



# **Social science** that makes a difference



**science & innovation**

Department:  
Science and Innovation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## Vision

The HSRC will be a national, regional and global leader in the production and dissemination of transformative social science and humanities research in the interests of a just and equal society.

## Mission

The HSRC produces leading-edge policy research, through engaged scholarship, to utilise in understanding and explaining social conditions and informing social change for inclusive growth in communities.

## Values

### Acceptance

Respecting equality and embracing ideas, speaking out against discrimination of any kind.

### Critical friendship

Pursuing non-partisanship but collaborating with all stakeholders, including government.

### Integrity

Conducting business honestly, diligently and underpinned by ethical principles.

Embracing, but not abusing, intellectual freedom.

### Respect

Treating colleagues, stakeholders and members of the public with dignity and humility.

Observing organisational policies and processes.

Preserving the environment and natural resources.

### Excellence

Undertaking leading-edge research while remaining relevant.

### Trust

Creating a safe and supportive working environment for colleagues.

# Introduction

With a service record of more than 50 years, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is the largest dedicated research institute in Africa focusing on the social sciences and humanities. Our highly skilled researchers work in crucial developmental areas.

As a statutory research agency, we are **tasked** to:

- Contribute to the effective formulation and monitoring of government policy;
- Evaluate policy implementation;
- Disseminate research-based data and fact-based research results to stimulate public debate;
- Foster research collaborations; and
- Help build human sciences research capacity and infrastructure.

Our work finds expression through the following **divisions and centres**:

- Africa Institute of South Africa;
- Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators;
- Developmental, Capable and Ethical State;
- Human and Social Capabilities;
- Impact Centre; and
- Inclusive Economic Development.

**Collaborations** are key to our success. Our local and international stakeholders and collaborators are extensive and include government departments and their implementation agencies, private sector organisations, civil and community organisations, research councils, universities, United Nations agencies, and basic and higher education departments/organisations.

• *Our research agenda focuses on outcomes that are aligned with the National Development Plan and a vision for 2030. As such, we produce and disseminate knowledge that contributes to policy options and programmes on **poverty alleviation**, solutions to **reduce the inequality gap** and innovations around **employment creation**. We are moving beyond research generation, towards research use for policy and impact.*





**AGENDA 2063** is Africa's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development. It is a concrete manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

*The AISA team must have a handle on a broad range of issues – from regional integration to peace and security, and science and technology as well as cultural issues.*

## Africa Institute of South Africa

Founded in 1960 and incorporated into the HSRC in 2014, the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) takes its lead from Agenda 2063 as well as South Africa's National Development Plan: Vision 2030, the Department of Science and Innovation's Strategy for Africa, and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's African Foreign Policy objectives.

### Our work

AISA undertakes basic and applied policy-relevant research that focuses on the development challenges and opportunities facing the African continent. It seeks to provide leadership and harness African agency in the drive for the transformation of African societies into dynamic, peaceful, prosperous spaces.

The institute:

- Is a hub for Africa-centred knowledge production and dissemination, policy engagement, and implementation support;
- Provides thought leadership on key questions facing the continent and is a catalyst for transformation;
- Drives the intellectual project for a 'Better Africa';
- Collaborates with and convenes African scholars, practitioners, policymakers and civil society, amplifying African voices, and leveraging existing capacities to improve knowledge, policy and practice; and
- Builds capacity and trains young scholars, future leaders and women in Africa.

## Research focus areas

<b>Alleviating poverty and inequality</b>	Conducting studies and interventions that address poverty and inequality in Africa. Assessing the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.
<b>International and regional architectures</b>	Considering the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) peace and security architectures, among others, are on the agenda.
<b>African international relations</b>	Analysing South Africa's engagement with other African countries and Africa's engagement with the international community.
<b>Gender relations in Africa</b>	Topics on the research agenda include women, peace and security, and women in science and technology; the latter with the aim to start a hub for knowledge generation.
<b>Culture and development</b>	Looking at how culture can be used in a post-conflict context. This includes looking at how historical artefacts and sites could be used in the post-conflict phase to develop a culture economy.

