helping their families and gaining skills…It is a way to help the family survive'

(Teacher, KwaZulu-Natal site).

'They are learning but they are also helping us…They are taught respect'

(Farmer and parent, KwaZulu-Natal site).

'The problem is that parents are drinking'

(Principal, Western Cape site).

and lower education status than children not working at all. Children working in commercial and subsistence agriculture were found to have fewer assets, more hunger, lower parental education status and to be less likely to have both parents alive than those working in commercial agriculture or subsistence agriculture.

Additional causes of child work in agriculture were the duty to help family; the need to learn important skills for their future; parental interest in keeping children 'busy'; and parental alcohol abuse (most notable in the Western Cape site).

CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

The analysis of child labour included the consideration of numbers of children younger than 15 working in agriculture, indicators of hazardous conditions (13) and indicators of

negative impact on well-being (health and school). We found the following:

- Large numbers of children younger than 15 were found to be working in commercial and subsistence agriculture (boys at higher risk than girls).
- The extent of child labour, measured as a report of any one of the other indicators, emerged as very high, in both subsistence and commercial agriculture.
- Hazards were more commonly reported for both types of agricultural work than the negative impact on school or health.
- The negative impact on school and health was reported by large numbers of children working in subsistence and commercial agriculture.
- Children working in commercial agriculture were found to be at a higher risk for exposure to hazards than children working in subsistence agriculture.
- A handful of common hazards were found in both agriculture types: working when it is too hot; working when thirsty; working for too many hours; working when tired; working before sunset or after sunset.
- Additional hazards common in commercial agriculture were: fear of abuse (physical and verbal by fellow workers or farmer); and transport difficulties accessing work.
- Children working in agriculture were found to have higher levels of anxiety and depression than those not working at all.
- Children working in subsistence agriculture only were found to have lower levels of anxiety and to be less likely to suffer depression than those working only in commercial agriculture or both types.

A paradox is that the study highlighted the high value that children and adults place on child agricultural work in spite of the hazards and negative impact on well-being. This is explained by the critical role such work plays in supporting livelihoods and meeting basic needs. In the words of one child: 'We are able to support our families…brothers and sisters' (Girl, KwaZulu-Natal site).

What law enforcement can prevent commercial agriculture work by under-age children? The general consensus from focus groups was that the employment of children under the legal age has decreased over time. The reduction was seen to be partly due to better enforcement of new policies and laws prohibiting young children from working, the enforcement of the minimum wage law, ▶

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and a reduction in general demand for agricultural labour.

Adult research participants argued that the conditions of work for children on commercial farms have improved.

Six recommendations, mostly in line with the CLPA, followed from the study:

- **More effective poverty reduction and alleviation measures:** These are most important. The study flags options to explore.
- **Better law enforcement measures:** More resources are required to enforce the law preventing children under the legal age from working in commercial agriculture and to ensure payment of the minimum wage. The former must be linked to more effective poverty measures. If it isn't, children will simply trade the right to a minimum income for the right not to work.
- **Awareness raising measures:** These are required to educate caregivers of children working in subsistence agriculture as well as legal employers of children working in commercial agriculture about the common hazards and negative impact on well-being and how to avoid them.
- **Measures to reduce the risk of exposure to negative influences and anti-social behaviour:** Programmes and facilities are urgently required to occupy children in poorly resourced communities when they are not in school.
- **Measures to address alcohol dependence amongst child caregivers.**
- **Measures to link children to local income-earning opportunities:** For example, adjustments to school curricula in rural areas should be explored to better link learners leaving school with local development needs and employment opportunities. ●

Last words: A child's view about what is required

'If the government would give support grants…or open job opportunities for our parents… we would not need to work'

(Girl, Mpumalanga site).

Judith Streak is a senior research manager in the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) research programme. The final report will be available on the HSRC website soon.
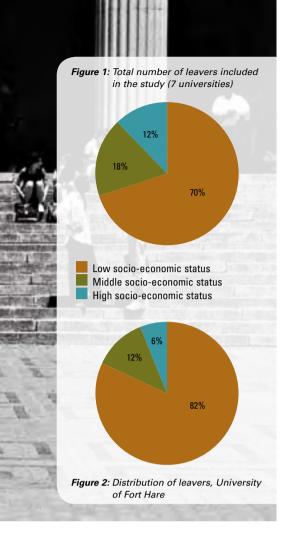
Why students leave:
The problem of high university drop-out rates

The socio-economic status of families of students who do not complete their university qualifications played a significant role in the students' ability to persevere in their studies, concludes MOEKETSI LETSEKA, project leader of a groundbreaking new study on the question of why students leave prematurely.

In the study we avoided using the tern 'dropouts' to describe students who leave the universities without completing their qualifications. Our assumption is that university students do not drop out. They withdraw from their studies for numerous reasons: personal, social, economic, cultural, political and others. They take up jobs, join the army, get married, take a year off, but they often either return to their studies via contact-mode institutions or via distance education, and transfer their accumulated credits to the institution where they re-register.

