

Review

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Three HSRC flagship projects celebrate 20 years

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shifts to older age group
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EDITOR'S NOTE

By Antoinette Oosthuizen

As 2023 draws to an end, we are pleased to share with you the December edition of the *HSRC Review*. In this edition, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of three HSRC flagship projects.

The South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, and Behaviour (SABSSM) survey has been tracking HIV data in South Africa since 2002. Findings from the sixth survey, released in November, show a drop in HIV prevalence from 14% in 2017 to 12.7% in 2022. The epidemic is also maturing, with more older people living longer on antiretroviral treatment. Repeating this survey over the last two decades has provided policymakers with trend data to inform HIV treatment and prevention programmes in South Africa.

Low condom uptake is an ongoing concern. SABSSM VI found that less than half of young people with multiple sexual partners reported that they used condoms the last time they had sex. Understanding the reasons for this reluctance is critical for designing effective behavioural interventions.

We report on a qualitative study among young people aged 18–24 years who were in age-disparate relationships in a rural setting of uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal. Condoms have social significance, the researchers found. Condomless sex cemented primary relationships, indicated fidelity, or conferred power or prestige, and the worrying practice of “sero-guessing” (assuming a person’s HIV status by their appearance) may override the inclination to have safe sex, the study revealed.

The South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) tracks public views about important societal issues, including democracy, service delivery, public spending, taxation, xenophobia, financial literacy, voting, abortion, the environment, and many more. Over the last 20 years, this flagship series has gained recognition for reliable social indicators and attitudinal measures as the basis for evidence-based decision making. The demand for SASAS-based insight from government departments has grown and resulted in, for example, dedicated survey questionnaires on election beliefs and behaviour.

In June, the HSRC hosted a colloquium on the Zondo Commission’s state capture findings and implications

for the future of democracy in South Africa. Media coverage after the event focused on Chief Justice Raymond Zondo’s controversial claim that Parliament would not be able to stop another attempt at state capture, due to too little change in the status quo. We write about the importance of public reflection on state capture and the findings of the Zondo Commission, as well as a worrying SASAS finding that many South Africans are unaware of the Zondo Commission’s work.

The South African National Survey on Research and Experimental Development Inputs (R&D Survey) is the third HSRC flagship project featured. The proportion of GDP that a country spends on R&D is one of the key indicators of its competitiveness and a gauge of knowledge-intensive innovation activity. Each year, the R&D Survey reports the latest available data on R&D expenditure and performance across five sectors: higher education, science councils, government, business, and not-for-profit organisations. The findings inform science policy development, and government R&D priorities and funding levels.

We also write about the HSRC’s recently completed national food and nutrition security survey, which for the first time provides data that will help the government solve the problem of food security through programmes targeted at district and municipal level.

Marking Disability Rights Awareness Month (3 November to 3 December), we feature the story of an Eastern Cape woman who struggles to access healthcare services after losing a leg. Based on fieldwork for the HSRC’s Women Rise Project, her story sheds light on the struggles experienced by people with physical disabilities, especially those living in rural areas.

Other articles look at the future of wind energy in South Africa, accessing land for housing and the importance of hearing local voices for structural transformation in Africa.

For more information on these projects, please contact us at the email addresses provided.

We wish you a safe and peaceful festive break.

The Review Team

South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication (SABSSM) Survey

Celebrating 20 years

Tracking HIV for more than 20 years: SABSSM VI shows prevalence peak shift to older people

*South Africa's HIV epidemic is maturing, with more older people living longer on antiretroviral therapy. However, young people are still at risk. According to the HSRC's sixth HIV household survey, a summary report of which was released in November, less than half of young people with multiple sexual partners are using condoms while they are least likely to be virally suppressed. Findings such as these have public health implications and emphasise the continued relevance of this flagship HSRC survey series, which is celebrating more than 20 years of tracking HIV in South Africa. **By Antoinette Oosthuizen***

South Africa's population of older people living with HIV has increased, probably because antiretroviral therapy (ART) is allowing people to live longer and healthier lives with HIV. Their changing healthcare needs will require an integrated treatment approach, which also considers age-related non-communicable diseases and mental health. At the same time, prevention programmes will need to be stepped up among young people, since many are still not using condoms despite this having been the focus of many HIV awareness programmes for over two decades.

This was revealed by experts at the recent launch of summary findings from the HSRC's Sixth South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, and Behaviour (SABSSM VI) survey.

An ageing population with HIV

SABSSM VI found the percentage of all people living with HIV (PLHIV) in South Africa to have decreased from 14% in 2017 to 12.7% in 2022.

“Several factors contribute to HIV prevalence,” said Professor Khangelani Zuma, divisional executive of the Public Health, Societies, and Belonging division of the HSRC and overall principal investigator of SABSSM. “These include fewer people getting infected with HIV, more children born HIV negative, less AIDS-related mortality, and people ageing and dying from natural causes. The increase in the population (birth of HIV-negative babies) would also increase the denominator of HIV-negative people in the country.”

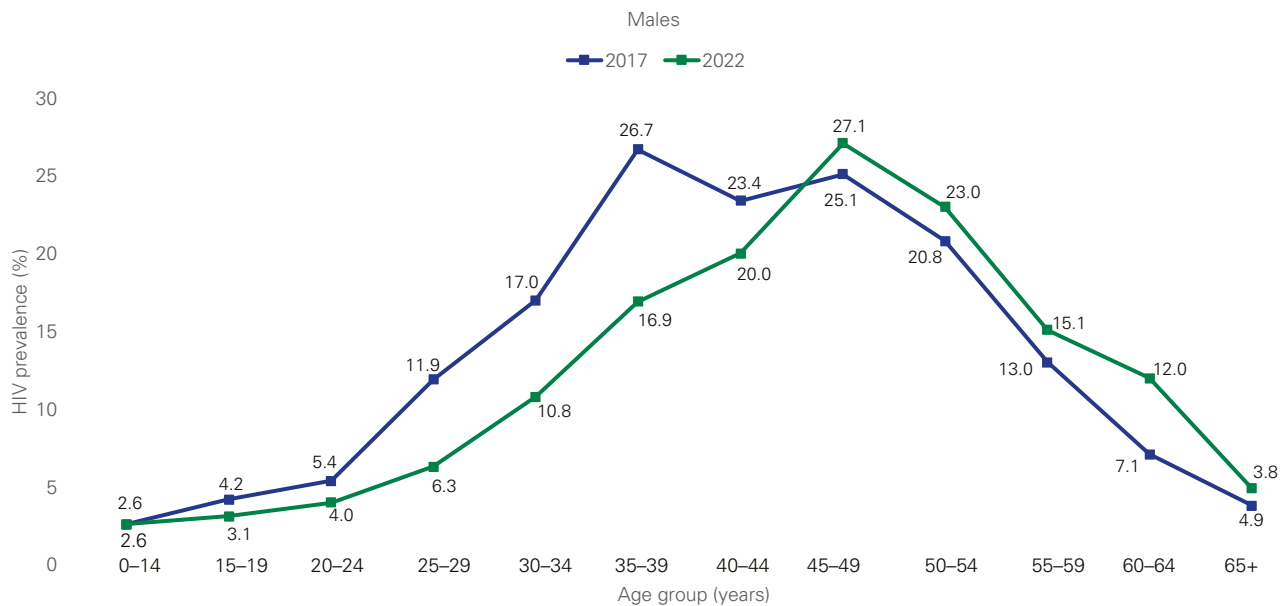
The researchers also noted a shift in HIV prevalence peaks between 2017 and 2022, indicating an ageing epidemic, as more people on ART survive into old age.

Among men, in 2017 the peak prevalence was 26.7% in those aged 35–39 years (Figure 1), while in 2022 the peak was 27.1% – but among those aged 45–49 years. The drop in prevalence in the younger male age groups may indicate that new infections (incidence) have decreased. Incidence data is still being processed and will be released in the final SABSSM VI report early in 2024.



Photo: HSRC

Figure 1. Overall HIV prevalence among men in South Africa, 2017 vs 2022



Source: SABSSM VI

At the launch, Dr Eva Kiwango, UNAIDS Country Director, said the shift in age distribution means programmes will need to consider the changing care needs of PLHIV. Many of those in the older age groups live with other chronic conditions and the shift has implications for integrating HIV and other health services, such as those for non-communicable diseases and mental health.

Zackie Achmat, co-founder of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) 25 years ago and known worldwide for his HIV and AIDS activism, also highlighted the plight of elderly PLHIV in a recent interview with the HSRC.

“We [need to] understand what is happening to people like me who are in our 60s and going into our 70s ... because the people on treatment are those who are born with HIV, right through to those of us who’ve had HIV [for decades].

“We need studies of comorbidities and the impact on geriatric AIDS, the psychological and mental health needs of PLHIV, because there’s still a certain stigma around it ... you feel lonely and the fact that you have to take pills every day ... [the] sense that you never leave HIV, [like] you leave the flu or COVID-19.”

Achmat believes that messages should focus on drug adherence and HIV prevention, but also emphasise the positive. “We need messages from older people

who say, ‘I’m healthy but now these are my problems. But I couldn’t have looked after my grandchildren if I didn’t stick to my medication.’”

Women still bear the brunt

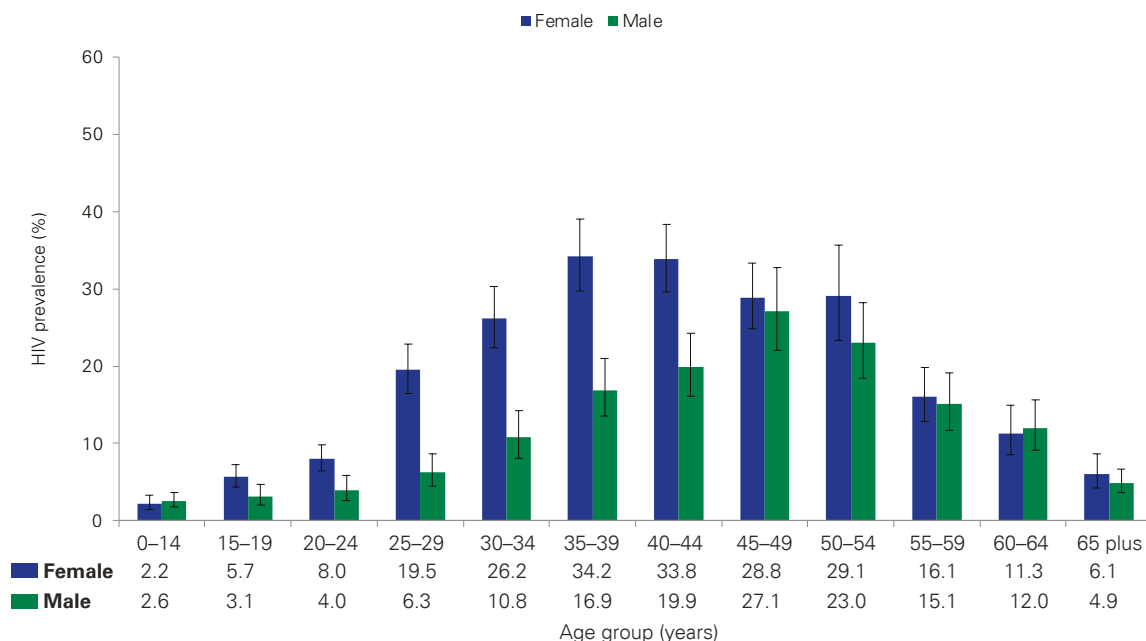
Among adults aged 15+ years, HIV prevalence was nearly twice as high among women (20.3%) compared to men (11.5%). By race, HIV prevalence was highest among black people (19.8%), followed by coloured (5.1%), white (1.3%), and Indian/Asian (1.2%) people.

Among women, HIV prevalence was highest in the age range 35–39 years at 34.2%, whereas among men it was highest in those aged 45–49 years at 27.1% (Figure 2). Pronounced differences in HIV prevalence by sex were seen among younger populations, with it being approximately twice as high in young women aged 15–19 years (5.7% vs 3.1%) and 20–24 years (8% vs 4%), and three times higher in women aged 25–29 years (19.5% vs 6.3%) compared to in men.

“It is shocking that in 2022, with all that we know, we have age groups of women where the prevalence is three times higher than in men,” said Dr Thembisile Xulu, CEO of the South African National AIDS Council, at the launch of the summary report.

Zuma says the vulnerability of women has been a persistent challenge over many years and partly relates to young women having sexual relations with older men.

Figure 2. HIV prevalence by sex and age in South Africa, 2022



Source: SABSSM VI

Viral load suppression

ART reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) in those who test positive for HIV. Having less than 1000 copies of HIV/ml blood means viral load suppression (VLS) has been achieved, and the person's chance of getting ill or transmitting HIV is reduced.

SABSSM VI showed that VLS among adults aged 15+ living with HIV had increased from 62.2% in 2017 to 81.2% in 2022 (Table 1).

It was the highest in females (91.4%) aged 55–64 years, followed by males aged 65 years and older (86.9%). VLS was lower among younger adults, being lowest among women aged 15–24 years (68.2%) and men aged 25–34 years (66.3%).



