



**Developmental, Capable
and Ethical State**

Making
GOVERNANCE
work

3RD EDITION



THOUGHTS FROM THE DIVISIONAL HEAD

Although we have been wishing one other well for 2021, this feels a bit like 2020 version 2. But work continues from our respective homes and we are becoming re-acquainted with one another via Zoom and Teams. This year started with a second wave of COVID-19 and a real threat to (American) democracy. Despite the angry mob that tried to derail the peaceful transition of power, Joe Biden is now the new President of the USA, and if his inauguration is anything to go by, we can expect a return to dignity and civility. Old school is cool in this context. Particularly moving was a poem entitled “The Hill We Climb” recited by a young African American poet, Amanda Gorman. A stanza that became a meme on social media is very touching:

For there is always light,

if only we’re brave enough to see it

If only we’re brave enough to be it.

It is during this time of pandemic and rising fascism that we need to be the light.

As always, DCES is making its mark in the policy space, particularly through the UJ/ HSRC COVID-19 democracy survey since April 2020. The Third Round of this survey, conducted in partnership with the Centre for Social Change at the University of Johannesburg, went online from 29th December to 6th January via Moya Messenger, a #datafree platform and other social media channels. This generated an excellent response of just over 10 600 fully completed questionnaires. We had two high impact results coming from the survey, the first on the re-opening of schools and the second on vaccine acceptance. Most respondents wanted the reopening of schools to be postponed. This was finally announced by the Minister of Basic Education prior to the scheduled re-opening on 27th January 2021. We like to think we had a part to play in that decision by presenting evidence about how adults in South Africa feel about such pressing matters. The outcome of the vaccine acceptance question gave us an indication that 67% of adults living in South Africa are willing/ probably willing to take the vaccine, with 18% who would not (or probably would not) take the vaccine. 15% of South African were “undecided” and could perhaps be convinced to immunise if presented with sound scientific evidence about the efficacy of the vaccine(s), their safety and side effects. We found from the open-ended questions that only a small minority of respondents mentioned conspiracy theories as reasons for not wanting to be vaccinated. Besides the media attention this finding received, we were also contacted by the communications team in the Department of Health to advise on the best strategies to use during their Vaccination Campaign.

The first million doses of the AstraZenica vaccine reached our shores all the way from India on 1st February 2021, with a further half a million expected later in February. These will be administered to frontline health care workers. But this is only the beginning of a massive roll-out effort by government and a long journey to recovery and healing.

If you protect yourself, you protect others. If you protect others, you protect yourself. Be the light.

Contents

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



04

A LONG STUDY TO FREEDOM!



07



06

PROF NARNIA BOHLER-MULLER
BAGS CEO'S AWARD AT HSRC
ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY 2020



08

PROFESSOR WILLIAM GUMEDE,
HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOW

<u>06</u>	COVID-19 IS IN OUR MIDST: THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR COMEBACK SOLDIER
<u>09</u>	STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
<u>12</u>	SPOTLIGHT ON SOME DCES PROJECTS
<u>14</u>	SOLUTIONS-ORIENTATED COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
<u>14</u>	NEW BOOK
<u>14</u>	MEDIA

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UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

PROF MODIMOWABARWA KANYANE

a. Tell me about where you grew up and what your family life was like.

I am the fourth child in a family of 11. I grew up at Bydrift village, which is at the border between Sekhukhune and Ga-Mphahlele in Limpopo. I was a typical village boy who grew up in the countryside and spent the greater part of my youth hunting and herding my father's cattle in the time I spent outside of school. Despite economic challenges, my parents educated all of us, even though my mother was unemployed and my father was a Railway Police Officer in Germiston.

b. How did your parents influence you?

My mother could not go to school due to the harsh realities of apartheid at the time. She was taught to read and write by my father, who was working in Gauteng, and was thus able to read the letters he sent to her. Although my father completed his schooling in standard six, both my parents had a deep love for education. My father spent a great portion of the paltry earnings he received on our education right up to college and university level. Most of us children obtained university degrees – and my brothers and sisters are now teachers, librarians, historians and administrators, and a dentist. Two of us have PhDs. I am proud of my parents. We are all alive today, except my father who died at the age of 90 on 26th June 2020. He is now rested, and we are all proud of his legacy that enables us to serve society in many different ways.

c. Where did you go to school?