## Project snapshots

- Projects are diverse and include knowledge production on the above focus areas, creating platforms for dialogue, disseminating research, and building capacity through interventions such as the African Unity for Renaissance Conference, the African Young Graduates Conference, the Archie Mafeje Memorial Annual Lecture; Diplomatic Conversations, and many other seminars and workshops. Engaging with key stakeholders include the African Union, the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Southern African Development Community, the Department of Science and Innovation, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), the international community, universities, science councils and research organisations and civil society.
- AISA is working on a baseline study for food and nutrition security in South Africa for the DALRRD. This will provide much needed data on levels and places of food insecurity that can inform future policy and planning.
- AISA produces relevant analysis for regional integration in Africa – with a focus on implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement. The African Union and South Africa have prioritised regional integration as a means for growing intra-African trade and Africa's economies. Many barriers exist to successfully implement the agreement. AISA focuses on the opportunities and challenges for implementing this agreement and provides policy advice for improving effective realisation of the goal. It also looks at the agricultural sector in southern Africa and what kind of trade could be forthcoming in terms of this agreement.
- AISA produces research and policy advice on 'Silencing of the Guns in Africa'. It held engagements on violent extremism in southern Africa, conflict in the Tigray region and reflected on 20 years of implementing the women, peace and security agenda.
- AISA is engaged with research and knowledge dissemination on vaccines and pharmaceutical innovations to fight COVID-19, including a focus on traditional medicine.
- AISA produced reports on Science Diplomacy in Africa (after engagements with six African countries) and on alcohol abuse in Mpumalanga. The Executive Head was part of a Ministerial Task Team looking at Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in the Department of Defence and the lead drafter of the recently adopted South African National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. AISA also interviewed a number of women peacekeepers in southern Africa with the aim of profiling women peacekeepers as part of the celebration of 20 years of implementing the women, peace and security agenda.
- AISA conducts research into culture and development, particularly how culture can be a lever to consolidate development. Research also looks into principles, policies and practices of heritage resources management.

*AISA is there to provide innovative ideas and solutions for Africa's biggest challenges.*  
~ Prof. Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Head



## Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators

**CeSTII** adheres to national and international data quality standards, ensuring equivalence with internationally accepted practices of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and developing contextually appropriate measures in Africa. It works closely with the Southern African Development Community and Africa-wide measurement research and policy communities. It plays a training and capacity building role for STI measurement in Africa, in partnership with the African Union Development Agency's (AUDA-NEPAD) African Science Technology and Innovation Indicators Initiative, the African Observatory in Science Technology and Innovation (AOSTI), and the SADC Social and Human Development Directorate responsible for STI programmes.

CeSTII contributes official statistics measuring science, technology and innovation (STI), a function usually performed by national statistical agencies in other countries. Over the past two decades, CeSTII has built up a rich database of longitudinal trend data on research and development (R&D) and innovation for use by policy-makers and researchers globally. The South African R&D Survey, business innovation surveys, and other policy relevant surveys are conducted regularly.

### Our work

CeSTII looks for new ways to interrogate R&D and business innovation data, to help address developmental challenges with respect to the health sector, the green economy, the oceans economy, building a capable state, and South Africa's priority economic sectors. It contributes new conceptual frameworks, designs and methodologies to measure innovation in the informal and agricultural business sectors, based on the methodology of the OECD's Oslo Manual Guidelines for Collecting, Reporting and Using Data on Innovation.

The Centre also aims to enhance the way surveys are conducted by experimenting with digital tools and new research methodologies.

CeSTII is an active contributor to the STI indicator measurement community in Africa and globally, a contribution that is underpinned by inclusive and sustainable development objectives.

## Focus areas

<b>Measuring R&amp;D capacity in South Africa</b>	The annual South African R&D Survey is a key tool to enhance the STI indicator system for evidence-based policy-making by providing comprehensive R&D performance statistics. This data can be used for more advanced statistical analysis and data modelling and informs complementary, in-depth research to engage with South African economic development and policy issues.
<b>Measuring innovation capacity in local firms</b>	A core research priority is to improve the quality and extend the focus of business innovation measurement in South Africa. The national business innovation survey is rolled out in three-year cycles, covering firms in the formal manufacturing, mining and services sectors, and now extends to commercial agricultural businesses.
<b>New indicator development</b>	The Department of Science and Innovation's new national STI indicator research agenda promotes innovation for sustainable and inclusive development. New indicator frameworks inform collaboration with the Africa Institute of South Africa, the National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI), SADC, AUDA-NEPAD, AOSTI, and individual African countries by promoting indicators and measures appropriate to African contexts and in support of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 and the Sustainable Development Goals.
<b>Communication, networking, capacity building and data uptake of STI indicators</b>	Cross-cutting projects support, coordinate and advance the work of CeSTII, including a dedicated CeSTII Communication, Dissemination, Visibility and Advocacy Strategy with a strong digital focus. This expands outreach to engage with the right stakeholders for sustained impact, deepens digitalisation to enhance survey participation and response rates, and creates streamlined business processes for improved public data use and uptake.