Photo: HSRC

Table 1. Viral load suppression among people living with HIV by age and sex in South Africa, 2017 and 2022

	2017			2022		
	n	%	95% CI	n	%	95% CI
Total	5 617	62.2	59.5–64.8	7 038	81.2	78.5–83.6
Sex						
Male	1 468	54.1	49.1–59.0	1 926	77.6	73.9–80.9
Female	4 149	66.9	64.3–69.5	5 110	82.9	79.8–85.7
Age						
15–24	736	47.7	40.9–54.6	614	70.1	63.3–76.1
25–49	3 874	61.7	58.3–64.9	4 621	80.5	76.6–83.9
15–49	4 610	60.0	57.2–62.8	5 235	79.5	75.9–82.7
15+	5 617	62.2	59.5–64.8	7 038	81.2	78.5–83.6

Source: SABSSM VI



Photo: HSRC



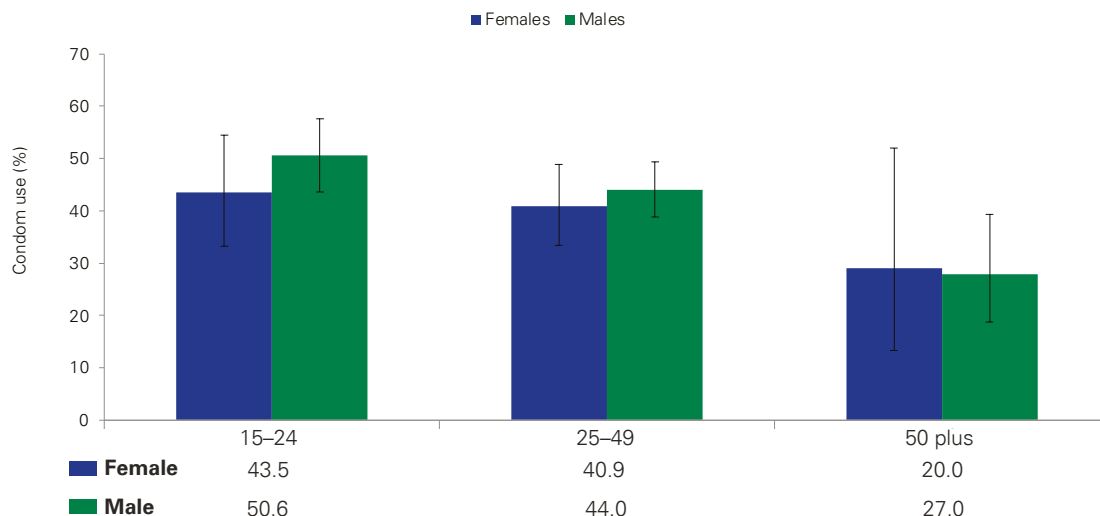
Photo: HSRC

Condom use

SABSSM VI also asked participants who had more than one partner in the previous year about condom use the last time they had sex. Among those aged 15–24 years, 50.6% of men and 43.5% of women said they had used condoms. Among older adults aged 50 years and older, self-reported condom use was 27.9% among men and 29.0% among women (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Condom use during most recent sexual encounter for people with multiple sexual partners in South Africa (2022)



Source: SABSSM VI

Youth at risk

Zuma warned that while HIV prevalence decreased to 390 000 of those aged 0–14 years and 533 000 of those aged 15–24 years, the numbers are still concerning, as many young people may not know their HIV status. Their lower VLS means they can spread HIV more easily, and half of young people with multiple partners don't use condoms.

Achmat believes new messages need to target the youth.

"[We have] young people living with HIV *and* taking medicines. ... We may not find many who are willing to be open, but the ones that can, should be able to speak of their struggle. Most importantly, they should be able to speak about how they're healthy and can't transmit HIV [due to VLS]."

Reaching 95–95–95

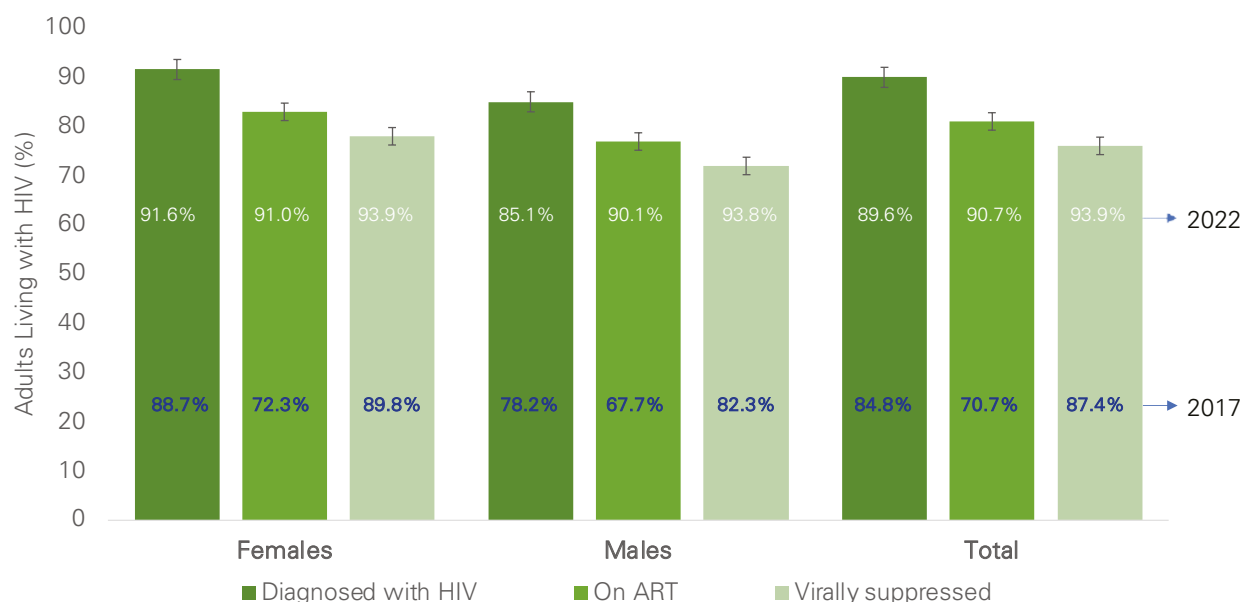
South Africa has made progress on its 95–95–95 targets – that by 2025, at least 95% of all PLHIV

will know their HIV-positive status; 95% of those diagnosed HIV positive will be on ART, and 95% of all those on ART will have achieved VLS.

SABSSM VI shows that in 2022, 90% of PLHIV aged 15 years and older knew about their HIV-positive status (92% of women and 85% of men). Of those who knew their HIV status, 91% were on ART (91% of women and 90% of men). Overall, 94% of those on ART were virally suppressed (Figure 4).

This is an improvement compared to 2017, when the UNAIDS target was 90–90–90 but South Africa achieved 85%–71%–87%. The great uptake of treatment can be attributed to the changes in treatment guidelines in 2016, explained Zuma. The new guidelines made provision for everyone requiring HIV treatment to be given it immediately, regardless of their clinical status, which previously needed to include a CD4 count below 500 cells/mm³.

Figure 4. 95–95–95 indicators for people aged 15 years and older living with HIV in South Africa, 2017 and 2022



Source: SABSSM VI

History: SABSSM changes over the years

The HSRC, in collaboration with a consortium of partners, has been implementing SABSSM surveys for the past 20 years, starting with the 2002 Nelson Mandela/HSRC-funded survey on HIV and AIDS, followed by the 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2017 surveys. The 2022 survey was the sixth in the series.

The SABSSM surveys have become a major source of information for measuring progress in the implementation of South Africa’s national strategic plan to curb HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and tuberculosis.

Over the years, the researchers have increased the number of biomarkers measured, expanded participation to entire households, and introduced electronic data collection systems, which allow them to access data immediately. The first survey included 9 963 participants and focused on estimating HIV infection, prevalence (cumulative HIV infection cases), incidence (new HIV cases), and knowledge, attitudes and perceptions about HIV and AIDS and sexual behaviour.

The sixth survey is the largest to date and was expanded to collect data on SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Researchers approached 76 134 people in all 9 provinces and 62.7% agreed to provide blood specimens. It is hoped that once available, the new data on COVID-19 will also help to inform South Africa’s future pandemic response

policies and interventions. The HSRC is finalising the main SABSSM VI report, which is expected to be released in April 2024. It will also include an analysis of new HIV infections (incidence) as well as summary sheets with data for provinces and selected districts.

Impact: The importance of good data

“This survey began to make HIV real,” said Professor Salim Abdool Karim, associate scientific director of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), when recently interviewed by the HSRC.

“I have always felt that the first survey was a turning point in the way in which the public understood this pandemic and the way in which they grappled with the evidence.”

Achmat also believes that good data has been crucial in the decades-long struggle against HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

“In the TAC, we always said the first place to start is the fundamental rights of everyone to life, healthcare, dignity, and equality. Once you’ve set your principles, the second place you go is to evidence – research and data – to see what needs to be done, and what should not be done. That’s what science is. From there, you educate yourself, the activists, and the public. Research work – the work of gaining knowledge – is essential for justice. You cannot have justice without knowledge.”

Achmat praised the numerous scientists and health workers who spoke truth to power at great personal risk during the difficult years of HIV denialism in South Africa: "They not only used their science and knowledge to improve lives but were morally invested in what they're doing."

The way forward

In a recent interview with the HSRC Dr Olive Shisana, special adviser to President Cyril Ramaphosa and former HSRC CEO, warned that continued funding of SABSSM is more critical than ever.

"We continue to have the largest number of people with HIV in the world ... failing to provide funds to prevent HIV does not mean that the problem is going to remain in Africa. People's bodies are biological hazards. They travel from one place to the other ...

it is very important that [we have] resources to make sure that we do not have the epidemic continuing to become a pandemic ... so that we end AIDS itself [and] so that no one should ever have to die of AIDS."

SABSSM contact: SABSSMVI@hsrc.ac.za

SABSSM VI was led by the HSRC in collaboration with partners and was conducted with funding from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) with technical collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, South African Medical Research Council, NICD, University of Cape Town, South African National Aids Council, and UNAIDS.



Former President Nelson Mandela with members of the HSRC research team and collaborators who worked on the 2002 Nelson Mandela/HSRC Study of HIV/Aids. Back: Dr Mark Orkin, Dr Kevin Kelly, Dr Leickness Simbayi, Warren Parker, Julien Chauveau and Yoesrie Toefy. Middle: Dr Olive Shisana, Dr Heather Brookes and Prudence Ditlopo. Front: Dr Mark Colvin Photo: HSRC



Prof. Khangelani Zuma presenting at the launch of SABSSM VI on 27 November 2023.

Photo: Adziwili Nematandani, HSRC



Delegates at the SABSSM VI launch on 27 November 2023.

Photo: Adziwili Nematandani, HSRC



Delegates at the SABSSM VI launch on 27 November 2023.

Photo: Adziwili Nematandani, HSRC



Dr Lucky Ditaunyane at the SABSSM VI launch on 27 November 2023.

Photo: Adziwili Nematandani, HSRC



Photo: Adziwili Nematandani, HSRC

Social dynamics and HIV risk in age-disparate relationships:

Insights from rural KwaZulu-Natal

*Condoms prevent unwanted pregnancy and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections like HIV, but for young adults navigating social and age-disparate sexual networks in rural South Africa, condoms also have social significance. Participants in a recent HSRC study in KwaZulu-Natal reported that condomless sex cemented primary relationships, indicated fidelity, or conferred power or prestige. These considerations, twinned with the worrying practice of 'sero-guessing' (assuming a person's HIV status by their appearance), may override the inclination to have safe sex. By **Andrea Teagle***

Adolescent girls and young women in South Africa have long borne a disproportionate risk of HIV, driven mainly by the prevalence of age-disparate transactional and transient relationships with multiple partners. Although the HIV incidence has declined slightly in this cohort, young girls remain at significantly higher risk than boys the same age.

In rural KwaZulu-Natal, the rate of infections among boys is rising. This might reflect earlier testing among boys than in the past or, as the HSRC's Phiwokazi Qoza and colleagues [write](#), it might indicate that relationships between young men and older women are becoming more common, alongside concurrent relationships with peers. Understanding why high rates of new infections persist in this age group, despite increasing preventative measures, is critical for designing effective behavioural interventions.

A team of HSRC researchers conducted a study involving 17 young men and women aged 19–24 who reported having partners five or more years older than themselves. They wanted to know how young people navigate and perceive sexual risk in this social environment. The study took place in the uMgungundlovu district of KwaZulu-Natal, where approximately 20% to 30% of adults above 16 years of age live with HIV.

Locally trained female data collectors conducted interviews to solicit participants' narratives, opinions, and experiences of decision making around HIV testing, condom use, contraceptive use, pregnancy, and related topics. It emerged from these conversations that participants used condoms inconsistently with primary and even side partners – a finding that aligns with national statistics. In the [2017 HIV national household survey](#) (SABSSM V), a quarter of respondents aged 15–24 years had never used a condom with their most recent sexual partner.