I went to Majwanyaneng primary school in Bydrift, my home village, and Phaswana secondary school in Malatane village where I completed my matric in 1987. I had to walk or cycle a distance of about 15km to the school, sometimes going through chilly winters and hot, stormy summers. Upon completion of my matric, I studied at the University of the North (now University of Limpopo) for my undergraduate and post graduate degrees and completed my PhD at the University of Pretoria. I also obtained Certificate in International Economic and Financial Negotiations from the International Institute of Public Administration, Paris. I also spent a while in Norway conducting research on social security, which added value to the establishment of SASSA.

d. Who have been your strongest influences in life?

Professor Victor Ayeni was the strongest influence in my academic life. Actually, he was God sent, as there had been no Masters' or PhD graduates in the Department of Public Administration at that time. He supervised my Master's dissertation and even made sure that the university employed me as a lecturer in 1996. I'm eternally grateful to Victor, amongst the rare breed of sage and staunch academics who contributed to society in an impeccable manner!



e. What led you to your career?

I did not choose a career. The career in public administration chose me. My secondary school subjects suggested a career in natural sciences, medicine or engineering. However, Adv Mabesele persuaded me to pursue a B. Admin degree. I immediately fell in love with political science, public administration, development studies and administrative law.

f. What was your first impression of the HSRC?

I came to the HSRC to cut my teeth in research with the intention to leave soon afterwards. The environment for the first six months was intimidating and I wanted to go back to lecturing. Fundraising for research was brutal and time-consuming, but I eventually got the formula right. My intended resignation from the HSRC did not materialise. The rest is history!

g. What has surprised you most about working at HSRC?

What always surprises me is the difficulty of attracting black researchers at a senior level, no matter how hard we try. I guess it is the conservative nature of the organisation framed within a funding model that is hard to deal with. Many researchers have left the organisation for the same reason, and we are left with significant equity challenges today.

h. What do you find most challenging about working here?

The main challenges are raising funds and leading difficult projects. It is all about hard work. I have nonetheless received two HSRC Senior Research Excellence Awards, and received appointments as professor at Tshwane University of Technology and University of Fort Hare, and a member of council at the University of Mpumalanga.

i. If you could change one thing about the HSRC, what would it be?

Obviously, one thing to change, is the funding model to enable the researchers to do what they know best, which is conducting research and not becoming 'consultants' always looking out for funding.

j. How would friends and acquaintances describe you?

Honest, strict, and pays attention to details and does best to go the extra-mile.

k. What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

My totem is a lion, but I lie low in most cases except when I am provoked beyond measure! One more, I am an Orlando Pirates fan always deriving fun out of "Kaizer-Chips" fans when they lose because they will remain quiet the whole week without disturbing us. I'm a spiritual person and go to church on the Sabbath, something many people do not know about me. I am passionate about science and innovation and am currently sharpening my AI skills to produce business intelligence solutions.

l. If you weren't a researcher, what would you be doing instead, or what would your life be like?

I would be playing golf fulltime and living an adventurous life with my family. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7). I'm fulfilled and content with life! When not working, I'm on my gadgets exploring new tricks.

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PROF NARNIA BOHLER-MULLER

BAGS CEO'S AWARD AT HSRC ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY 2020



It was a proud moment when our Divisional Executive bagged the CEO award, in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the achievement of HSRC goals. It is awarded to employees who utilise links and follow-up on projects initiated by the Office of the CEO. These might include securing MOUs, stakeholder relationship nurturing and management; internal and external relationship support; and courageous leadership. Narnia's out-of-the-box thinking and ideas are amazing incentives to growth in DCES. Congratulations, Narnia. We wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavours. We are all very thankful that you are on our team. HSRC values dedicated staff such as Narnia.