THE HSRC'S STUDENT PATHWAYS STUDY traces a 2000–2002 cohort of students who left ('non-completers') the institution without completing their studies, as well as those students who graduated in seven selected public higher education institutions (HEIs), namely, the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Stellenbosch (US), the University of Fort Hare (UFH), the University of Limpopo (UL), the University of the Western Cape

Figure 1: Total number of leavers included in the study (7 universities)

- Low socio-economic status
- Middle socio-economic status
- High socio-economic status

Figure 2: Distribution of leavers, University of Fort Hare

Table 1: Re-categorisation of SES variables

Education	Monthly income	Ordinal variable	Value (score)
No formal education Some primary schooling Grade 7 Some secondary schooling	No income R1–R 400 R401–R 800 R801–R 1 600	Low	1
Matric / Grade 12 Technical college certificate	R1 601–R 3 200 R3 201–R 6 400 R6 401–R 12 800	Middle	2
Technikon certificate or diploma University certificate or diploma Technikon degree University degree	R12 801–R 25 600 R25 601–R 51 200 R51 201–R 102 400 R102 400–204 800 R204 801 or more	High	3

the survey database to calculate the socio-economic status (SES) variable as follows:

- Education level of the father/male guardian;
- Education level of the mother/female guardian;
- Monthly income level of the father/male guardian; and
- Monthly income level of the mother/female guardian.

Based on the average score of the four ordinal variables above, the SES is calculated using the following formula:

$$SES = \frac{\left(\frac{\sum Education}{Father-Mother}\right) + \left(\frac{\sum Income}{Father-Mother}\right)}{4}$$
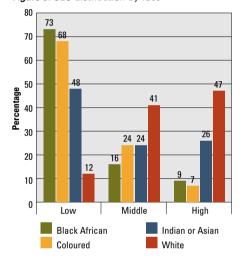
The four categories were then re-categorised to form ordinal variables with categories of 'low', 'middle' and 'high'. Table 1 shows how the education and income variables were re-categorised to describe an ordinal variable.

Data from the surveyed students who dropped out shows that on average 70% of respondents across the seven universities came from low socio-economic status families (see Figure 1).

The low socio-economic status family background was more pronounced among leavers in previously disadvantaged universities such as UFH (82%) (see Figure 2), the University of the North (Limpopo) (82%), UWC (79%) and CPUT (74%).

The survey data showed that black Africans comprised the largest proportion of the low socio-economic status demographics, followed by coloureds and Indians, while whites comprised the largest proportion of the high socio-economic status demographics, followed by Indians and black Africans (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: SES distribution by race

- Black African
- Coloured
- Indian or Asian
- White

(UWC), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), and Pentech, now part of the merged Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Seven case-study reports outlining the situation at each of these institutions have been completed. Report-backs have been done at four universities, namely Wits, UFH, UWC, and CPUT.

The study draws on: the analysis of the institutions' *raw unit data* from the Department of Education's (DoE) Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS); survey data derived from a postal survey of 34 000 respondents, of whom 20 000 dropped out of their studies during this period and 14 000 graduated, with a return rate of just over 16%; qualitative data derived from interviews of senior academics and members of management; and a broad spectrum of institutional reports. The study seeks to understand factors influencing transitions and pathways of students through the higher education sector into the labour market.

Data from the study found that the socio-economic status of the families played a significant role in the students' ability to persevere in their studies. The study drew on

Most leavers indicated they left at the end of their first year or midway through their second year, at which point they still had between one and six outstanding courses. Lack of finance emerged from the data as the major impediment for the completion of studies, which is to be expected considering that on average their parents/guardians' monthly income is in the bracket R 400–R1 600. Around 70% indicated that they had no siblings with university experience, which suggests that they are first-generation university students in their families.

Financial difficulties compelled most of the leavers to take up full-time, part-time or odd jobs, earning between R1 601–R3 200 a month. While this was necessary in order to augment their meagre financial resources, there is no doubt that juggling study and work proved to be another reason for not focusing on studies. ●
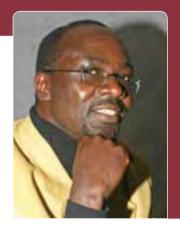
Mr Moeketsi Letseka is a senior research specialist in the Education, Science and Skills Development (ESSD) research programme.

Africa–West stand-off:
Zim recovery roadmap under threat

President Thabo Mbeki has a new regional mandate to broker a negotiated settlement to end the debilitating political and economic crisis that is rapidly driving Zimbabwe over the cliff. But the mediation effort runs the risk of failing unless a protracted face-off between Africa and the Western world over South Africa's northern neighbour is resolved, says PETER KAGWANJA.