Worryingly, in the current study, young men reported making assessments of HIV status based on physical appearance, a practice that the authors refer to as 'sero-guessing'. Adjectives such as 'fresh' or 'fit' to describe a body shape or figure were 'linguistically framed as markers of an HIV negative status', according to Qoza and colleagues. For instance, one 23-year-old male participant stated, "I can judge a person by her physical appearance, then I can make conclusion that she is fresh, has nothing and everything is all right with her."

Sero-guessing took place in an environment where the social significance of condoms resulted in their use as a tool for navigating and shaping relationship hierarchies. Many participants indicated that they



Photo: Marcos Cola, [Pixabay](#)

understood the importance of condoms in protecting against STIs. However, sero-guessing might override existing knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, the authors suggest. In some instances, the practice arguably provided a means for young people to rationalise risky sexual behaviour that offered social/relational benefits.

“For many participants, HIV and AIDS is something that is happening ‘out there’ to ‘other people’ but they are precluded from its occurrence because they have unprotected sex with people they think they trust,” says Qoza. “Trust is informed by aesthetic/physical attributes. But, most importantly, if condoms were not involved when the relationship was initially ‘consummated’, they will rarely be introduced – irrespective of how many people enter the sexual network.”

She and her colleagues argue that these findings indicate the need for educational and behavioural programmes targeting young adults. Although sexual and reproductive health is taught in high school, many people do not have access to information about risk assessment into adulthood – when navigating sexual risk becomes more complex.

Condoms, trust, and commitment

Participants reported that condomless sex signalled trust and commitment; engaging in it became a way to build social capital and maintain a relationship.

Conversely, participants reported that insisting on a condom with a ‘straight-main’ – primary partner – may indicate mistrust or infidelity and could cause conflict. It followed that most participants reported not using condoms with their straight-main, even though none of the young men or women were in monogamous relationships. Sero-guessing provided a way to avoid ‘fighting’ about condoms, testing, and HIV status, the authors write.

Given the expectation that condoms were used in casual sexual encounters or side partnerships, the decision not to use them in this context was also socially significant.

Here, too, sero-guessing emerged as a means for young men to rationalise sexual encounters even when they did not have condoms with them. One participant (18 years old) said, ‘I am dating several partners ... one is 24 years old. She is fit. I mean physically well-built ... so we do not use a condom.’

“Both parties in the condomless sex encounter benefit,” explained Qoza. “The man gains prestige from his peers because he successfully convinced a beautiful woman to forgo all the information they have been taught about sexual risk and trust that they are the desired serostatus. At the same time, the woman agrees to forgo this information because that one act creates a consortium between them that is usually reserved for straight-main partnerships.”



In a larger [study](#) of motivations for condom use among young people in six districts across South Africa, conducted by researchers from the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), a similar finding emerged. In the qualitative component, involving 237 adolescent girls and young women and 38 male peers, the men reported that impregnating a woman was a way of laying claim to her and proving their masculinity. Young men's motivations to have condomless sex included 'increased sexual pleasure, proof of their masculinity and power, and prestige amongst peers,' the authors write.

Older 'sides'

It was common for participants to be in primary relationships with people closer to their age and to engage in relationships with older people on the side. The authors note that although relationships between young men and older women lack cultural legitimacy, the lower expectations of commitment that characterise such relationships are attractive for some young men.

In the study, men and women reported similar motivations for dating older partners. Participants said that while straight-mains took care of their emotional needs, older partners took care of their financial and material needs. Dating an older person was also seen to elevate social status.

'[My friends] would say, "Take him friend and chow his money; these old men have diabetes anyway, so he won't have sex with you.",' a 23-year-old woman said. Another participant, an 18-year-old man, said, "You see the gifts he gets from his date. And the date will come in her car, and they will park somewhere, then you feel the pressure of also wishing to date an older person."

Shifting narratives

Although they actively pursued older partners, the participants disapproved of older people engaging in these kinds of relationships. Men and women expressed the view that 'blessers' took advantage of young girls: "... Especially older people in most cases will want to have sex without using a condom and this will force you to do things that are against your will. The older partner – when you suggest that they get tested for HIV and such – are quick to say that they are older and they will do no such thing."

One young woman pointed to a distinction between a large age gap and relationships with people only a few years older (even if the latter was still transactional). Despite this shifting dynamic away from much older partners, the authors note that young women in these networks remain vulnerable to HIV through relationships with younger men who regularly engage in multiple sexual relations. Age-disparate relationships between young men and older women are also likely to increase the HIV risk in these sexual networks.

Qoza and her team underscore the need for increasing awareness that HIV testing is the only way to determine HIV status and should be part of a health routine, rather than viewed as a last resort to confirm a positive status. Education programmes should also emphasise the value of alternative preventative measures such as pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Next steps

This research provides a snapshot of how young people are making decisions in their sexual relationships, says Qoza. "Whereas these decisions might be individual, they help us understand collective risk behaviours potentially exacerbating the HIV and AIDS epidemic in South Africa. We were able to uncover that young people are not only in age-disparate relationships with older men and women, but they also have concurrent relationships with their peers or people who are closer to their age. Within the multi-party sexual relationships that often emerge, young women are unable to negotiate condom use because of both patriarchy and the desire to develop the social capital associated with serious relationships. Young men are uninterested in negotiating condom use because they rely on sero-guessing to ascertain the desired serostatus and continue to sero-guess in order to avoid conflicts within the relationship."

The findings of this research can be used to motivate young people not to "test with their eyes", but rather to engage in consistent condom use, start testing for sexual and reproductive health earlier and continue to rely on healthcare facilities to ascertain their serostatus and the status of sexual partners.

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Izwi Labantu

(voice of the people):

SASAS charting South African attitudes over two decades

*Each year, the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) asks a representative sample of South Africans about aspects of life in the country. 2023 represents the 20th anniversary of this HSRC flagship project, with Round 20 of surveying completed in October. **Drs Ben Roberts** and **Jarè Struwig** reflect on the experience of measuring and monitoring social, political and moral attitudes over the past two decades.*

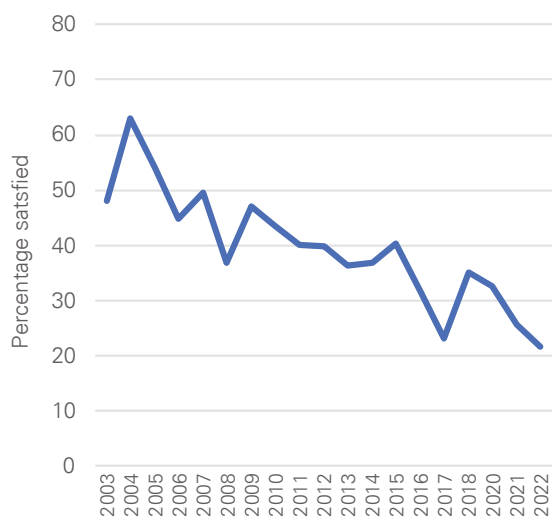


This annual survey is a nationally representative, repeated cross-sectional survey and was established under the guidance of former HSRC CEO, Dr Mark Orkin, and executive director, Dr Udes Pillay, with expert advice from the late sociologist, Prof. Sir Roger Jowell. Originally from South Africa, Jowell founded the British Social Attitudes Survey (1984–) and the European Social Survey (2001–). He was president of the University of Cape Town’s Student Representative Council and vice-president of the National Union of South African Students. Leaving for the UK in the late 1960s, he went on to be a leading expert in national and cross-national survey research. He served as special advisor to SASAS until his passing in 2011, and indelibly influenced its structure, content and quality standards.

Each SASAS round is designed to yield a representative sample of 3 500 individuals aged 16 years and older in households which are geographically spread across the country’s nine provinces. Random probability sampling ensures that everyone has an equal chance of being picked, so the results are representative of the South African population.

The SASAS questionnaires cover a wide variety of topics, topics, with core questions repeated in each round of the survey to monitor change and continuity over time. In addition, rotating modules on specific themes are fielded to provide detailed attitudinal evidence to inform policy and academic debate.

Figure 1a. Satisfaction with democracy, 2003–2022



Collecting this data over multiple years has enabled us to track notable trends and discern where views have changed or stayed the same.

Impact and influence

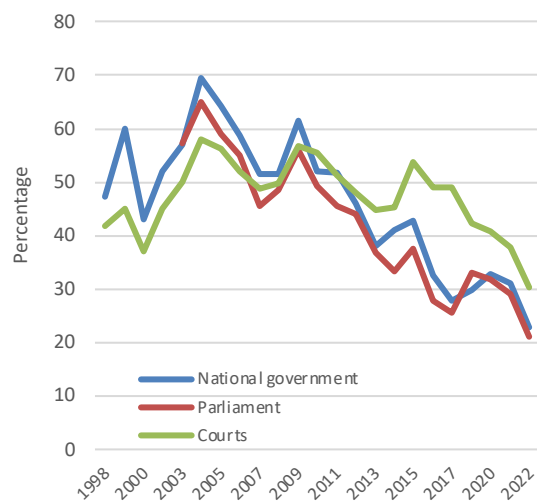
A few examples of how public opinion, and SASAS in particular, has interacted with policy over the years are provided below.

Power to the people? Democracy and governance

The SASAS series has consistently tracked different measures of political support in the country, including satisfaction with democracy as well as trust in government and other core political institutions. Corresponding with a global downturn in democratic evaluations over this period, these indicators have shown a steady decline, with satisfaction and trust levels more than halving since the mid-2000s (Figure 1 a and b).

For example, 48% of South Africans were satisfied with democracy, but this has changed over the 20-year period and in 2022 only 22% of South Africans were satisfied with democracy. Confidence in national government fell from 69% in 2004 to 23% in 2022, trust in Parliament from 65% to 21%, and trust in local government from 48% to 25%, with similar trends for courts of law, political parties, and politicians. The biggest falls coincided with high-profile government scandals. Attempts by successive government administrations to reverse this decline have not yet succeeded in doing so.

Figure 1b. Trust in the three branches of government, 1998–2022



Source: SASAS

Bridging differences: Social cohesion

Intergroup relations have been enduring themes throughout the survey series, especially relevant in a diverse country still dealing with the pain and trauma of historical injustices and promoting the moral philosophy of *ubuntu* (humaneness) in our daily interactions. A range of commissioned research has also been undertaken over the years, on themes such as multidimensional social cohesion, family cohesion, xenophobia, as well as sexual orientation and gender identity. These have all had policy or advocacy firmly in mind.

Figure 2a. Percentage stating that two adults of the same sex having sexual relations is 'always wrong' or 'not wrong at all' (2003–2022)

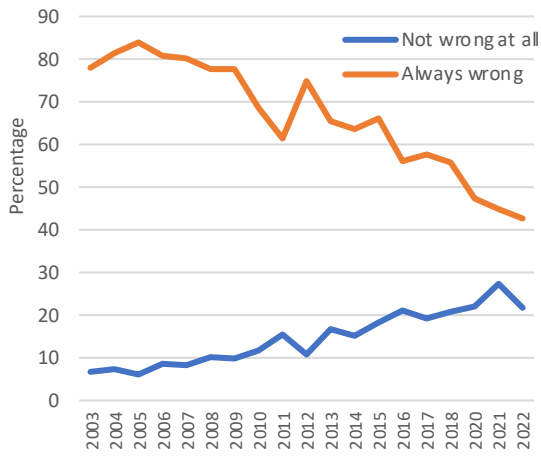
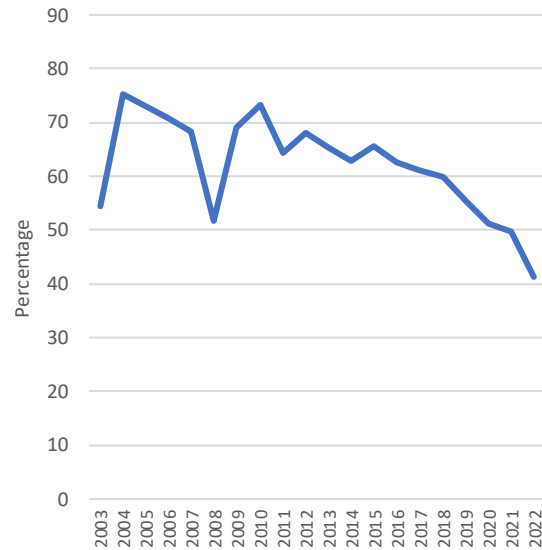


Figure 2b. Percentage stating that race relations in the country have improved since 1994 (2003–2022)



Source: SASAS



Patterns tend to be mixed. For instance, there are distinct signs of a change in views on LGBTIQ+, with a clear shift towards greater tolerance (Figure 2a). Conversely, attitudes towards foreign nationals have remained intractably harsh, with barely a quarter (22%) willing to welcome all immigrants to the country in 2022 (results not shown). Views on improved race relations since the transition to democracy in 1994 were mostly encouraging until 2015, after which a progressive decline has been observed (Figure 2b).