COVID-19 IS IN OUR MIDST: THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR COMEBACK SOLDIER. BY BILLIE-JEAN JOSEPH

On 28th December 2020 I woke with the most excruciating body aches. I initially thought it was just from the busyness of spring cleaning and all the prepping for the Christmas period but I soon realised that I had never before experienced such aches and the fever that followed. After my visit to the doctor, I got tested for COVID-19 and received a positive result. My immediate thought was to panic and instantly my thoughts moved from panic to worry for my husband, children and then those who I had been in contact with. But steadily through the day I accepted the diagnosis and results, reassured myself that this is something that can be overcome and reminded myself of how blessed I am to have access to some form of treatment and space to be able to fight this terrible virus. The days that proceeded were not easy at all, the body aches and fever progressed to a tight chest, then to night sweats and a complete inability to keep my eyes open! Added to that, my husband and I had to clean, sanitise our home and take care of our two small children while trying to keep our distance! In reflection to that experience there are few things that stood out to me which helped us along the way:

1. Disclose – no matter how hard it is, no matter the guilt or shame that comes with it, disclosing is most important as this ensures that those you have been in contact with can be proactive in watching for any symptoms as well as going into quarantine.
2. Communicate with those who are closest to you – suffering in silence is not brave it makes it more difficult. I found so much comfort and support from my circle. A message to find out how you are doing, a friend ordering you supper when you are too unwell to cook, and even dropping groceries at your gate. Even just to chat about what is happening in the “outside world” and for me the greatest of all is for prayer, as that gave us the courage and strength to fight.
3. Rest – Of course there is a great desire to fight the need to rest but this will only prolong the recovery process. Resting is so important as it allows the body and mind to heal. It is an essential part of the recovery process, so giving in to rest was vital to my recovery (well, as much as you can with two toddlers constantly asking you for a snack!).

I hold our frontline workers and essential services workers in high esteem. I realised that complaining about being in one place all the time is not such a great ask in the greater scheme of things. Every day they risk their lives and the lives of their families to serve us. I have moved from being fearful, to being more aware and continuing to follow the preventative guidelines communicated by government. Daily I get stronger mentally and physically. Through the help and support of family, friends and colleagues I can safely say that although it was not easy it is possible, you can win the fight! We should push forward in the battle and in our own small ways make it safer for ourselves and those around us.

A LONG STUDY TO FREEDOM!



After his long road to PhD, encompassing 10 years of fieldwork, we present to you the esteemed Dr Tim Hart in his doctoral robes at the masked graduation ceremony on the 14th December 2020. On Tuesday, the 14th July 2020 Tim Hart successfully defended his PhD in Social Anthropology in the first-ever Zoom PhD oral examination at Stellenbosch University. The title of Tim's thesis is: "Brokering, mediating and translating rural development: land and agricultural reform in the southern Cape." It focuses on the social relationships between people and things in development and how the social process of development enables the mediation of policy, interventions and their outcomes. The core argument pertains to the ability of all actors to perform translations so that they can obtain elements of projects that benefit them. This selective behaviour and mediation practices enable them to control how success and failure are made and interpreted as such.

Dr Tim Hart reminds us that from the 3rd November to 3rd December every year we commemorate disability rights and the diversity of all persons with disabilities. This is the annual highpoint of the disability rights movements in South Africa whereby the government gets involved more deeply with the sector. Business and disability support organisations collaborate to raise funds specifically for vulnerable persons with disabilities so as to improve their circumstances. The 3rd December also marks Casual Day, led by the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown measures to halt the spread of the coronavirus, employees could purchase a Casual Day sticker that enabled them to attend work in less formal attire. Tim says, "I would like to urge you to think about persons with disabilities who make up your families, your friends, colleagues and even those you may encounter in your life. Please remember that their physical or psychosocial impairments are emphasised by the social structures and the lack of facilities that acknowledge and subsequently support their challenges – it is the context that is disabled. Those who are physically or psychosocially challenged do not want pity. They simply need the recognition and understanding that in some situations they are not quite like you. Some of us may have challenges seeing or hearing what you see and hear. Others may not be able to move or express themselves at the same pace as you or even use the same facilities that you do. Some may be institutionalised or ignored because there is nobody to care for them".

Perhaps wearing masks, using ZOOM or being cautious about leaving your home has increased your understanding and empathy of the challenges of communication and reduced socialisation and movement. Take time to reflect on how COVID-19 and the lockdown measures have potentially 'disabled' you by preventing you from doing what you used to do and what you want to do. As with people everywhere, persons with disabilities are diverse. So are their experiences and abilities to cope with societies' disabling features. Some are more vulnerable than others, particularly poor women and children. Perhaps one of the legacies of COVID-19 will be an increased sense of empathy and understanding of the challenges that others face, that some are more vulnerable than others and the realisation that we are not so different after all? It is our diversity that should unite us rather than divide us.