- *CeSTII does STI research that speaks to new socio-economic challenges before, or in parallel with, policy processes. That means once policy is formulated, research is available to inform discussion and action. New measures and indicators of STI must be more appropriate and reflective of our developmental challenges in southern Africa. Previously, South Africa mostly adopted innovation and economic models from developed economies, but that benefits neither equality nor inclusivity. For example, European innovation surveys traditionally measure innovation in the manufacturing sector first, but in our context, African economies are still strongly agriculture based with a large informal sector.*

- *Our work has decision-making impact. For example, data from the annual South African R&D Survey are used continually – by, among others, the Reserve Bank, Cabinet, NACI – and in formats varying in scope and purpose from statistical reports, analytical reports, to fact sheets, policy dialogues and provincial policy fora targeting the private and public sectors.*

- *~ Dr Glenda Kruss, Centre Executive*

## Recent project snapshots

- Apart from the annual South African R&D Survey, two baseline surveys focused on innovation in agricultural and informal enterprises, contributing to a new STI measurement framework appropriate to the developmental challenges of the global south. Fieldwork for both surveys was completed in 2019, creating new datasets released in 2021. The CeSTII team will continue to deepen this process with new questions driving the analysis of existing R&D and business innovation datasets, and the design of new datasets. These provide insights informing new STI measures, and creative ways to address new STI policy imperatives.
- Using the STI Strategy for Africa 2024, which sets out six developmental challenges, including health, CeSTII looks at how well the country's innovation and R&D systems are oriented to address key priorities.
- In relation to COVID-19, the Centre partnered with Statistics South Africa to survey the impact of lockdown on company performance, including the impact on R&D and innovation performance. A next step is to design short instruments for R&D and innovation performers in South Africa to gauge the impact of COVID-19 on their R&D and innovation operations.
- In a quest to analyse survey data in new ways to respond to policy-relevant issues, CeSTII is working with the Department of Science and Innovation on modelling of the investment requirement for R&D investment targets in South Africa. Our work includes a review of trend data and micro- and macro-modelling scenarios, to propose and test the best models. The design of a research agenda to study the issues impacting on the achievement of national gross domestic expenditure on R&D and gross domestic product targets will follow, with the view to extend the work to other countries in the SADC region.



## Developmental, Capable and Ethical State

**DCES RESEARCH INTERVENTIONS** aim to answer:

- How to strengthen democracy through transparent governance, accountable leadership and reinvigorated public participation/civic engagement; and
- How to ensure sustainable development through peace, human and social security.

Agenda 2063 of the African Union, seeking to establish peace, security and integration on the continent, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals and South Africa's National Development Plan inform the work of the Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES) division. The division's research, implementation and advocacy support serves to build a capable, ethical and developmental state, as well as strengthen social cohesion, and create safe, inclusive and resilient communities.

### Our work

Knowledge gained through the DCES' work contributes to more sustainable peacebuilding and strengthens participatory democracy, enabling better accountability and citizenship where people are at the centre of governance, and socio-economic and environmental rights are promoted and protected.

- *Everybody who lives in South Africa is affected by the laws and policies of the state. For successful democracy, everyone must participate, typically by having their voices heard in elections. To some extent, our participatory system has collapsed because, especially at local government level, the process is highly politicised so that often only one party dominates at a voting station, resulting in discomfort among citizens to participate in decision-making as part of our constitutional framework. New ways of hearing those voices must be explored, making use of technological advances and understanding people's perceptions.*

## Focus areas

### Peace and sustainable security (PaSS)

Insecurities from climate change, environmental crises, hunger and food shortages, pandemics, recurring energy and water shortages, and the changing nature of employment affect sustainable development. Social protection is necessary to address human and social vulnerabilities. For example, the National Health Insurance is a transformative health financing reform seeking to address social injustices due to limited and inequitable access to inclusive and quality health services by the majority of South Africans. These injustices must be fully understood and evidence-based interventions generated. PaSS provides insight into the nature of these challenges and ways of responding to them more effectively. **Research themes** include economic & political security; climate change; food, water & energy security; and social protection.