A DARK CLOUD hung over the recently concluded August 2007 summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders in Lusaka, Zambia. This cloud now throws its shadow over the upcoming Euro–Africa summit in Portugal on 8–9 December, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Uganda later in the year.

The 14-member organisation resolved to put together an economic recovery plan to pull Zimbabwe from the brink. But Western critics are already warning that Africa risks losing heavily for its failure to come down hard on Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF elite.

As Tom Morrison, a former foreign correspondent for Reuters warns: 'Failing… to get to grips with the issue of Zimbabwe, the SADC leaders are seriously undermining Africa's credibility on the world stage…They may get a rude awakening the next time they lobby for a better global deal for their countries on the world stage'.

Since the meltdown began in 2000, the West and Africa have been staring each other down, waiting to see who will blink first. The tension over Zimbabwe is rooted in their diametrically opposed interpretations of the causes of the Zimbabwe crisis.

To the Western world the trouble in Zimbabwe is unreservedly a crisis of leadership and governance, and of the violation of human rights and democracy. From a gallant citizen of the British Empire, honoured by Queen Elizabeth II in 1994 as a Knight of the Order of Bath, and praised by the 'Iron Lady,' Margaret Thatcher, as a 'man I can do business with', Robert Gabriel Mugabe has metamorphosed into the very image of an African dictator. The responsibility for Zimbabwe's woes are heaped on his policies and actions, and Mugabe's exit has become a magic potion routinely prescribed by every Western policy think tank.

Even those Africans who criticise Mugabe for emptying Africa's breadbasket, still hold him in high regard as a liberation hero and Africa's Fidel Castro, a leader who has defied the lone superpower – the United States – as well as its former coloniser – Britain.

While it is probably true that the West must shoulder some responsibility, there is nevertheless no doubt that bad policies have contributed to the crisis which has pushed Zimbabwe's economy to the brink of collapse – with an official inflation rate of 4 500%, nearly 80% unemployment, empty food shelves, dry gas stations, nearly empty state coffers, and collapsed services. Zimbabwe's perilous slide has become a security and economic threat to the entire region, spawning no less than three million refugees, who are straining services in their adopted countries.

But Zimbabwe's real threat to the southern African region is ideological. The Africa–West confrontation has emboldened Mugabe and transformed him into a symbol of African resistance, and a victim of racially inspired retribution for seizing and handing over white farms to black Zimbabweans. As such, he has won allies in the countries of southern Africa, like Namibia, South Africa and Angola, where black people are grappling with historical injustices relating to land, restricted access to services and few economic opportunities.

When the crisis erupted in 2000, the West trained its strategic focus on South Africa as the regional economic, military and political powerhouse, putting it under pressure to break ranks with fellow Africans and openly confront the Mugabe regime.
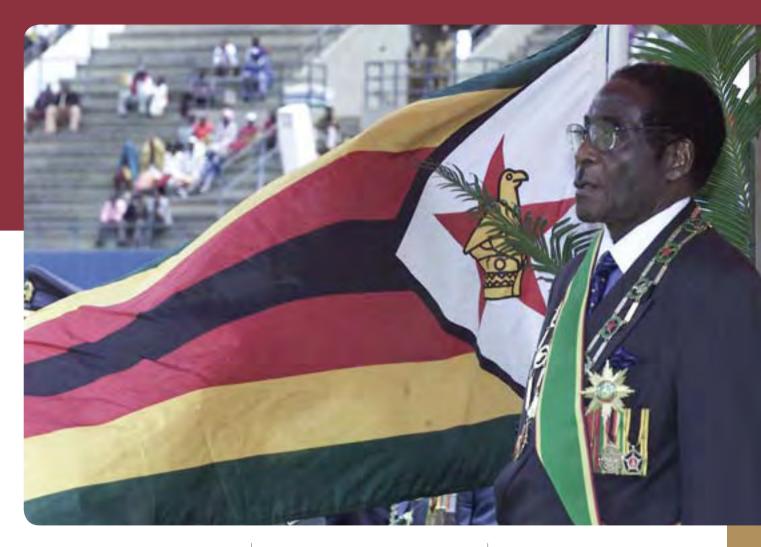
In the post-9/11 world, dominated by superpower unilateralism and 'coalitions-of-the-willing' who seek to change regimes, South Africa is confronted with two broad policy choices with respect to Zimbabwe:

- **Regime change:** This entails the use of a combination of military force, sanctions and open public criticism; and
- **Regime transformation:** This involves a mix of peer pressure and instruments of soft power – such as mediation and tactical offers of economic carrots – aimed at transforming the body politic and paving the way for a robust democracy.

Pretoria has settled for the soft-power option, which has been parodied as 'quiet diplomacy'. South Africa's response to the Zimbabwe crisis has neither been seamless nor static. The 'quiet diplomacy' phase (2000–2004) yielded a 108-page constitutional draft, but Pretoria lacked the requisite muscle to get the rival parties to implement it.