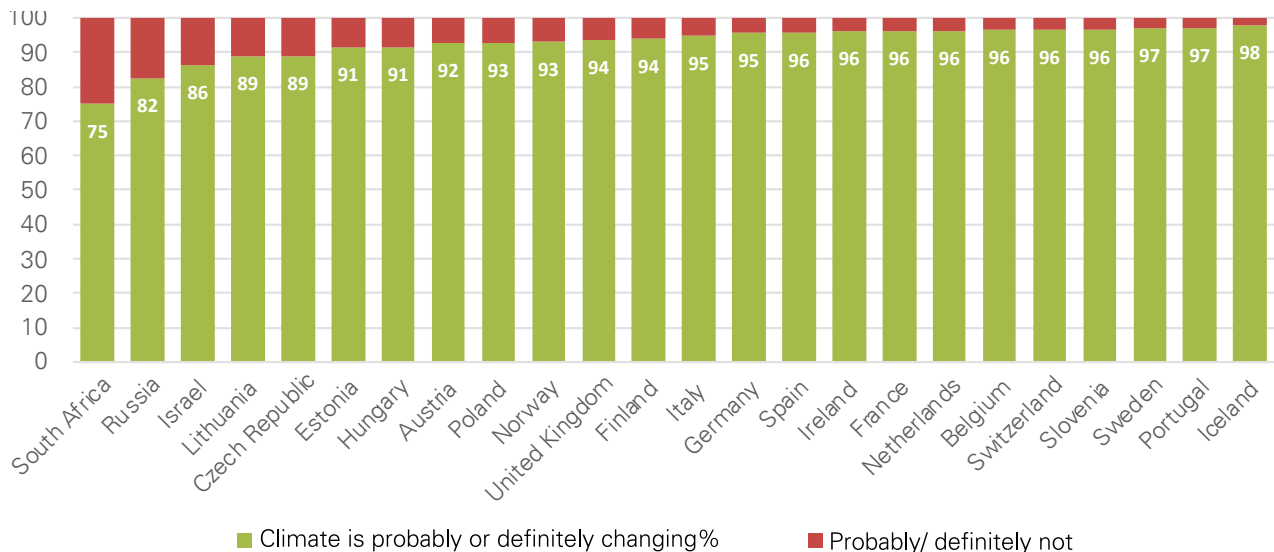
A world of difference: International partnerships

Comparing the views of South Africans on issues of national priority to those of citizens in other countries is essential for gaining a more nuanced understanding of our society, and the ways in which it is similar to or different from others. Through SASAS the country is a formal member of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), a partnership of more than 40 countries that annually fields an in-depth module of questions on topics of global relevance. ISSP topics have included: social networks; national identity and citizenship; work orientation; the role of government; religion; social inequalities; the environment; health; and family and changing gender roles.



A SASAS fieldworker in 2020 Photo: HSRC

Figure 3. Belief in climate change reality: South Africa compared to Europe (% , 2017), ranked low to high based on the belief that the climate is probably or definitely changing



Source: SASAS

Strong linkages have also been developed with the European Social Survey (ESS). Apart from harmonising measures on topics like fear of crime, xenophobia, race relations, and social trust, SASAS has also fielded ESS modules on social inequalities in health, criminal justice, attitudes towards democracy, social policy, and climate change and energy.

These continued international engagements have enriched the evidence base to inform decision making. One example includes attitudes regarding climate change (Figure 3). Despite greater awareness of our changing climate over the last 15 years, South Africans tend to display more climate change scepticism than citizens of other countries. In a 2017 comparison of 24 countries, South Africans were least likely to believe that the world's climate is changing. The value of such comparative analysis is that it broadens our perspective and helps with the development of effective policies in the country.

Going to scale

In setting up the SASAS infrastructure in the early 2000s, one of the guiding aims for the series was to gain recognition for reliable social indicators and

attitudinal measures as the basis for evidence-based decision making in the country. We have seen encouraging signs in this regard over time, as the demand for SASAS-based insight from government departments has grown.

This has resulted in dedicated survey questionnaires on election beliefs and behaviour for the Electoral Commission of South Africa, financial literacy surveys for the Financial Sector Conduct Authority and National Treasury, and even a baseline Public Relationship with Science survey in 2022 for the HSRC's parent ministry, the Department of Science and Innovation. Modules have been prepared for the Department of the Environment and the Presidential Climate Commission, as well as the Departments of Social Development and Defence, to mention just a few.

Through these and other contributions, SASAS is playing a role in the growing culture of data-led policy making. Similar commissioned research has been undertaken based on grants from local and international charitable foundations and agencies as the basis for framing campaigns and strategies.



SASAS fieldworkers in 2003 Photo: HSRC

Blues skies: Elements of the experimental

Beyond the routinely fielded survey content, each round has intentionally included an element of the experimental, to provide new insight on underrepresented topics. This is crucial for growing scientific understanding of societal dynamics in the country. Examples have included attitudes towards *ilobolo* (bride wealth), decolonisation, restitution, homelessness, the lived experience of inequality, materialism, and the social norms of corruption.

Experiences of young and emerging scholars working as part of the SASAS team

"My invested time in the SASAS project has been beyond improving myself, but has also been an integral part of developing others through research."

~ **Samela Mtyingizane**

SASAS researcher completing a PhD in Development Studies, UKZN, on attitudes towards the decolonisation of education

"My time with the SASAS team has been truly rewarding ... This journey has not only deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by ordinary South African citizens, it has also equipped me with the ability to think about recommendations and solutions to address some of these issues."

~ **Dr Thobeka Zondi**

HSRC SASAS researcher and former DCES PhD intern; graduated with a PhD in Public Administration, UKZN

"The SASAS project has been instrumental in fostering my growth as both a scholar and researcher ... being a member of SASAS provided valuable experience that informed my doctoral studies and other facets of my academic career. Here's to another two decades of SASAS."

~ **Ngqapheli Mchunu**

HSRC DCES senior researcher; he will graduate with a PhD in Political Science from Stellenbosch University late this year

Capacity development

A SASAS-aligned internship programme has been established where students at master's and doctoral level can work with the SASAS core team, gain exposure to all aspects of survey methodology, identify a thematic interest for dissertation purposes, and gain publishing experience. There is a strong emphasis on promoting data usage at universities for the purposes of instruction and studies. We would like to see the survey increasingly employed as source material for dissertations and peer-reviewed publications, and as an instrument for providing students and researchers with skills in the analysis of microdata and survey methodology.

Continuity and change: Looking to the next 20 years

A short reflection piece such as this can never do justice to the breadth and depth of the survey evidence generated and contributions made to decision making over two decades, and the many milestones and achievements. Perhaps one of the highlights of the flagship survey series that speaks to the objectives of SASAS was being awarded the National Science and Technology Foundation's Data for Research Award in 2017 for its role in advancing social science knowledge in the country.

In the spirit of high-quality attitudinal research, our hope for the next two decades of SASAS and beyond is to carry on monitoring continuity and change in South African society, while maintaining a comparative understanding of dynamics in the country through the perspective of the public. Experimentation will continue to be key. To this end, from 2024 onwards the SASAS team will run an internal competition for HSRC young and emerging scholars to propose the topic of a survey module. Through this input, we hope the spirit of innovation and insight that has guided us will endure.

The phrase 'standing on the shoulders of giants' is wholly appropriate when thinking of the innumerable contributors to SASAS over the years. These include past and present CEOs, executives, directors, and special advisors, as well as a truly phenomenal survey research and administrative team. We wish to acknowledge the special role of our data collectors, who brave inclement weather and a range of unforeseen circumstances to ensure that high-quality data is gathered.

Above all, we are deeply indebted to the thousands of South Africans who voluntarily open their doors, hearts and minds each year in the pursuit of better understanding our society. *Siyabonga kakhulu!*

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SASAS fieldworkers in 2020 Photo: HSRC



SASAS fieldworkers in 2022 Photo: HSRC



A SASAS fieldworker in 2017
Photo: HSRC



**HSRC's work on
Zondo Commission
outcomes adds to
ongoing analysis to
prevent future
state capture**

*In June, the HSRC hosted a colloquium on the Zondo Commission's state capture findings and implications for the future of democracy in South Africa, as an outcome of the Future of Democracy project. Much of the media coverage after the event focused on Chief Justice Raymond Zondo's controversial claim that Parliament would not be able to stop another attempt at state capture, due to too little change in the status quo. **Antoinette Oosthuizen** spoke with **Narnia Bohler-Muller** about the importance of reflecting on state capture and the findings of the Zondo Commission in a public arena outside of the courts. They also discussed a worrying finding of an HSRC survey that many South Africans are unaware of the Zondo Commission's work, despite daily news reports and live television screenings of proceedings.*

In June 2022, the Zondo Commission filed the final part of its report on state capture in South Africa. The findings describe multiple incidents of state capture that took place in South African government departments and state-owned enterprises during the former presidency of Jacob Zuma. Released in four parts, the report outlines extensive corruption, for example, in parastatals like the [South African Revenue Service \(Sars\)](#) and [South African Airways \(SAA\)](#), at the state-owned companies [Denel](#), [Eskom](#) and [Transnet](#), and involving the privately owned state contractor [BOSASA](#), as well as the attempted capture of the [National Treasury](#).

Chaired by then Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo and held from January 2018 to June 2022, the Commission heard testimony from more than 300 witnesses over 429 days of public hearings.

Support from the HSRC

The HSRC, through its Future of Democracy project, has been helping to synthesise the outputs of the Zondo Commission, and is now working with the CSIR to archive the data generated by the hearings.

In June 2023 the HSRC hosted a colloquium titled 'Post Zondo: The Future of Democracy' at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria. The aim was to discuss the Commission's findings but also to gauge public appetite for democracy as a form of governance.

The colloquium was a high-level, in-person event with presentations from stakeholders who included Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Blade Nzimande, former Constitutional Court judges Johann Kriegler and Richard Goldstone, members of academia, and civil society. The proceedings were filmed and broadcast live on YouTube, and it was attended by the media, mainly to cover Zondo's address.

Speaking out and ruffling feathers

During his keynote speech, [Zondo commented](#) that Parliament had failed to take steps to expose and stop state capture timeously, causing South Africa to lose over R58 billion:

... if another group were to do the same, Parliament would still not be able to stop it. That is simply because I've seen nothing that has changed. The question that arises then is: If Parliament won't be able to protect the interests of the people, if there are attempts for another state capture, who will protect the people?

He went on to suggest ways to prevent a recurrence, including giving people more power through electoral reforms, and establishing a standing anti-corruption commission to monitor the government.

Later that day, Parliament responded with a [statement](#) expressing "shock and strong objection" to Zondo's remarks. The press release stated that Parliament should be given the necessary space to fulfil its obligations, and that it had "taken decisive steps to address" the recommendations of the Zondo Commission. These steps included developing rules and guidelines to enhance its oversight processes and conducting research to "explore international best practices". To monitor progress on implementation of these initiatives, Parliament's Rules Committee "had decided that quarterly reports on the progress of these initiatives [had to be] tabled".

A week after the colloquium, [Business Day reported](#) on a meeting between Parliament's presiding officers and Zondo, described as "constructive" by National Assembly Speaker Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula and National Council of Provinces Chairperson Amos Maseko. The National Assembly stated that it was implementing 19 recommendations, 11 of which had already been completed. Parliament had started recruiting for various advisory roles, legal and otherwise, to strengthen its capacity.

Spotlight on the HSRC

While the controversy may have dominated media coverage of the event, it also drew attention to the HSRC’s impactful work.

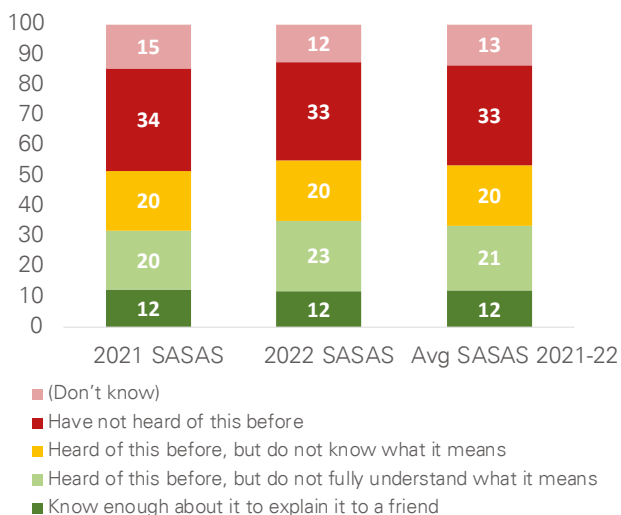
“If Parliament hadn’t released a statement the same day, I’m not sure it would have been such a big story,” said Prof. Narnia Bohler-Muller, divisional executive of the HSRC’s Developmental, Capable and Ethical State division.

“We wanted the colloquium to be high level and illustrate the importance of the work that we’re doing for the Zondo Commission, and have since been contacted by universities all over the country and are being invited to events to share our research.”

SASAS awareness

However, while academics are readying themselves to delve into the findings, public ignorance about the Zondo Commission is shocking. HSRC researchers found that 33% of those who participated in the 2022 South African Social Attitudes Survey had never heard of the Zondo Commission before (Figure 1). This was despite proceedings having been live-streamed on television and covered in daily media reports. Another 12% of participants were “unsure”, 50% had heard of it but did not know what it meant, and only 12% said they knew enough about it to explain it to a friend.