### Democracy, governance and citizenship (DGC)

This programme works with government, oversight bodies and civil society to improve and strengthen participatory democracy through research and implementation support, advocating for the adoption of a values-based approach to development, with a focus on developmental local government and accountable leadership. It views the interface between governance, leadership and citizenship as a nexus for policy-relevant and impactful research. **Research themes** include electoral research; social cohesion & citizenship; local governance; and democracy and constitutionalism.

### BRICS Research Centre

The BRICS research work strategically links PaSS and DGC through addressing critical issues of economic growth and development; peace, security and international relations; social justice; sustainable development and quality of life; political and economic governance; knowledge and innovation. This includes research collaborations with BRICS member states, governments, the private sector and civil society stakeholders. **Research themes** include BRICS and multilateralism, South-South relations, sustainability and governance, and the right to development.



### TO READ

The latest edition of the State of the Nation.

*The Developmental, Capable and Ethical State division is committed to the constitutional state and the health of democracy in South Africa, and all the various elements that go with that. We are passionate about providing evidence to help guide and inform policy and provide implementation support as a trusted and engaged research partner in the National System of Innovation.*

*~ Prof. Narnia Bohler Muller,  
Divisional Executive*

### Project snapshots

- The DCES has several research projects in the pipeline. Once completed, these are made available in the public domain and to government stakeholders as policy briefs. Significant work is done with the Independent Electoral Commission, for example the voter preparation and satisfaction surveys for every national and municipal election.
- Internally, the division collaborates with the Impact Centre on issues around local government and social media, and with AISA on the HSRC-wide food security project, among others.
- Working with the African Union Development Agency and the South Korean Embassy, one project looks at the differences in development between South Africa and South Korea; much work is also done with the BRIC countries.
- Two flagship projects are the annual South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) and the biennial State of the Nation (SON) publication.
  - SASAS is a nationally representative survey that has been conducted since 2003. It provides a unique, long-term account of the speed and direction of change in the underlying public perceptions, values and social fabric of modern South Africa. As such, it is a notable tool for monitoring evolving social, economic and political values among South Africans, but also demonstrates promising utility as an anticipatory, or predictive mechanism that can inform decision- and policymaking processes. The 2021 survey will also explore citizens' attitudes towards National Health Insurance.
  - The SON, published since 2003, is double-blind peer reviewed publication focusing on relevant topics of national interest. The 2018 edition focused on *Poverty and Inequality: Diagnosis, Prognosis and Responses*, and the next edition's theme is *Ethics and Politics of South Africa's Struggle against Poverty and Inequality*. This volume deals with the political economy of inclusion/exclusion; the electoral system; women and land; leadership and accountability; normative approaches to delivery; minimum wage; taxation; socio-economic rights; identity and wellbeing; culture and transformation; and the international context.



**IMMEDIATE IMPACT:**

People's experiences under lockdown formed a big part of the HSC's research work in 2020 and 2021. The results from the various studies informed the COVID-19 Command Centre's decision-making regarding regulations and levels.

## Human and Social Capabilities

The Human and Social Capabilities (HSC) division responds to South Africa's challenges in the area of human and social capabilities as these pertain to the intersection of health and wellbeing, and identity and belonging. The HSC's work responds to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework priority areas of education, skills and health; social cohesion; safe communities; and a better Africa and world.

### **Our work**

The HSC team explores the lived experiences, challenges and opportunities faced by under-served, vulnerable and marginalised communities, with the aim to understand how they navigate their identities and sense of belonging. A need exists to promote optimal mental and physical health as an outcome of this understanding, as well as an obligation to create conditions in which citizens can survive, thrive, and be well for the country to achieve social cohesion and social protection.

- *Our research work looks into how agency, attitudes, aspirations, capabilities, and other psychosocial factors reinforce or liberate people from the constraints imposed by the social environment. Thus, how can South Africans reach their aspirations and live a life that helps the country achieve its goals.*

## Focus areas

### Health and wellbeing

Research focuses on the impact of poverty and unbalanced income distribution, gender and violence, underdevelopment of community infrastructure, the longer-term impacts of the apartheid system and development of interventions of health promotion and prevention of illnesses. Attention is given to spatial differences that reinforce separation and inequalities and seek to understand how people navigate their health and wellbeing for the purposes of developing policies and practices. Research themes include health surveillance, health promotion and health systems research, and social and biomedical issues of health and disease.