Since then, quiet diplomacy has died and been buried. South Africa's approach to Zimbabwe has oscillated between applying limited pressure, uncoordinated 'microphone diplomacy' and 'abdicationism' to a do-nothing stance.

Zimbabwe also rejected, on grounds of sovereignty, South Africa's offer of a $500 million credit line enabling it to purchase

fuel, food and to pay off the International Monetary Fund debt so as to avert its imminent expulsion in late 2005. In return Zimbabwe was required to adopt a roadmap for democracy and good governance as well as an economic recovery plan. The fall-out from Zimbabwe's refusal marked the end of Mbeki's bilateral diplomacy and mediation until he was re-appointed as mediator by the SADC in 2007.

Mbeki's current mediation offers the best chance for creating a level playing field ahead of the crucial 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. While the interim report on the mediation process was presented at the August SADC summit, mediation remains a work in progress and the future is still uncertain. However, the mediation efforts should be supported by Africa and the West.

Adding to Zimbabwe's woes is the stampede to succeeded Mugabe, which is tearing the ruling party apart. Mugabe has in any case declared that he is going to stand in the 2008 elections. Zimbabwe's opposition, whose only chance lies in presenting one candidate,

remains too splintered to be a real threat.

The West, including America and EU member states, has imposed asset freezes and travel bans on Mugabe and some hundred of his ZANU-PF colleagues, their spouses and close relatives. Despite the attempt not to hurt ordinary Zimbabweans and to ensure a steady flow of humanitarian assistance, the sanctions and Zimbabwe's isolation have fostered an international climate dangerously unhelpful towards Zimbabwe's economic recovery. The SADC's efforts to revive Zimbabwe's economy have to deal with this reality.

The travel bans threaten to scuttle the long overdue Euro–Africa summit in Lisbon on 8–9 December. The first meeting between Africa's 53 states and the EU was held in 2000 in Egypt. But subsequent meetings have been put off following the imposition of the travel ban on Mugabe, and Britain's strong objection to his presence at the event. As the current holder of the EU Presidency, Portugal has hinted it will invite Zimbabwe to the December summit, attracting severe criticism, particularly from Britain, whose

Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, is likely to stay away.

While Africa and the West agree on Zimbabwe's need for economic recovery and an enabling environment for democracy, ending the complex crisis there demands a nuanced approach.

Africa and the West need to back the SADC process in a concerted effort in order to secure constitutional and electoral reforms as well as an economic recovery plan ahead of the 2008 elections. In addition, African liberation leaders like Sam Nujoma and Kenneth Kaunda have a role to play in easing the tensions between the two blocks. They could possibly prevail upon President Mugabe to retire so that a peaceful transition can take place. Despite the efforts by regional leaders to date, the situation in Zimbabwe is still far from resolved. ●

Dr Peter Kagwanja is a research director and senior African fellow in the Democracy and Governance research programme. He is also president of the Africa Policy Institute in Nairobi, Kenya.

Breaking the cycle of
violent crime

The HSRC has embarked upon a project on violent crime and social citizenship, reports VANESSA BAROLSKY.

THE PROMISE OFFERED by South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 was that, with the end of apartheid, levels of violence in South African society would drop significantly. However, various forms of social violence at all levels of society, ranging from armed robbery to sexual violence and murder, have remained at extremely high levels. Although the rate of murder has declined slightly from approximately 20 000 murders a year to about 18 000 last year, South Africa still has one of the highest per capita murder rates in the world.

South African society is therefore challenged by behaviour which undermines the bonds of solidarity, community and trust between citizens. The fundamental premise of the democratic state's capacity to govern is its ability to provide its citizens with a minimum level of security and provide an enabling environment for all citizens to realise their constitutional rights.

If citizens are afraid, are engaged in or are victims of criminal activities (whether it be violence or corruption), drug abuse or sexual violence, the bonds of solidarity and community are undermined. This weakens the fabric which ultimately holds a society together. The critical question then is how we understand these problems of social cohesion in relation to the high levels of violence characterising South African society and, crucially, how we use this knowledge to formulate innovative social interventions which will have a significant impact on breaking the cycle of violence in South Africa today.

While considerable research has already been conducted by a variety of units within the HSRC on the question of violence – which has placed the institution in the position to conduct particularly high quality research in the area – it is clear that there is still much work to be done if we are to break the cycle of violent crime in South Africa.

This project intends to marshal the intellectual resources of the HSRC and the expertise it has already developed in examining the problem of violence from a number of disciplinary perspectives into one research project which combines this expertise across methodologies and disciplines in a concerted effort to develop much needed new methods of intervention for policy-makers and relevant stakeholders. Such an interdisciplinary research effort for the purposes of social intervention is unprecedented in South Africa.