Figure 1. Responses to the question: ‘How much would you say you know about the Zondo Commission and its work?’



Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2021–2022

“It is worrying if people don’t know what is happening – and this is something that we want to research. If the citizenry does not have knowledge of such important events, then they’re not going to be able to make informed decisions, including who to vote for. We have seen this lack of awareness in other areas measured by SASAS,” explained Bohler-Muller.

Those who do know about the Commission will want to see action taken against those pinpointed by the reports.

“If by May of next year not a finger has been raised to bring people to book based on the evidence in front of us, people could feel disillusioned. I think there is already a sense of disillusionment. Citizens will lose patience with democracy – the consequences of which could be possible unrest, and low voter turnout in the 2024 election,” Bohler-Muller added.

Archiving the Zondo data

The HSRC and CSIR are working on a massive archival project to preserve the data from the Zondo Commission for future use by all.

Over 64 000 records have been produced, for example, affidavits, evidence transcripts, statements, letters of request, exhibits, government legal framework publications, and applications for cross-examination, postponement, and recusals.

Each record needs to be individually examined and organised into a system. The team is currently digitally indexing the records, identifying duplicates, linking different formats of the same subject matter, and establishing a physical records centre.



Understanding state capture

Inspired by the colloquium, the HSRC researchers are also working on a book about the players who fought or facilitated state capture in the country.

“We want to do a deeper analysis of the processes, people and institutions involved in facilitating or allowing the hollowing out of the state from the inside and the outside. People and institutions used certain mechanisms to do that, and they tended to work together. Those who fought or became whistleblowers risked their jobs or faced crooked boards and executives at institutions. To prevent a recurrence, we need to analyse how the system was manipulated to the point of near collapse.”

It was more than stealing

“The Zondo Commission touched on the health of our democracy, how people are held accountable, how transparent the state is. State capture was not

just about stealing money, but about the hollowing out and attempting to collapse the State itself.

“South Africa has been shown to be vulnerable, which means there is a possibility that things may go back to where they were, especially since many of the players are still in government. That’s why we must also trace whether the Zondo recommendations are being implemented or not. If we don’t see action, or if we are only seeing action from small players, the democratic project will be jeopardised. Therefore, we must recognise trends and patterns, and draw attention to them, while also encouraging and protecting whistleblowers.”

Two new HSRC policy briefs based on presentations made by researchers at the colloquium have been published. You can find them [here](#) and [here](#).

Watch Zondo’s comments at the colloquium [here](#).

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*EFF members carry a protest placard of Atul Gupta during protests to remove former President Jacob Zuma in Cape Town
Photo: Discott, Wikimedia Commons*

20 years of measuring South African science and innovation indicators (CeSTII)

Marking 20 years of R&D Surveys at the HSRC

Countries invest in research and development (R&D) to grow their economies, create jobs and generate better human development outcomes. The HSRC, in collaboration with the South African Department of Science and Innovation and Statistics SA, has been measuring R&D investment in the public, private and higher education sectors for more than 20 years. These flagship HSRC surveys inform policy development to support innovation and competitiveness in the country. *By Nazeem Mustapha, Glenda Kruss, Jacqueline Borel-Saladin, Gerard Ralphs*

The proportion of GDP that a country spends on research and development (R&D) is one of the key indicators of its competitiveness and a gauge of knowledge-intensive innovation activity in its economy. A representative annual survey of R&D activity yields vital information for a country's statistics, contributing to evidence-informed innovation policy.

The HSRC began measuring research and experimental development on behalf of the then South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) 20 years ago, in 2003.

Each year, the HSRC's South African National Survey on Research and Experimental Development Inputs (R&D Survey) reports the latest available data on R&D expenditure and performance across five sectors: higher education, science councils, government, business, and not-for-profit organisations.

The findings from this flagship survey inform science policy development and are used to set government R&D priorities and funding levels, and for monitoring and benchmarking against other countries. This long-term research helps us understand R&D in the country and map changes over time.

The early days of R&D Surveys in South Africa

While the recognition of R&D as a vital driver of innovation can be traced back to the early 20th century, the systematic measurement and tracking of R&D activities [gained more prominence after World War II](#) in the United States of America. The first edition of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Frascati Manual, which lays out the industry standard methodology for collecting R&D data, was published in the 1960s. The first R&D Survey in South Africa based on these guidelines was conducted in 1966, and a total of 18 official surveys were conducted over the next 25 years, usually biennially.

The survey was initially run by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), but from

1977/78 the HSRC was brought on board to survey the social sciences (which had not been included up to that point). The survey seemed to lose momentum in the years following South Africa's transition to a fully democratic state in 1994, with several breaks in survey continuity until 2001/02. To re-establish the series of the survey, in line with OECD methodological guidance, the new HSRC Knowledge Management Group was tasked with conducting the 2001/02 survey, to serve as a new baseline and the start of an official long-term suite of internationally comparable R&D indicators (Figure 1).

The inception of CeSTII

The HSRC proposed a Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (CeSTII) to the DST in September 2003, with the specific goal to produce science, technology and innovation (STI) surveys. By deciding to locate STI measurement within a public research institute like the HSRC, the DST was able to ensure that the task of conducting regular STI surveys would be part of the HSRC's mandate to use public funds to conduct research in the public interest over the long term.

Thus, CeSTII was established to help transform the STI system, and by utilising ring-fenced public funds to grow and maintain core competencies, conducts STI surveys that produce indicators used by government decision makers to this day.

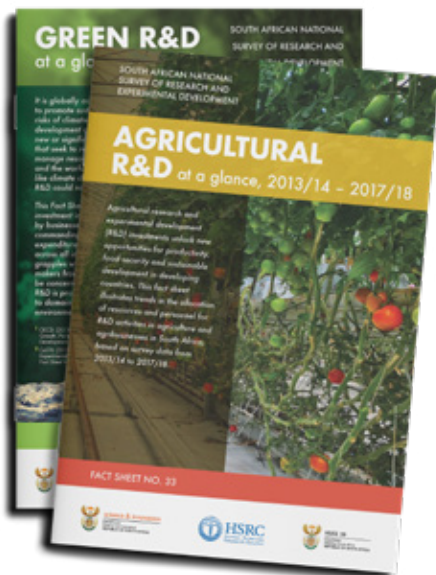
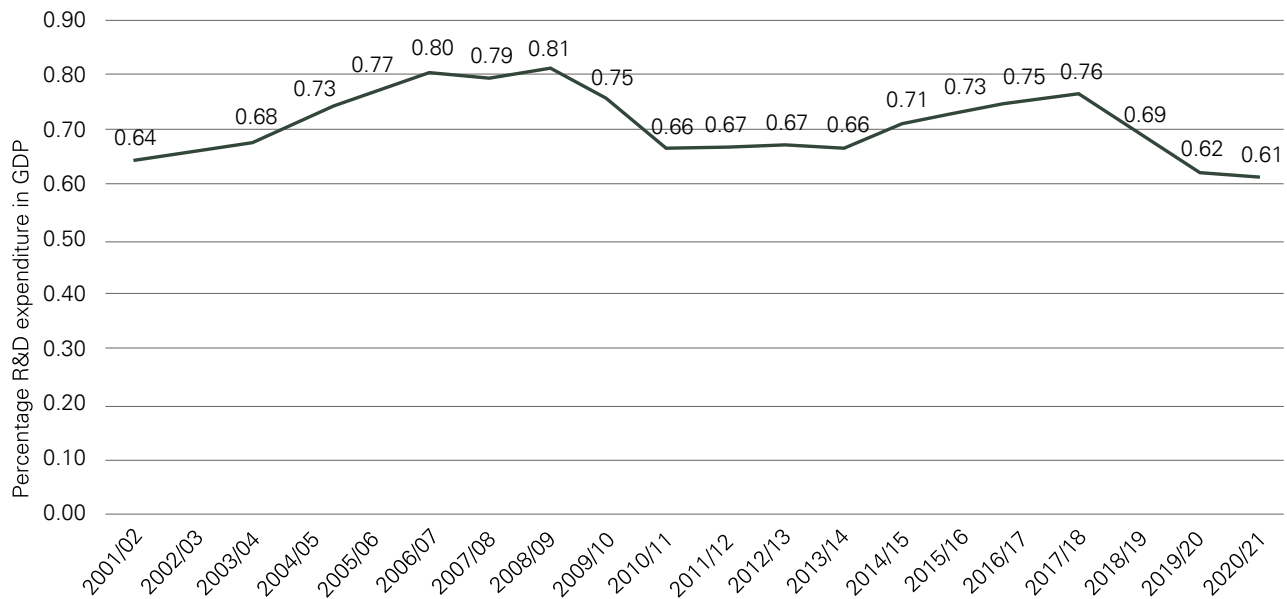


Figure 1. South Africa’s R&D Survey enables the tracking of the country’s research intensity ratio (GERD/GDP), 2001/02–2020/21



Data source: South African R&D Survey, HSRC CeSTII

R&D Survey: Activities, intent and impact

The annual survey project consists of data collection, data analysis and writing of reports and other outputs, such as fact sheets, policy briefs, academic journal articles and book chapters. These outputs are disseminated broadly within the STI community locally and internationally. The survey adheres to the Frascati Manual’s international measurement standards as well as those required for national statistics series by Statistics South Africa.

Data are collected on expenditures devoted to R&D within the national territory of South Africa, human resources utilised in R&D, and other indicators associated with the activity of performing R&D. Each wave of the survey includes a rigorous process of cleaning and building registers of entities likely to perform R&D to ensure improved and updated coverage.

The R&D Survey was developed to enable the growth of inputs into R&D activity (financial and human capabilities) and investment by all actors across South Africa’s national system of innovation to be tracked

over time. The statistics from the survey are publicly released every year, and there is now longitudinal R&D data available stretching across two decades.

The results of the R&D Survey are used to assist the government with strategic planning that informs policy and the allocation of funds. It is recognised at the highest levels, including by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Innovation. Data are used by stakeholders such as the National Advisory Council on Innovation, the Department of Science and Innovation, Statistics South Africa, the Reserve Bank, and many academics and researchers. The results also form part of the internationally comparable STI data for South Africa provided to the OECD and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics.

With this foundation of expertise and data, the HSRC plays a leading role in facilitating the sharing of data on the continent, advising African countries on STI measurement, as well as training and building capability in STI measurement in research and policy communities across the African continent.

Ongoing evolution: Digitalisation of the R&D Survey

Even before COVID-19 spurred digitalisation across many industrial and institutional sectors nationally and globally, the HSRC's experts anticipated that a new R&D Survey system was necessary to support new business processes and provide greater flexibility and longevity through a modern database system. In [partnership with the CSIR](#), a system was designed to support R&D Survey data collection tasks effectively and with minimal technical intervention. To enhance user experience and ease the load on survey staff, a [new digital user interface of the R&D Survey](#) was piloted in the 2020/21 survey, and full implementation was fast-tracked in response to the pandemic.

Going forward, the intention is to onboard all R&D Survey respondents to the online digital platform and, based on their user feedback, to continue to develop the system to provide even better value-added services to respondents. These include links to interact with the organisation's previously submitted data, through widgets and downloadable reports, as well as enhanced survey support through collaboration and communication tools.

Looking forward

Over two decades the HSRC and its CeSTII have developed in-depth expertise and technological capabilities to contribute to STI measurement in the national interest. The R&D Survey's time series data, which forms part of the public knowledge commons, is a resource for a wide range of potential users, including respondents, researchers and policymakers, to develop evidence-informed decisions.



Authors:

Dr Nazeem Mustapha, chief research specialist; Dr Glenda Kruss, executive head; Dr Jacqueline Borel-Saladin, senior research specialist; and Gerard Ralphs, programme manager, in the HSRC's Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators

This article is adapted from a poster titled 'An overview of the annual National Survey of Research and Experiment Development' presented by CeSTII at the HSRC Emerging Researchers Conference in September 2023. To contact the Centre, write to innovation@hsrc.ac.za. Katharine McKenzie contributed to the copy editing of this article.

[Visit CeSTII pages on the HSRC website to learn more](#)

Read more:

[Lessons in public sector innovation: Digitalising the R&D Survey, HSRC Review, December 2022](#)





Photo: Pixabay

Balancing global expertise and local empowerment: South Africa's wind energy growth

South Africa's 33 wind farms were all built by international turbine manufacturers. Given the limitations of the local manufacturing industry, local companies will need to continue to rely on foreign expertise to expand the country's wind energy output. The establishment of such partnerships will significantly influence the extent to which future renewable energy projects generate jobs and benefit local communities. In a recent study HSRC researchers led by Krish Chetty looked at two wind farms to analyse how South Africa can best guide a just and inclusive transition to use of local resources. *By Andrea Teagle*

By 2030, South Africa must install approximately 3600 wind turbines and 14 million solar panels to meet the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan target of 20400 MW of additional green energy, according to a [GreenCape report](#). The shift to renewables is necessary for the country to address its energy needs and achieve its carbon reduction commitments. It also has the potential to generate employment and benefit local communities.