### Identity and belonging

Identity is understood as individual, social and political and as shaped by social categories such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ability and age. Research themes include race, identity in society and systems in transition; genders and sexualities; and under-served, vulnerable and marginalised communities.

### Centre for Community-based Research

The centre's core comes from the rural Sweetwaters office that has conducted community-based intervention research in the Greater Edendale area of KwaZulu-Natal for the past 15 years. The centre aims to improve health and wellbeing of the public by primarily undertaking intervention trials, generating evidence, developing novel approaches and methods through the combination of social and biomedical sciences, and to serve as a hub for capacity building and training. One centre highlight involved briefing the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on how differentiated service delivery models could support social distancing and home lockdowns.

## Project snapshots

- The HSC division conducts multi-country research that are funded by different agencies, for example the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, among others.
- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a United States governmental initiative, and the CDC fund the People Living with HIV Stigma Index. The index measures stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV in three provinces in South Africa. Data focus especially on underserved and marginalised communities (i.e. transgender people; sex workers; lesbian, gay, and bisexual; people with disabilities; people who use drugs); and access to healthcare, education and rights.
- One of the division's flagship projects is the HIV/AIDS Prevalence Survey, implemented for the sixth time since 2002. This study has provided valuable information to South Africa and Africa. It covers the level of the HIV epidemic in the country, the dynamics of HIV infections, identifying who are the people who are affected and who are worst affected. It also measures a number of aspects of the HIV epidemic, including the prevalence of HIV, the rate at which people would get infected with HIV, and the number of people who are actually taking antiretroviral treatment. The research indicates or estimates the number of people who are drug resistant, offering information that informs which drugs to provide or how the treatment should change. The research also highlights misconceptions that exist around HIV, as well as the attitude towards people living with HIV. For example, the study shows that attitudes have changed positively over the years.
- Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, the Centre for Community-based Research has maintained its focus on delivering high-quality large-scale behavioural and biological community-based interventions and research projects. In the Delivered Health Project, for example, all research activities were paused, but lifesaving HIV and chronic medications were still collected at primary healthcare facilities and delivered to people's front doors throughout all phases of the lockdown. This was done in coordination with the KwaZulu-Natal District Department of Health and in the service of the community in which the study is taking place.
- Other projects include a geospatial tuberculosis (TB) data analysis funded by the National Research Foundation; an internationally funded community-based TB screening and diagnosis using novel triage tests; co-designing community-based information and communications technology interventions for maternal and child health in South Africa; and an ongoing longitudinal study looking at perspectives on COVID-19 and lockdown.

*If you are interested in seeing South Africa as a country achieving the goals of a healthy society, a just and equal society in every respect, and a cohesive society, partner with us. We conduct research in this transdisciplinary intersection on policy and programme-relevant research that helps the country improve health, improve the wellbeing of people, and promote a socially just and socially cohesive society.*

~ Prof. Khangelani Zuma, Divisional Executive



## Impact Centre

**WHAT IS IMPACT?** This seems like a simple enough question, but even global organisations struggle to quantify, qualify and define ‘impact’. It cannot be gauged linearly because so many other events and collaborators might contribute to the eventual impact in a society. How does an organisation then confidently say, ‘We did that’? This is one of the key questions the Impact Centre is tasked to unpack. Another is, how does impact look like in South Africa and Africa, how does it differ from developed countries? What are some of the unique ways in which the lenses that we bring from this continent might be useful in a global conversation and understanding of impact? Looking at other literature, the centre has adopted the following as a definition of impact: *The theory and practice of using research as a means to make a positive difference to human life.*

The HSRC Impact Centre was born from the HSRC’s re-alignment early in 2020. The centre responds to the increasing need for the work of role players in the National System of Innovation to be more visible, while clearly illustrating their impact – the tangible difference they make – in a society not necessarily science-aware.

The Impact Centre’s mission is to draw on diverse perspectives, skills and partnerships to generate, measure and communicate impactful research on critical challenges facing South Africa and the world.

### Our work

Internally, the Impact Centre works closely with the rest of the HSRC. Externally, it aims to occupy the conceptual leadership space on impact within the broader National System of Innovation, and become an international thought leader in the impact research environment.