The project intends to make a groundbreaking contribution to the study of violent crime in South African society by utilising the unique range of interdisciplinary expertise

> *social dislocation, economic inequality, poverty and unemployment, and histories of authoritarian rule do not in and of themselves explain the particularly high levels of violent crime in South Africa.*

within the HSRC as well as the expertise of identified external research organisations. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be combined in order to conduct in depth case studies in a sample of areas in South Africa. In our national study we will ask:

- Why are some communities prone to higher levels of violence than others? What factors contribute to these patterns of violent crime?
- Why are other areas able to maintain lower levels of violence? What are the 'resilience' factors that enable these communities to make choices that don't involve violence?
- What kinds of interventions are being implemented in areas of high violence and in areas of low violence?
- In areas of high violence, how effective are these interventions in addressing

violent crime? What are the problems and successes?

- In areas of low violence, we need to ask whether low levels of violence can be linked to the effectiveness of the criminal justice sector or whether there are other factors at play such as higher levels of community cohesion.
- Finally, what nationally appropriate solutions and interventions can we propose based on our research findings?

Researchers agree that a common set of risk factors characterise South Africa and other developing countries. These have to do with social dislocation, economic inequality, poverty and unemployment, and histories of authoritarian rule. Yet, these factors do not in and of themselves explain the particularly high levels of violent crime in South Africa. In order to understand what makes South Africa unique in this respect, we will have to look very closely at case studies from across society which, taken together, will inform our understanding of the national problem of violence in our society.

The principle informing the case-study approach takes its cue from international thinkers such as Amartya Sen,[1] who on a speaking tour in South Africa said easy answers and rushed solutions to the problem of violence should be avoided. Such approaches tend to assume rather than question the causes of violence.

Just two examples of such assumptions will suffice to demonstrate the point. Firstly, the assumption that there is inevitability a link between poverty and violence and, secondly, that there is a link between a high number of guns and violence. In the first instance, Calcutta, as Amartya Sen points out, is one of the poorest cities in India but has one of

the lowest crime levels in the country. And in the second instance, Canadians, who have more guns than Americans, have a much lower murder rate than found in the US. However, violence may indeed be linked to poverty or easily available firearms in other instances.

What this approach requires in terms of our interventions and responses to violence is an acknowledgement of the complexity of violence and consequently the need for a *differentiated* approach to the problem of violent crime. The factors involved in violent crime and the intervention measures required to break the cycle of violence in South Africa need to take differentiations in patterns of violence into account and to apply appropriate methodologies of intervention.

By choosing a representative sample of case studies, the HSRC will be able to investigate these nuances in violent crime and criminal justice intervention in order to build up a holistic national picture, which will lay an enormously important evidence-based foundation for policy formulation and the development of innovative solutions to the problem of violent crime in South Africa today.

Critically, using the case-study approach as a methodology will allow us to probe beneath the 'surface' in the chosen case-study areas in order to investigate the complex array of factors involved in the problem of violent crime. Similarly, this approach will allow for the examination of a complex range of factors in order to evaluate the criminal justice system's response to violent crime.

This study takes further the important suggestions made by scholars, experts and policy-makers following a comprehensive and representative national assessment of violent crime held in 2004,[2] which advocated the need for more localised studies of violence within the context of the communities in which violence takes place. ●

Ms Vanessa Barolsky is a chief researcher in the Democracy and Governance research programme.

[1] Nobel Prize winner in economics and author of the book, *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny.*

[2] The conference titled, 'Violence in South Africa: critical perspectives', was held in 2004, and organised by the Criminal Justice Initiative of the Open Society Foundation. The proceedings can be accessed at www.osf.org.za.
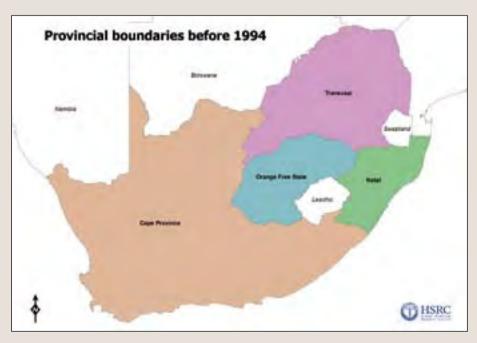
The future of South Africa's
provincial governments

Fourteen years after the creation of the country's provincial level of government, questions are being asked about whether the changes introduced in the interim Constitution, which effectively doubled South Africa's provinces from four in the apartheid period to the present nine, have hampered service delivery to previously underserved areas, says VINO NAIDOO.

THE FOUR PROVINCES that were in place prior to the 1993 interim Constitution were governed by provincial administrations which, in the context of sustaining apartheid, were directly answerable to national executive authorities. Scattered elsewhere were also those territories, or 'homelands', designated for the settlement of Africans. These areas represented the unrealised hopes of 'separate development'.