However, the need for speed causes friction between priorities. South Africa's limited manufacturing capacity means that international wind turbine manufacturers will continue to be instrumental in constructing and maintaining new wind farms. But reliance on international partners in the longer term may hinder the development of local manufacturing capacity, write the HSRC's Krish Chetty and colleagues in a recent [paper](#).

How can South Africa best ensure that wind farms transition to local resources in the longer term and maximise local impact?

To find out, the researchers took a closer look at the successes and challenges of two wind farm partnerships – Cookhouse wind farm in the Eastern Cape and Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar wind farm in the Northern Cape. They spoke to the public, energy experts in the public and private sectors, project developers, policy makers, and local and international researchers.

The two wind farms were established as part of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), which aimed to expand South Africa's energy sector. Developed in 2011, Cookhouse is a partnership between the Indian turbine manufacturer Suzlon Energy and three local partners: African Clean Energy Developments, African Infrastructure Investment Managers and AFPOC Ltd. Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar, comprising two wind farms built in 2013 and 2017, respectively, is a partnership between Chinese company Longyuan (60% ownership), and a consortium of South African black-owned companies (40%).

A just transition?

What makes a transition just? In 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa created the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) to chart a path to a green economy. The PCC defined a 'just transition' in terms of distributive, restorative and procedural justice. Briefly, distributive justice requires that South Africans benefit equitably from the benefits associated with renewable energy, such as job opportunities, skills development and clean energy. Procedural justice requires that communities actively participate in green projects, policies and implementation plans. Restorative justice seeks to address past injustices – for instance, by supporting workers previously employed in coal-based industries and those adversely affected by coal. Chetty and his colleagues analysed the wind farms based on these three components.

The fact that Cookhouse and Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar are located far from coal stations meant that they could not absorb workers previously employed in the coal industry. However, the authors write that the wind farms advance restorative justice in a broader sense by offsetting 'a substantial quantity of carbon emissions, [and] contributing to the improved health of surrounding communities and general ecological sustainability'.

Local employment

The study found that Cookhouse and Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar together offset over a million tons of CO₂ per year (384 000 and 619 000 tonnes, respectively). For scale, South Africa emitted [405 million tonnes](#) of CO₂ in 2022. A 2021 modelling paper published in [Nature](#) projected that for each one million tonnes of carbon saved in 2020, 226 additional deaths (related to temperature increases) would be prevented between 2020 and 2100 under a baseline emissions scenario.

In addition to reducing emissions, both wind farms achieved distributive and procedural justice through employment and education opportunities and community trusts.

Surrounding communities partly own the two farms. The Cookhouse community owns a 25% stake in the project, while the De Aar Mulilo Community Trust – representing communities within a 50 km radius of the wind farm – holds a 12.5% equity share. In addition to supporting local development projects, the trusts give a voice to the surrounding communities, the

research team writes, advancing procedural justice. 'While [the communities'] share of returns will only be received after the respective loans are paid off, in the interim, the community trusts offer a mechanism to direct the efforts of the wind farm in addressing social concerns.'

Such community trusts should be encouraged, Chetty told the *Review*, adding that the initiative was widely reported as positive and not restrictive to the growth or management of the wind farms.

The farms also generated jobs for workers in nearby communities. The Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar wind farms created 700 construction-related jobs and 100 jobs for managing wind farm operations. However, stakeholders pointed out that most jobs were created during the construction phase and, therefore, temporary.

The HSRC researchers suggest that the limited longer-term employment opportunities are partly due to the nature of the contracts with the foreign partners. The fact that international partners are larger and better resourced than local developers has tended to influence the power dynamics in wind farm partnerships, the researchers write. In this case, to secure funding both farms entered into turn-key contracts, making the manufacturers responsible for operating and maintaining the farms after construction. Since skilled local labour is limited, the farms rely primarily on foreign workers and resources for maintenance.




Photo: Hendrik van den Berg, [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Scaling up local training programmes

“Contracts should not be restrictive in the long term, tying the wind farm to international manufacturers for many years. Such contracts are needed in the short term, but the state needs to expand focused skills development programmes to support these wind farms,” Chetty says.

Both Cookhouse and Longyuan-Mulilo initiated turbine technician training programmes to increase the pool of skilled labour from surrounding communities. Although the output was too low to meet demand, these programmes demonstrate the potential of education programmes to benefit local communities if they are scaled up, the researchers write.

However, Chetty says, it shouldn’t be the responsibility of the wind farm to solve the skills gap. “We need to be looking at partnerships between TVET colleges and the industry, with the industry defining their skills requirements. “The education system also has to be revitalised to become more agile and responsive to the needs of the power producers.”

Incentivising local manufacturing

When Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar was structuring its partnership, South Africa’s broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) requirements stipulated that 40% of farms must be locally owned and 40% of parts must be locally sourced. While intended to ensure inclusivity in local industry, the withdrawal of a potential investor in Longyuan-Mulilo De-Aar elicited concern that the requirements were constraining industry growth.

For this reason, President Ramaphosa initiated a relaxation of these requirements for the sixth bidding window in 2022. However, the authors note that

the country’s long-term policy position needs to be clarified. ‘These projects are long-term investments, so the investors need a consistent regulatory outlook, requiring the state to clarify long-term BBBEE regulations,’ they write.

Chetty and his team indicate that, while the BBBEE requirements aimed to promote local inclusivity, the nascent manufacturing sector was ill-prepared to meet the market’s demands, which constrained growth. As was the case in China, South Africa’s manufacturing sector may benefit from tax breaks, subsidies and other incentives to promote global competitiveness.

For instance, the government could incentivise manufacturers like Suzlon and Longyuan to establish local factories to service their wind farms. The government has already taken steps in this direction by establishing [Special Economic Zones](#). This initiative has spurred local tower manufacturing, although less progress has been made with other components, such as blades. “If the local manufacturer were subsidised, it would make their components more attractive than foreign manufacturing plants,” Chetty says.

The team is currently working on two related policy briefs. One focuses on strategies to expand manufacturing, while the other aims to streamline the process through which municipalities and independent power producers can access climate finance.

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Thousands of people marched towards the Cape Town Civic Centre on Human Rights Day in March 2018 to demand land for better housing. The need for affordable housing in well-located urban areas remains urgent. Photo: Ashraf Hendricks/GroundUp

Releasing municipal land for affordable housing

*The South African government owns large amounts of vacant land, much of it in areas where affordable housing would enable economic inclusion of poor and marginalised communities. However, the release and development of this land has been extremely slow. In partnership with experts on property and land development in South Africa, the HSRC's **Ivan Turok** presents a step-by-step plan to aid stakeholders in accelerating access to affordable housing in well-located urban areas. **Jessie-Lee Smith** summarises the main recommendations.*

The legacy of apartheid includes persistent housing shortages, as well as ruinous spatial marginalisation of poor communities from economic and social opportunities. Meanwhile, the public sector retains sizeable amounts of vacant and underused land, some in well-located parts of cities with good access to jobs and social amenities. This land is a valuable resource which, through affordable housing, could help address the chronic shortage of such accommodation in desirable locations and counteract the typically exclusionary character of the property market in many urban areas of South Africa.

The government's social housing programme has attempted to promote affordable accommodation on prime public land, to encourage integration and upward mobility. Municipalities are required to designate restructuring zones for these projects. However, the misplaced assumption that public entities would readily offer their surplus land at reduced prices, coupled with excessive red tape designed to prevent fraud and corruption, has meant that the programme has not achieved its transformative potential, resulting in [underspent budgets and little impact on urban inclusion](#).

In response to the need to accelerate the release of public land for affordable housing, the HSRC's Prof. Ivan Turok and a team of partners and property experts investigated the underlying problems. They have written a report based on four case studies of major cities, including Johannesburg, Cape Town, eThekweni (Durban) and Tshwane (Pretoria).

The report presents steps to assist stakeholders, including government bodies, private partners, and non-profit developers, in mitigating procedural errors, excessive delays and opaque rules governing the release of public land.

These legal and bureaucratic complexities have often confounded planned projects using public land, which emphasises the importance of simplifying and streamlining procedures. Understanding the seven essential steps in the process, which are outlined below, is crucial.

1. Land identification

Identifying suitable land is the first step in the process of public land release and development. The government's land portfolios should be meticulously combed through to identify sites that are most suitable for affordable housing. Suitable 'raw' land parcels should be identified by their location in relation to economic opportunities, access to transportation, and public amenities. Parcels should not contain costly physical constraints to development, such as steep slopes, poor drainage, or contamination. Groups of adjacent land parcels are ideal, because they facilitate neighbourhood planning processes and allow supporting investments, such as public spaces, to be more easily coordinated.

2. Land reservation

Municipalities then need to reserve the land for affordable housing. Reserving land stops it from being used for other purposes, as officials would

then turn down requests to use the land in other ways. Various stakeholders need to be consulted and included in the process at this stage. For example, politicians have specific mandates and may contest the lost revenue from subsidised disposals. The local community also may have reservations about land earmarked for low- or middle-income housing. Arrangements may also need to be made to protect the site from unauthorised occupation.

3. Land packaging

Reserved land now needs to be 'packaged' for development. Land packaging adds value to a parcel and, when no shortcuts are taken in legal procedures, can significantly improve prospects of the site being developed. Packaging land involves creating a design of what will be built, including specifications such as scale, density, composition and layout. These concept plans should be expertly drafted after engineering studies of the site, analyses of market demand, feasibility assessments, financial modelling, and due diligence investigations of legal matters. At this stage, a land parcel would also undergo several processes to ensure its viability. The land should be valued, it should be rezoned if necessary, and should undergo environmental and heritage studies. Again, stakeholders should be involved in this process to ensure the plan creates value for all concerned and reduces risks and uncertainties for developers.

4. Consultation

Once packaged, internal and external consultation is required to handle objections, make any amendments to the concept plan, and confirm its validity, viability and legitimacy. Various stakeholders, including several municipal departments and politicians, must formally approve these plans. Given the material and symbolic value of land, engaging the local community is important in order to respond to their needs and fears, benefit from their knowledge, and obtain their buy-in. Failure to communicate and consult with stakeholders can risk court disputes, delays and even physical disruptions.

5. Disposal method

Packaged land is then disposed of by the government, which means it is sold, exchanged, donated, or leased. One way of doing this is by a public tender where developers bid competitively for the opportunity. This method requires very clear and transparent criteria explaining how the quality of the bids will be

assessed. Alternatively, municipalities may come to more of a negotiated arrangement for highly complex projects, involving experienced developers that they can trust to deliver a successful outcome. This method saves much of the preparatory work and is also appropriate when developers are inexperienced and require capacity building for their projects to be viable.

6. Legal agreements

Legal agreements are essential for the transparent release and development of government land. These agreements safeguard the public good and help protect the project from failing to meet its objectives, by specifying the responsibilities of both parties. Both the municipality and the developer sign an agreement that spells out conditions attached to the sale or lease of the land.

7. Land development

Once land has been transferred to a developer, physical construction can take place. This includes the development of internal roads, utilities and other infrastructure. The actual buildings typically come next, followed by further improvements to the site, such as landscaping. Developers face many risks and vulnerabilities during this process, including changes in market conditions or the price of inputs that affect project viability. These risks can delay construction or require renegotiated arrangements with key stakeholders.

The tasks covered by this report's step-by-step approach include all stakeholders who would and should be involved in the process. Government bodies, private partners, and non-profit developers can utilise the steps presented to make the release and development of land more efficient and successful. If followed alongside the range of laws, regulations and policies that govern the release of municipal land for affordable housing, these steps could help accelerate the economic inclusion of marginalised communities.

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Photo: KJ Kgopa, [Wikimedia Commons](#)

HSRC survey indicates need for area-specific interventions for food and nutrition security in South Africa

South Africa has enough food and numerous food programmes, yet millions of people still go to bed hungry. The HSRC recently completed a national food and nutrition security survey, which for the first time provides data that will help the government solve this problem through food security programmes targeted at district and municipal level. *Thokozani Simelane and Antoinette Oosthuizen* explain how researchers measured food and nutrition security and what they found. Indicators showed that levels and types of food insecurity varied between provinces and districts.

Food and nutrition security is a constitutional right in South Africa, and the government views it as a core strategic priority. Numerous policies, strategies and programmes have been developed and implemented to ensure that people have enough nutritious food to eat. Support has included child support grants, school feeding schemes and farmer support programmes. Despite these interventions, and while South Africa is regarded as food secure at a national level, in some parts of the country [some people still go to bed hungry or eat only once or twice a day](#).

Government departments need up-to-date data and scientific evidence at district and municipal level to ensure that their interventions are targeted. This is why the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) commissioned the HSRC to conduct the National Food and Nutrition Security Survey (NFNSS) between 2021 and 2023.

HSRC fieldworkers visited more than 34 500 South African households in all nine provinces. They conducted interviews in local languages using questionnaires to ask people about the types and amounts of food they consumed and to gather household information on issues such as education, employment, and the effect of COVID-19 on their ability to access food. In some households children were measured and weighed to assess their health and growth.