This entails working with public and private sector stakeholders to develop an understanding of scientific evidence; stimulate public debate and engagement through communicating and disseminating fact-based findings to stakeholders and publics; conduct imaginative, timely and impactful projects; improve access, use and uptake of knowledge; enhance community ownership and use of research; and catalyse policy learning, innovation, and action.

- *The greater the degree of involvement of strategic stakeholders in the research enterprise, the greater the chances that new knowledge being generated will be used, that strategic partners will see and understand impact, that important research projects can be resourced over multi-year periods, and that sustained research can lead to impact in communities.*

## Focus areas

<b>Science in society</b>	Conceptualising and understanding impact and what it means to be doing research where knowledge production, in the context of fake news and the shifting role of research, is changing. What does this mean for impact and what resources do researchers need now?
<b>Impact assessment</b>	Focusing on methodological issues, e.g. how to measure impact not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. Looking especially at the HSRC's big surveys, such as HIV, and food security. Considering other social science methodologies to understand and correctly measure impact.
<b>Strategic partnerships</b>	The HSRC's work necessitates working with multiple stakeholders – from funders, to government and other science councils. Considers the best fit to leverage the HSRC's research for optimal benefit and impact. Key is bringing partners onboard early in research, thinking more strategically about value-driven partnerships.
<b>Communications</b>	Looking at the best way to translate, disseminate and communicate research findings to the rest of the world. How to increase visibility and understanding by making use of all the platforms available in this digital age. Includes empowering researchers to make their work accessible.

**IN ESSENCE:** Impact is not a job for the Impact Centre. Every researcher is tasked with planning their research with impact in mind. It fundamentally shifts the way in which we conduct research and engage with society. It challenges researchers to think about their changing role as knowledge producers.

## Project snapshots

- With a big part of the Impact Centre's work focusing internally, it makes sense that a key imperative is to help researchers think about their role and understand the role of knowledge producers in influencing, shifting and engaging with the broader community.
- Externally, the centre is looking at how to best embed an emphasis on impact early in research projects. For example, in an initiative with the University of Cape Town, a group of environmental scientists are looking at issues of climate change in a gender policy context. This is a good example of a five-year project where an impact team will be entrenched in the project from the outset. The project involves several African countries thinking about how they translate policy findings; how the African Union and other national and regional stakeholders might be engaged around climate change; how capacity can be built; and how impact with its monitoring, evaluation and impact assessments, or narratives for change form part of impact. Lastly, determining how results should be communicated and disseminated brings to life every element of the Impact Centre.
- Several projects focus on science engagement with health journalists and communicators, health information practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, and artificial intelligence and human rights in Africa.
- Other work includes the development of policy briefs, management of seminar series, the implementation of a formal research/policy engagement structure, research that explores and integrates the different ways for measuring impact, managing the HSRC's various internal and external communication and engagements platforms, and supporting meaningful engagement with partners, civil society and local communities.

● *Traditionally, in academic and research environments, impact has been measured in a narrow way. For example by looking at academic citations, publications in high impact journals, etc. Now, we are much more interested in how research actually has societal impact; the work that we do must touch lives, whether that means a shift in attitudes or behaviour. Can we measure it – can we look at what happened before and after? And can we, by developing our own and learning from existing best practice models, create a resource for others to use? What role can developing narratives – storytelling – play?*

● ~ Prof. Heidi van Rooyen, Centre Executive



## Inclusive Economic Development

**ASSESSMENTS** of the effectiveness of government programmes in maths and science education, skills development, land, housing and economic development; **PARTICIPATION** of young people in accessing dignified and decent work; the **TRANSFORMATION** of higher education; and **INNOVATION** that allows for wider access to services, and supports food security form a large part of IED's work.

The Inclusive Economic Development (IED) division undertakes research to transform educational outcomes and increase economic participation. It recognises that education and the economy have long been linked, and thus conducts research in both areas, sometimes discretely, many times overlapping, and through a multidisciplinary lens. We research ways to understand educational performance and improve learning for those who have had unequal starting points, and interrogate the social, spatial and structural obstacles to economic participation to bring about the gains and growth South Africa needs.