The transition to democracy led to abrupt changes in this environment by prompting the geo-political unification of South Africa as it had developed under apartheid. This forced constitutional negotiators to examine how the ten homelands and their existing governing structures could feasibly be re-incorporated into South Africa. The net effect of these negotiations, the details of which are clearly evident in the 1993 interim Constitution, would impact materially on the four existing provincial jurisdictions. Essentially, the old Cape Province was split into three provincial areas, the Transvaal into four, with Natal and the Orange Free State remaining largely as they were.

Fast-forward 14 years to 2007 and we are beginning to see a debate gradually emerging about the provincial jurisdictions bequeathed to South Africa by its 1993 interim Constitution and upheld by the 1996 Constitution. In recent addresses to parliament, senior ministers have suggested that the number of government structures created under the country's current inter-governmental system may be hampering effective public service delivery. The ANC has even placed the future of the provincial level of government on the agenda of its upcoming national conference in December 2007, tabling a number of options

Provincial boundaries before 1994

Provincial boundaries after 1994

for provincial-government reform in a position paper entitled, *Legislature and governance*.

In some respects, the issue of provincial-government reform risks being viewed as 'beguilingly simple', as a member of the opposition Democratic Alliance party was recently quoted as saying, although not necessarily for exclusively political reasons. Linked to his argument is the possibility that the governing ANC might seek to increase and consolidate its national executive authority over provinces, a centralising move that harks back to apartheid practice.

But the issue is more complex than that; consideration must be given as to whether the provinces have been effectively delivering on the core social functions mandated to them by the 1996 Constitution in key areas such as education, health and social welfare. With this perspective in mind, how might some of the scenarios for reforming the provincial level of government play out?

The first scenario could amount to enforcing the relatively loose constitutional principle of 'co-operative government' between national, provincial and local spheres of government, brought about by the transition to democracy. This would have the effect of allowing national government to assume more direct responsibility and accountability for the execution of certain functions hitherto managed by the provinces, particularly those that are presently shared between national and provincial government.

This could result in a streamlining of policy and public financing processes that could, theoretically, facilitate more efficient service provision. The net result would see a reduction in the discretion and authority of provincial governments, which would essentially revert to administrative tiers taking directives from national government.

A second scenario, suggested by the ANC, would be to retain the current system and continue to direct significant time and resources into ensuring that public service delivery is progressively and consistently improved across the provinces. The argument is that the structures, mechanisms and remedies stipulated in the post-apartheid Constitution for this very purpose have not perhaps been fully exercised or utilised in a way to ensure that cooperative government yields progressively better delivery performance.

Suggestions to improve the current system include strengthening the oversight role of provincial legislatures over their executive bodies; strengthening the national government's own ability to monitor and support provincial governments; increasing the role of sub-provincial structures such as district and metropolitan governments in service provision; and facilitating the deployment of skilled administrators to sub-national levels experiencing difficulties.

A third scenario, also mooted by the ANC, is to remove the provincial level of government altogether. It is not clear however whether such a move would eliminate the complete presence of administration in between the remaining national and local spheres, where provinces might be confined to coordinating and monitoring the implementation of services that might then get shifted to the local sphere.

> …consideration must be given as to whether the provinces have been effectively delivering on the core social functions mandated to them…

This has been described by some as an 'hourglass-shaped system'. Given their respective and more clearly delineated roles in policy formulation and regulation, an important question that arises is if it is feasible for national and local governments, in addition to their current roles, to cope with the significant responsibility of administering and overseeing the huge social services sectors (i.e. education, health, and social welfare), which presently account for three-quarters of provincial budgets. This then puts scenarios one and two back on the table.

A fourth scenario, also introduced by the ANC, is what it has termed a 'hybrid' model, where the three spheres would be retained but with fewer provinces. This seems to correspond with the tone of recent comments made by South Africa's finance and defence ministers. Both ministers appeared to express a general concern about whether the country's administrative corps could effectively manage the number of governing structures created under the current system, which as mentioned earlier saw the re-constitution of nine new provincial structures. Implicit in the ministers comments was also a concern about whether the national sphere of government could exercise the effective monitoring and oversight over the provincial sphere which the constitution obliges it to perform.

There is a certain pragmatism in this fourth scenario. Evidence in the provinces speaks of senior management capacity shortages, poor audit results, expenditure volatility, financial governance problems, a lack of time and resources required to maintain a complex system of intergovernmental co-ordination, reporting, and monitoring. This has reasonably led some to re-think the shape of the current system, where reducing the number of provincial governing structures, and possibly even provinces, could potentially minimise such problems and/or reduce complexity.

It could also be argued that a strategic reduction in the number of provinces might yield efficiencies (i.e. economies of scale) in service provision. But a reduction in the number of provinces would most certainly have political implications for regional party representation, and in this regard might also yield 'pragmatic' political gains for parties with broad national appeal, such as the ANC.