Measuring food security is about much more than estimating volumes of food or regular access to it. People must also eat enough different types of food to stay healthy. So, to measure the different dimensions of food and nutrition security, the researchers used key internationally accepted food security indicators: the Household Food Insecurity Access Score (HFIAS), Household Hunger Score (HHS), Food Consumption Score (FCS), and Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS).

HFIAS and HHS reveal crisis areas

The Household Food Insecurity Access Score (HFIAS) measures the degree of food access challenges that a household experiences. Household members respond to nine questions about the frequency of certain behaviours that signify challenges in accessing food, and their responses are added to reach a score from 0 to 27. A household was regarded as 'food secure' if it scored 1 or less, 'mildly food insecure' if the score was 2 to 8, 'moderately food insecure' at 9 to 17, and 'severely food insecure' if the score was ≥ 18 .

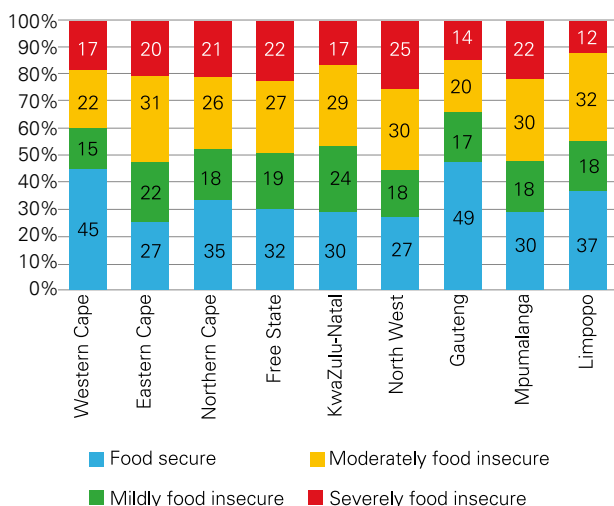
The survey revealed a national average HFIAS of 8.3 in South Africa; however, 17.5% of households scored 18 or more, indicating severe food insecurity. This means they often had to cut back on meal size or the number of meals consumed, and also experienced running out of food, going to bed hungry, or going a whole day and night without eating.

Another 26.7% of households were moderately food insecure, frequently consuming low-quality or undesirable food and occasionally reducing the size or number of meals. The mildly food insecure households (19.3%) worried about not having enough food and may have been unable to eat preferred foods, but rarely ate undesirable food and did not need to cut back. The food-secure households (36.5%) had access to food and rarely worried about not having enough.

The researchers also used the Household Hunger Score (HHS) which is derived from HFIAS questions and measures people’s experiences or perceptions of hunger. Nationally, over 79.2% of households reported that they experienced little to no hunger, while 15.3% experienced moderate hunger and 5.6% severe hunger.

While the national HFIAS and HHS might have indicated that food insecurity in South Africa was not acute at a national level, provincial and district scores revealed crisis scenarios in some parts. In North West, the HFIAS showed that more than half of households were moderately (30%) or severely (25%) food insecure (Figure 1), while the HHS indicated that 10% of households experienced severe hunger, almost double the national HHS average.

Figure 1. Food security status disaggregated by provinces in South Africa (HFIAS)



Source: National Food and Nutrition Security Survey National Report (2023)

HDDS and FCS to measure dietary diversity

People must also eat from various food groups to stay healthy. A chronic lack of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients [can lead](#) to chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and, among children, stunted growth.

This is why the researchers also used the [Household Dietary Diversity Score](#) (HDDS), constructed using the number of food groups reportedly consumed by the household over a 24-hour period. The food items were categorised into 12 different food groups, including different types of meat, vegetables, legumes and cereal, for example.

On average, findings show that households in South Africa consumed more than 6 out of 12 food groups, which suggests above-average dietary diversity levels, with 80.8% consuming highly diverse diets (≥ 6 food groups), 14.9% consuming medium dietary diversity (4–5 food groups), and 4.3% consuming low diverse diets (≤ 3 food groups).

The researchers also used the Food Consumption Score (FCS), which considers dietary diversity, food frequency and the relative nutritional importance of different food groups over a recall period of seven days. Food types are also weighted differently. A score can be ‘poor’ (0–21), ‘borderline’ (21.5–35), or ‘acceptable’ (> 35).

The findings showed that nationally less than two-thirds (58.1%) of the households consumed acceptable diets. About 23.3% of households were at the borderline and could fall into the category of consuming an ‘unacceptable diversity of foods’ if no actions were taken to help them improve their diets. Nationally, almost 18.6% of the households consumed poor diets.

The national overview of households indicated that most households survived on nutrient-poor food groups such as cereals, condiments, sugars, oils and fats. Consumption of nutrient-rich food groups such as fruits, pulses, nuts, eggs, fish, and seafood was limited.

The results showed significant variations between regions, districts and municipalities – again pointing to the dire need for targeted food programmes. For example, at provincial level, only 5% of households in KwaZulu-Natal had a poor FCS. However, looking at districts, 24% of households in uMkhanyakude scored poorly, as did 9% of households in the uMgungundlovu and iLembe districts.

Household characteristics and resources

Demographic and socioeconomic factors, such as gender, age of the household head, access to land and resources like irrigation, water sources, sanitation, and social grants, as well as factors such as household size, markets, household head’s education level, and involvement in agricultural

production, were found to significantly influence the food security status of the households. For example, the findings indicated increased acute food insecurity in households headed by elderly people. Positive correlations existed between employment, higher education status, access to social amenities and improved status of household food security.

Measurement of children

The researchers measured children to establish rates of wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age), again identifying regions at risk. The national prevalence of overall stunting, wasting and underweight in children aged 0–5 years was 29%, 5.3% and 7.8%, respectively. However, in the Northern Cape the overall prevalence of stunting was 48.3%, with 16% severely stunted. The province also had a severe wasting prevalence of 21.8% and severe underweight prevalence of 22.4%.

Recommendations

The NFNSS data can now be used to inform improved food programmes at regional and district level, and as a baseline to monitor household vulnerability to food insecurity. The report also provides South Africa with the opportunity to fulfil the requirements of the Dar Es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, a set of agricultural goals to help reduce food insecurity in the Southern African Developing Community region, to which South Africa is a signatory.

Specific recommendations include:

- ❖ *Promotion of domestic food production* encouraging families to produce their own food to ensure food security at household level

- ❖ *Focused investment and establishment of agri-food processing centres* to create an enabling environment for commercial food production and processing

- ❖ *A focus on employment creation* through a targeted agricultural sector employment-creation drive

- ❖ *Investment in food markets and food banks* at fruit and vegetable markets strategically located close to vulnerable households in all districts

- ❖ *Land redistribution and restitution*, with a rezoning strategy for land under traditional authorities so that some can be reserved for agricultural production

- ❖ *Investment in post-harvest agricultural processing* so the food system encourages and enables households to process and consume what they produce locally

- ❖ *Protecting extremely poor households from seasonal hunger* through assistance in particular months of the year (mostly January and June)

- ❖ *Enhancing food safety* by assisting informal traders and small businesses trading in agricultural products to improve the quality of their services and extend the lifespan of their products

- ❖ *Improve household nutrition through continued interventions*, such as breastfeeding promotion, growth monitoring of children, appropriate referrals, managing acute malnutrition, and dissemination of clear messages on the benefits of consuming nutrient-rich foods and dietary diversity, as well as guidance on food preparation and meal planning.

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Photo: Alexandre Saraiva Carniato, Pexels

Fairness and justice: Improving the quality of life of disabled people in retaining dignity and accessing healthcare

In South Africa people with disabilities continue to face numerous challenges when [accessing healthcare](#). The effect of the pandemic on these was [described](#) by scholars and activists in the early months of the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on fieldwork for the HSRC's Women Rise Project, the story of Mandy (not her real name) is shared, to shed light on the struggles experienced by people with physical disabilities, especially those living in rural areas, when attempting to access healthcare. For people with disabilities in rural areas, equal access to healthcare services does not equate to equity. By *Anelitha Tukela* and *Tim GB Hart*

Mandy is a 60-year-old woman living in a rural area of Kwelera in Buffalo City Municipality in the Eastern Cape. Her right leg was amputated in 2021 due to diabetes, which was diagnosed some years earlier, before the COVID-19 pandemic. She takes medication but also needs to inject herself to control her diabetes.

In April 2023 Mandy shared her story with fieldworkers from the HSRC's Women Rise Project. This project looks at key issues related to the precarity of women in rural areas of South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a starting point for post-COVID-19 rebuilding. Using the 'people's science' action approach in two phases, the research team has been documenting and exploring women's lives before, during, and after the acute phases of the pandemic, to identify trends and triggers that elevate or depreciate their livelihoods and health status. In the second phase the project will use this analysis to explore strategies to enhance the prevention of adverse outcomes in the health and livelihood spheres.

The loss of her leg forced Mandy to stop working and stay at home, relying on a disability grant. "I have money to maintain my household, but the only frustration is that I'm using a wheelchair and can't move around like I used to," she said.

Mandy attempted to apply for a prosthetic limb, which would give her greater mobility and independence in and outside her home. However, she found the process of getting the leg at a public hospital to be an enormous challenge, and has struggled to access the medical facilities and services needed to be eligible for it. To qualify, she has to attend weekly physiotherapy sessions at the hospital in East London, which is 40km from her home.

Mandy attended physiotherapy after her operation, when they taught her how to use her wheelchair and walking frame. However, she couldn't keep up with the physiotherapy because she lives in a rural area, and getting to the hospital every week was extremely challenging and expensive. If she used the taxi service, she had to catch two taxis before reaching the hospital; both charged her for transporting her wheelchair and walking frame, and no one helped her to get from one taxi to the other. Mandy therefore needed to hire a car, which could accommodate her wheelchair and walker. "I don't have money to hire a car every week, and without me going to physiotherapy every week, I can't qualify for a prosthetic leg," she said.

She has become frustrated with the process and is now thinking of finding ways of buying the prosthesis herself. However, a prosthesis is expensive in the private health sector, and she lacks funds.

Also, she would still require physiotherapy and assistance if she did acquire one. Mandy currently only receives a disability grant, but now that she is 60 years old this will be converted to an elderly grant (old-age pension) of equivalent value. Although she is a disabled pensioner, she will only receive the standard state old-age pension that all qualifying poor people of 60 years and older receive.

Every month Mandy also struggles to collect her diabetes medicines at the clinic, relying on others to collect them for her. A neighbour who was compensated through an Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) in her village used to collect Mandy's medicines but stopped when the EPWP contract ended. Sometimes Mandy's husband takes a day off work to collect his wife's medicines, but if he can't, and if she can't find someone to help, she goes days without taking her medication. To maintain her routine during these times Mandy drinks water whenever it's time to take her medicine, but with unstable diabetes, going for days without medication is a health risk.

Missing check-ups

When Mandy doesn't collect her medicine, she also misses her medical check-ups. "Nurses never write on the clinic card or tell the person collecting the medicines [when] my [next check-up date [is]," she said. Anelitha Tukela, the HSRC fieldworker who has been working in Kwelera, has linked Mandy with a health assistance mentor from a non-profit organisation that helps vulnerable children in nearby informal settlements, farming communities and rural

villages. The mentor agreed to help Mandy with her medicine collection until she gets assistance from the Department of Health. At the time of writing, the mentor was still collecting the medicine as the Department does not have a plan to accommodate disabled people who are unable to travel to the clinic.

Equality but not equity

The concept of equality is that all people have access to the same resources and opportunities, resulting in the same outcomes. However, [the idea of equity recognises that the circumstances of each individual are different, and to reach the same outcome, they need to be allocated specific resources](#). Essentially equality is about quantity and sameness, while equity is about fairness and justice. Like all South Africans, Mandy has a right to healthcare and equal access to medical facilities – but this access is not always equitable in rural areas located far from services, particularly for a person with a disability who struggles with challenges related to mobility and resources.

South Africa's public healthcare system doesn't have a programme to accommodate people who can't access their facilities due to a lack of transportation, insufficient money or limited mobility, as in Mandy's case. The disability grant of R2 080 per month does not cover her accessibility expenses. She has had to refrain from undergoing the weekly physiotherapy required by the state hospital to get on a list for a prosthetic limb. Lack of access is more pronounced in rural areas. Hospitals are far from homes, and transportation – public or otherwise – is less available and more costly. Public transport providers seldom

Kwelera in Buffalo City Municipality in the Eastern Cape Photo: HSRC

cater adequately for people with disabilities, and more expensive private options are required or the support of resource-stretched local non-profit organisations.

A way forward

One option would be for the health services to arrange house visits for people like Mandy who struggle to get to hospital for treatment, therapy and medicines. Another option would be to provide regular (monthly or weekly) state-funded transportation for people who need to go to hospital for specialised treatment. If either of these interventions existed, Mandy could have received a prosthetic leg by now, and would be taking her medicine regularly, preventing any further diabetes-related problems.