### Our work

Informed by the National Development Plan (NDP), IED focusses on inclusive growth in the economy and increasing employment opportunities (NDP Chapter 3) and on improving education, innovation and training (NDP Chapter 9). With regard to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework it addresses Priority 2 – Economic Transformation and Job Creation and Priority 3 – Education and Skills.

- *Too often a focus on growth alone leaves many behind and unable to participate in creating sustainable livelihoods. Instead by focusing on other drivers of development, including access to basic needs such as housing and shelter, and the acquisition and application of relevant skills, the serious linkages between the division's two areas of work – inclusive education and economic participation – are becoming apparent.*

## Focus areas

### Changing economies

The economy changes all the time, for better or worse. Economic change affects peoples' livelihoods and living standards. Research in this strategic area seeks to understand the forces that drive temporary fluctuations in the economy, and the bigger longer-term shifts in economic structures, social relations, and spatial distribution of economic opportunities. A focus of our research is on innovation and how to change the economy so that it produces better outcomes for all people, including the role of the state in enacting economic policies that foster wider participation among the vulnerable and marginalised.

### Education and livelihoods

Education is central to human actualisation and greatly impacts on young people's life outcomes and the kind of societies in which we live. Our research engages with the planning, quality, governance, effectiveness, transformation, transitions and outcomes of education at all stages. It is currently focussed on the unequal contexts of learning, assessment of achievement, the acquisition of relevant life and livelihood-ready skills in the context of changing technologies, and the future of work for youth in South Africa, Africa, and in the Global South.

## Project snapshots

- Funded by the Department of Basic Education, the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* monitors the quality of South African schooling by assessing learner achievement in these subjects. It provides rich data on the variable contexts of learning in schools, and allows researchers to recommend evidence-based interventions to enhance young people's schooling outcomes.
- Commissioned by the Mastercard Foundation, *The Imprint of Education*, investigates the impact of university education on first generation graduates – both their career trajectories and their contributions to family, community and society. This five-year-long study includes a longitudinal tracer study that maps obstacles and enablers to young lives as they embark on meaningful lives and livelihoods, including what kinds of leaders, institutions and organisations are needed to ensure an African continent fit for the future.
- A series of *Macroeconomic Policy Dialogues* that include a focus on stimulus packages, sustainable debt, structural transformation of the economy and the relationship between current macroeconomic policy choices and industrial policy and labour market policy, are underway.
- In partnership with the University of the Free State, IED hosts the *DSI/NRF South Africa Research Chair in City-Region Economies*. Cities are platforms for progress because they make people and firms more productive, create positive value and facilitate learning and creativity. The DSI/NRF Chair seeks to understand the determinants of urban economic prosperity and the obstacles faced to improve policy.
- Working with local government and municipalities, the Local Innovation Advancement Tools study devises, tests and shares fit-for-purpose decision mechanisms to enable municipalities to fulfil their mandates in delivering basic services (access to water, sanitation, electricity and recreational facilities), and to promote inclusive economic development.
- Building on the work done in the foundational *Labour Market Intelligence Programme*, research in the area of skills development and sustainable livelihoods, focusses on understanding the transformative structures, processes and policies that allow for equitable access to employment, including the role of an integrated social protection system (especially for youth and women) and the contribution of the sector education and training authorities in doing so.
- Funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training, the *State of Transformation* study makes recommendations for policy shifts in higher education following recent calls for decolonising and deracialising education.
- The Wellcome Trust-funded Climate adaptation and sustainable rural health outcomes in southern Africa project is a multi-year project that aims to evaluate the nutritional and psychosocial health outcomes of high frequency, high impact and widespread climate adaptation actions in rural southern Africa. The project team works with universities and state agencies leading climate change and food and nutrition security interventions in Zimbabwe.

● *Key in our mandate is to offer evidence-informed recommendations for policy shifts and programmatic innovations. We continually bring together experts in government, civil society and academia to find new ways forward in topics of crucial importance – so all can benefit – for example, reimagining technical and vocational education, embracing and applying the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution. Given our current context, it is of the highest importance that our research helps to change educational trajectories and outcomes, encourages agency and empowers people in communities with strategies for economic participation – and does all three things at the same time.*

● ~ Prof. Sharlene Swartz, Divisional Executive



134 Pretorius Street  
Pretoria  
0001

Private Bag X41  
Pretoria  
0001

Tel +27 12 302 2000  
Fax +27 12 302 2299

[www.hsrc.ac.za](http://www.hsrc.ac.za)