Finally, although a federal system has been raised as another option for the provinces, which would increase their legislative and executive authority, it is likely that this option will be resisted in the short- to medium-term by the governing party on the grounds that it offers less of an assurance that the extent of poverty and associated regional disparities present in the country can be responded to in a consistent manner. It would, however, also be in the governing party's interest to oppose such a move on political grounds in the current environment, where so doing would act to preserve national executive authority over the provinces in view of strong regionally concentrated opposition support. ●

Mr Vinothan Naidoo is a chief researcher in the Democracy and Governance research programme.

Youth Policy Initiative:
Integrating the approach to youth development

Youth development is a critical area for social investment, and all the more so if South Africa is to reap the potential benefits of the current youth bulge. However, DR SAADHNA PANDAY and PROFESSOR LINDA RICHTER point out that a common understanding of youth development priorities, and a co-ordinated multi-sectoral approach, is vital to ensure that our up-and-coming generation do not fall through the cracks.

INCREASINGLY, THE DEMOGRAPHIC SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE is taking centre stage in discussions on youth development. *The World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation* highlights the concept of the demographic dividend that results from larger-than-normal numbers of youth.

Through various public-health interventions (better sanitation, antibiotics, etc.), infant mortality has begun to decline. As a consequence of better child survival and declining fertily, which means fewer, but healthier children, a 'baby boom generation' is created that gradually works its way through the age structure of the population. To start with, the age structure is bottom heavy, with many children and adolescents to support in terms of health and education. But as the 'baby boomers' get older, the bulge shifts to the middle years, or the working-age population.

With fewer children and elderly people to support, this 'youth bulge' provides an unprecedented opportunity for dramatic economic and human development. The East Asian 'economic miracle' provides the

most salient example of the benefits of the demographic dividend. In these countries, almost a third of the economic growth between 1960 and 1990 is attributed to investments made in youth development.

But the dividend is not automatically reaped from a surplus youth population. To enjoy the benefits, countries need to invest in public health, education and labour-market participation, while simultaneously implementing sound family-planning policies to drive down fertility rates, thus sustaining the window of opportunity.

The number of young people in many developing countries will peak in the next 10–20 years, but sub-Saharan Africa is the only part of the world that will experience a youth bulge in the next two to five decades, provided that mortality and fertility begin to decline. South Africa is about halfway through the youth bulge but will still experience large numbers of young people for the next 15–20 years. This is a time-limited opportunity. As this cohort of young people ages, the bulge moves into the aging years and dependence on the State will then increase.

Is South Africa ready to take advantage of the youth bulge? We know that the current youth cohort in South Africa is the best educated ever, they are the healthiest sector of the population, and our Constitution grants them agency and platforms to influence political processes and civic life. Yet several multi-faceted challenges have constrained our ability to take advantage of the youth bulge for the past two decades and in fact continue to hamper our reaping the benefits of this opportunity.

Chief among these constraints is the inability to create close to full employment during their most productive years, coupled with incomplete and poor quality education. Some of the factors that drive current levels of unemployment include the mismatch between the growth in the economically active population against the number of jobs created in the formal sector. For example, between 1997 and 2002, the potentially economically active population between 18–35 years of age, grew from 6 to 8.4 million; the number of jobs created, however, only increased from 4.3 to 4.9 million. This led to an increase in unemployment among young people from 1.7 to 3.5 million (or two-thirds of the youth population). Other factors that underpin youth employment include lack of access to finance, the extent and quality of education, and limited career guidance and work experience.

What is more, employment does not automatically translate into financial security or prosperity. Young people are often under-employed, working under precarious conditions in lowly paid contract-type positions, most often in the services sector. And self-employment has not proven to be the panacea of youth unemployment; only 6% of participants in the Status of Youth Report survey (2003) reported being self-employed and this only when they could not find a job in the formal sector.

South Africa is about halfway through the youth bulge…

The dual reality of the South African context – with some modest strides made in youth development, but equally enormous challenges remaining – creates a conundrum. While access to schooling is expanding, how can we assist more young people to complete their education? Given that our youth are the best educated ever, how can we draw them into the economy and benefit from their talents? With expanded access to family planning, how can we enable young people to choose when and with whom they want to have children? When institutions and opportunities exist for young people to participate meaningfully in civil society, how can we help them to get and stay involved? And what second chances can we offer the large cohort of youth who have fallen out of the mainstream?

Efforts to create a policy and institutional environment conducive to youth development in South Africa is an acknowledgement of the important role young people can play in contemporary society and in shaping the future of the country. But, we have to find ways to optimise what young people do and what they become. We have to ask ourselves: what can we, as a country, do differently in the policy and programme environment to enhance the opportunities young people have for development; how can research optimise the policy-programme nexus; and how can we enable young people to become the custodians of their own development?

These are some of the questions that the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), in partnership with representatives from the youth sector, key government departments and non-governmental organisations are opening up for debate in the Youth Policy Initiative (YPI). The Initiative, which was launched in April and will span the next 18 months, consists of six high-profile round-table policy-dialogue meetings, supported by a public lecture and seminar series, the HSRC bi-annual conference, and publication of research results and policy analyses.