Equal access to healthcare is a fundamental right that should be available to all individuals, regardless of their disability. Adopting equity principles can ensure that the public sector healthcare system is inclusive and meets the health needs of people with disabilities, chronic illnesses and dread diseases, especially those living in rural areas who require specialised treatment that the clinics cannot offer at present or is only needed by a few people in each village.

Similarly, if the social protection system in South Africa adopted equity principles, then Mandy could receive an old-age pension that contributes to her living needs and a disability grant that contributes to her disability expenses. Disability expenses do not stop after the age of 60, but the notion of equality ignores disability, and thus undermines equal outcomes.

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Antananarivo, Madagascar
Photo: Lukys, [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Local voices in African structural transformation: Lessons from Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire

*The HSRC conducts research on development challenges in Africa in the context of the collective drive for peace, unity, self-determination, and prosperity for the continent and its islands. Through the lens of the 'Local Voices' project, HSRC researchers spoke to various civil society groups in Madagascar (2015) and Côte d'Ivoire (2016), to gain an understanding of the role of local voices in driving structural transformation during political transition. **Drs Nicasius Achu Check and Palesa Sekhejane** share some insights.*

The configuration of the state and political institutions in Africa is not aligned with developmental needs, since Africa has struggled to shed its colonial character. We still see this in, for example, the lack of recognition of ethnic and natural boundaries and the lack of appreciation of the importance of adapting to local contextual realities.

The violent nature of the 2009 Madagascar and 2010 Côte d'Ivoire uprisings, along with the military's support for these movements, suggested a fundamental fracture in the way power is acquired and exercised in these countries.

The HSRC launched the Local Voices project to examine how local actors such as civil society groups had shaped the development agenda of Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2015, a team of researchers from the HSRC's Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) embarked on a study focusing on the role of communities and the place of local voices in defining new relations with the state. The intention was to gauge the degree to which civil society influences government policies and debates.

The researchers also sought to explore how best to prioritise Africa-inspired approaches to resolving conflict, within the framework of several African Union resolutions.

Some questions focused on the role of local actors during the international community's military interventions on the continent and its islands, for example:

- Could the outcome of these interventions have been different if local voices, including those of women and youth groups, had been solicited?
- How did the interventions affect women and children?

The study sampled local opinions and perceptions on the need for foreign intervention to resolve local developmental challenges, and analysed the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the postcolonial African structural transformation agenda. With a critical qualitative research approach, the researchers aimed to reveal and critique the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions regarding present-day contexts, to empower individuals and institutions and enable change for a better world.

The research questions explored issues of race, gender, and class influences, how power structures at the time of the study may have served some groups' interests and oppressed others, and how truth and knowledge were constructed. This helped unearth critical data with the potential to inform viable options through which inter-community dialogue in Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire could be a platform to influence policy and political direction.

A need for participation

A key finding was the lack of inclusive and participatory approaches to civil society engagement in the ongoing development and reconciliatory processes. The two countries also lacked women and youth empowerment policies. Where some policies and projects existed, they could not be implemented in the prevailing socio-political spaces.

The downward spiral of the economic, political and security situation in Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire had been attributed to the inability of the political elites to address the double challenge of pervasive poverty and acute unemployment. The recent [Human Development Index \(HDI\)](#) shows that the economic situation in these countries has not changed. Fundamental to these challenges is the need for the countries to emerge from the shadow of French neo-imperialism, and to embrace opportunities that globalisation and South-South cooperation offers.

Colonial policies in Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire imposed international boundaries, but these divisions did not affect nation-building in these countries. The outcome of colonial disentanglement was a persistent and intractable series of economic, political and security challenges which, current studies hold, have not changed.

A major finding of the research was that democratic dividends could only be reaped in an atmosphere of positive peace. It was also observed that politico-security and governance challenges that the two countries faced had a negative impact on peace and development. Also, limited resources led to relationships between the various ethnic and religious groups in the countries being strained.

While people from the northern parts of Côte d'Ivoire felt emboldened by the fact that 'one of theirs' was the president, there was disdain among those from the southern part, who felt that their political leaders

had been side-lined in the rebuilding process. The researchers observed a need for citizen engagement in the development and reconciliation process in the country. They also saw that there could be no democratic development if citizenship and civic engagement were not encouraged. Local voices from all religious and geographical backgrounds needed to be heard – which still holds true today.

Role of the international community

Conversations with the various civil society groups revealed a belief that the international community had an important role to play in the reconstruction and reconciliation processes. The first contribution of the international community was seen as the need to enable technology transfer and provide technical support for building the capacity of CSO personnel in the countries. In most Francophone countries, the role of local voices in shaping a development discourse is a new phenomenon.

Secondly, most local CSOs in Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire relied on government funding. They did not – and still do not – have diversified funding streams, and are therefore divided in their advocacy work on government policies. This challenge can be addressed through financial and technical support from the international community to local organisations in building capacity within the civil society arena. While the financial and technical capacity of CSOs has been ameliorated, there is still room for improvement.

An important observation captured in many of the interviews was the fact that the two countries were still recovering from the 2009 and 2010 upheavals. Although the people interviewed and government officials had an air of determination regarding the need to reconstruct the country, a fairly large section of the population still felt marginalised. The direction for further research would be to look at how genuine reconciliation could be achieved in the midst of mistrust.

Therefore, as a follow-up to the Local Voices project, the HSRC has embarked on the Nation-Building Project, which aims to ascertain why state structures and institutions are ferociously challenged by non-state actors in Africa. This project examines the fundamentals of nation building in Cote d'Ivoire (August 2022) and Kenya (September 2022), and questions whether the concept of 'the State' needs to be revisited in these two countries. The purpose

is to develop a model to determine the strength and functionality of state institutions there. Initial research data point to the resilience and determination of Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire to withstand internal and external challenges to the foundations of the state.

Outcomes

Publications that arose from the Local Voices project have been cited by colleagues in academia, helping to shape a better understanding of contemporary issues and fostering positive change in Madagascan and Ivoirian society. The research aimed to put local peoples' perspectives of their concerns to the broader community, in the hope of helping to build bridges between local communities and policymakers.

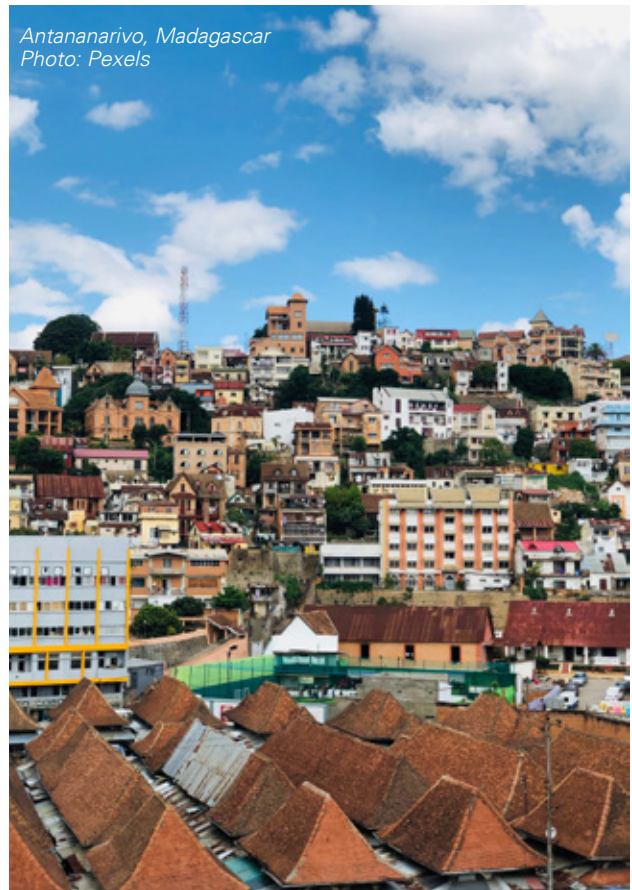
By providing an analytical framework, findings from Local Voices can also help, and have helped, to shape the direction of social policy in Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire, especially regarding the plight of women and young people. Subsequent to the HSRC's research visit, UNICEF approached Prof. Cheryl Hendricks (former head of AISA) to draft the Women and Youth National Plan of Action for Madagascar, an important policy uptake from the Local Voices study. Hendricks later also assisted with development of the [SADC Regional strategy on women, peace and security \(2018–2022\)](#).

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Further reading: [Localizing African Structural Transformation: Voicing Lessons from Madagascar](#)



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Antananarivo, Madagascar
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A woman sells coconuts while carrying her baby on her back on a beach in Côte d'Ivoire Photo: [SYLLA Cheick 225, Wikimedia Commons](#)

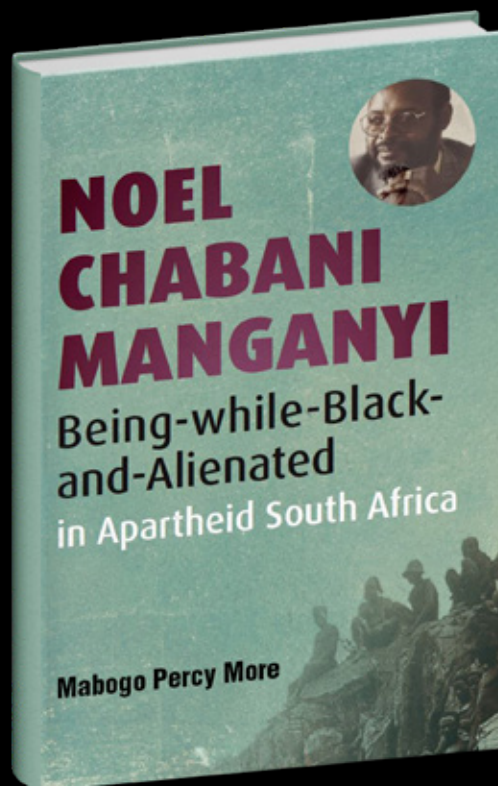


Antananarivo, Madagascar
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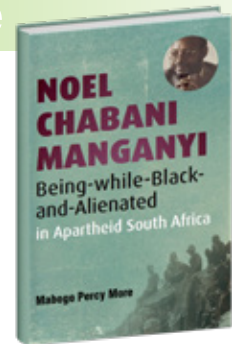
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Noel Chabani Manganyi

Being-while-Black-and-Alienated in Apartheid South Africa

Author:	Mabogo P. More
ISBN (soft cover):	978-0-7961-1025-1
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ABOUT THE BOOK

This is fundamentally a text about race and anti-black racism producing the problem of alienation (separation) of humans from one another, from their bodies, and from themselves, globally. The distinct and conscious focus is on the historical context of apartheid and 'post'-apartheid South Africa through the lens of Noel Chabani Manganyi, a distinguished black clinical psychologist and one of the first in the country.

The book is a philosophically critical engagement with his work, and it constitutes part of the author's overarching project of attempting to reclaim and retrieve hitherto overlooked, ignored and invisibilised black thinkers of the past and present. Although Manganyi has written over 10 books – *Being-Black-in-the-World* (1973) and *Alienation and the Body in Racist Society* (1977) being the most important and popular – his ideas and work have been disregarded by mainstream South African psychology and philosophy.

Manganyi's body of published work reveals that from the beginning he has been involved in an attempt to contextualise his discipline, psychology, in the lived realities of South Africa: apartheid racism and the alienation it produced for black people. His main concern has been to utilise psychological discourse to address issues relevant to what can broadly be called 'the black lived experience' in an anti-black racist society of the condition of alienation. He stood as a solitary figure whose voice was pushed to the margins of the psychological establishment, which was either silent about or complicit in the oppression of blacks by the apartheid regime.

By exploring Manganyi's concerns about apartheid racism and its attendant devastating production of alienation among black people, the author argues that the alienation produced by continuing rampant anti-black racism (even at the hands of a black government) constitutes a lingering problem of 'post'-apartheid

South Africa. The author demonstrates that apartheid and alienation are not only conceptually synonymous but experientially related: what connects anti-black racism (apartheid) and alienation is the fact of our embodied existence in the world and that black alienation manifests itself through the body. After all, anti-black racism is predicated on bodily appearance and differences among humans. Manganyi himself places a high premium on the body precisely because, in his view, black subjects have inherited a negative sociological schema of their black bodies, which results in most experiencing themselves as things or objects outside of themselves – that is, alienated from themselves.

The value of revisiting Manganyi's contribution can be underlined by reference to imperatives posed by recent incidents of anti-black racism and contemporary approaches to race and embodiment in disciplines such as philosophy (black existentialism), psychology, sociology, cultural studies and identity politics.

This book will be of interest to undergraduate and graduate students and scholars in the fields of psychology, social psychology, philosophy, sociology, critical race studies, phenomenology, existentialism, politics, political philosophy, and postcolonialism.

About the author

Mabogo Percy More is a retired professor of philosophy at the following institutions: University of the North, University of Durban-Westville, University of KwaZulu-Natal, and University of Limpopo. He is currently an associate researcher at the University of Limpopo and has published over 50 journal articles, book chapters and three books, two of these being *Biko: Philosophy, Identity and Liberation* (2017: HSRC Press) and *Looking Through Philosophy in Black* (2019: Rowman & Littlefield).

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