Experts from the policy, programme and research environments are coming together to highlight key challenges confronting young people, to debate the nature of the challenges and their possible solutions, and to discuss multi-sectoral and integrated approaches to address them. Roundtables, of which two have taken place, will produce policy briefs offering policy and programmatic direction. Topics for roundtables reflect contemporary challenges facing youth and issues of national priority, and include: youth policies and youth institutions; opportunities and risks of the youth bulge; entry into and expansion of livelihood strategies; school repetition, drop-out and discontinuation; teen pregnancy; and violence and violent crime.

A critical component of the YPI is creating opportunities for young people to participate in debates using channels appropriate and familiar to their generation. Live webcasts of the roundtables can be viewed at youth centres run by partner organisations such as the National Youth Commission, Umsobomvu Youth Fund, and loveLife. Video and audio files can be downloaded from the HSRC website, and young people can participate in a youth poll (www.hsrc.ac.za/ypi) or an sms poll (in the publication, *Power Your Future*) that features questions relevant to each of the roundtables.

The YPI is experimental and therefore dynamic. It is the inaugural and flagship project of the HSRC's newly formed Policy Analysis Unit, in collaboration with the Child Youth Family and Social Development research programme. Its principle aim is to inform policy-makers and implementing agencies, and to enable them to co-ordinate their efforts. Much depends on the Initiative's ability to garner support from key constituencies, particularly capturing the interest of young people in this process. ●

Dr Saadhna Panday is a senior research specialist and Prof. Linda Richter the executive director of the HSRC's Child Youth Family and Social Development (CYFSD) research programme.

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Monitoring Child Well-Being:
A South African rights-based approach

Edited by Andy Dawes, Rachel Bray
& Amelia van der Merwe

Practical and user-friendly, this volume provides an evidence- and rights-based approach to monitoring the well-being of children and adolescents in South Africa. Drawing on international precedents, and extensive peer-review processes, experts in various fields have developed this holistic set of indicators to enhance the monitoring of the status of children.

2007 / 704pp / 978-0-7969-2177-2 / R280.00 / Soft cover

Postgraduate Student Retention and Success:
A South African case study

Charlton Koen

This monograph is the posthumous publication of the first part of Koen's PhD thesis, in which he examines the main factors influencing the retention and success of master's students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Its publication is not just in honour of Koen and the quality of his work; it is also likely to prove a path-breaker in our understanding of the complex web of factors that shape postgraduate student retention and success.
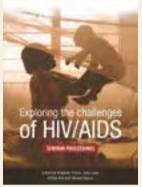
2007 / 132pp / 978-0-7969-2192-5 / R150.00 / Soft cover

Families and Households in Post-Apartheid
South Africa: Socio-demographic perspectives

Edited by Acheampong Yaw Amoateng
& Tim B. Heaton

In this research monograph, a group of well-established social scientists from such diverse disciplines as economics, demography, sociology and psychology attempt to explain the myriad changes in families and households in South Africa following the end of apartheid.

2007 / 248pp / 978-0-7969-2190-1 / R180.00 / Soft cover

Exploring the Challenges of HIV/AIDS:
Seminar proceedings

Edited by Bridgette Prince, Julia Louw, Kristin Roe
& Rehaaz Adams

This book is the culmination of the presentations and discussions delivered at the two HSRC/SAHARA satellite sessions of the 16th International AIDS Conference, held in Toronto, Canada. The first section, entitled 'Managing the complexity of the HIV/AIDS challenge in sub-Saharan Africa', focuses on current trends and studies on the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, and the second, 'Missing the women: Examining key challenges in policy responses to HIV/AIDS', presents an in-depth paper on this subject, including recommendations.

2007 / 80pp / 978-0-7969-2194-6 / R90.00 / Soft cover

Local Government, Gender and Integrated Development Planning

Alison Todes, Pearl Sithole & Amanda Williamson

Focusing on three case studies of municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal, this research examines whether national gender policy directives and guidelines are taken through in local government, IDP processes and outcomes, and in implementation, and how practice might be improved. It hopes to stimulate thinking and debate on how to promote women's rights and gender equality within decentralisation, IDP and project implementation processes.

2007 / 48pp / 978-0-7969-2197-0 / R90.00 / Soft cover

ICT Skills at the Intermediate Level in South Africa:
Insights into private provision and labour
market demand

Salim Akoojee, Fabian Arends & Joan Roodt

This research monograph examines the supply of, and demand for, intermediate-level ICT skills in South Africa through a study of selected training providers, giving insight into key elements of demand. People interested in current developments in the ICT training field, as well as legislators and regulators of the industry, will find this research monograph essential reading.

2007 / 72pp / 978-0-7969-2198 -7 / R90.00 / Soft cover