PROFESSOR WILLIAM GUMEDE, HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOW

We welcome Professor Gumedde as a new Honorary Research Fellow in DCES. At the Wits University School of Governance, he runs courses on public finance and economics, including how to put together the National Budget for Members of Parliament of all political parties in South Africa. He also presents the programme for MPs of the British Commonwealth on the financial management of their Parliaments and how to conduct themselves ethically as MPs. He is Founder and Executive Chairperson of the Democracy Works Foundation, now based in eight countries, and Chairperson of Action Aid. He has previously served as Advisor to the UNESCO World Social Science Report 2016. *Challenging Inequalities – Pathways to a Just World*, and Senior Associate & Programme Director at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Prof Gumedde has also served as a Course-Leader at the School of Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest. He was also a Senior Associate Member and Oppenheimer Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford University; a Senior Research Fellow and Graduate Student Mentor at London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE); Course-Leader at New School University, New York; Press Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge University, and Visiting Fellow at Duke University.

Professor Gumedde has chaired or served on the boards or audit committees of a number of public organisations, including the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), Legal Aid South Africa FXI and Legal Clinic, and the Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital. He is a former Managing Editor of *The Sowetan* newspaper.

He is a prolific author of bestselling non-fiction adult and children's fiction books. These include *South Africa in BRICS* (2014); *The Democracy Gap: Africa's Wasted Years*, (2013), *Salvation or Ruination* (2013); *Restless Nation: Making Sense of Troubled Times* (2012); *The Poverty of Ideas* (2009); and *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC* (2005).

His children's books include: *A Kite's Flight* (2010); *Sipho's Blanket* (2013); *Upside Down World* (2020); *Waiting for Gogo* (forthcoming). *Upside Down World* is used by KPMG as part of its flagship citizenship programme to encourage reading and combat childhood illiteracy. In 2016, he was invited by UNICEF to contribute to UNICEF's "Tiny Story" series, to pen a short story on the theme of "what I want for every child", to celebrate the organisation's 70th anniversary.

We are very fortunate to be able to work with such an esteemed scholar and respected public intellectual.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

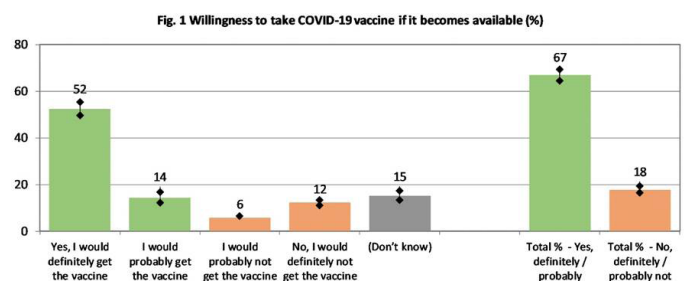
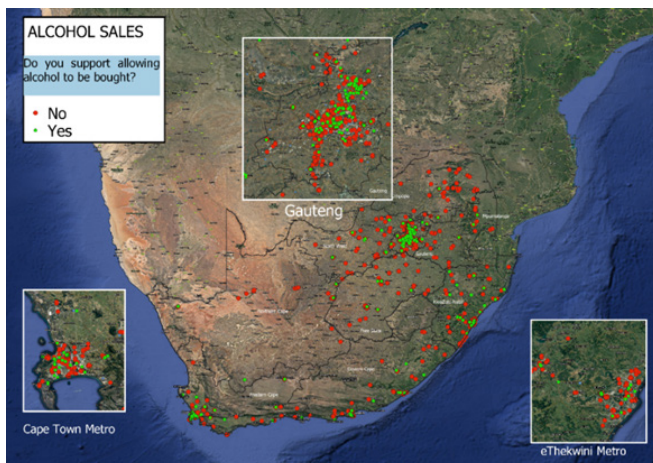
UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG



The inception of DCES in April 2020, came just four days after the imposition of the first national lockdown to counter the spread of COVID-19. Our division rapidly conceptualised a project, in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Social Change, to monitor public responses to the pandemic. We designed an instrument to assess effects on social, economic and psychological well-being, and views about the government's handling of the crisis, and preferences for mitigatory policy intervention. The survey was conducted online, using the innovative Moya Messenger platform, which allowed users to respond #datafree on their cellphones, thereby incurring no personal data costs. Three rounds of the survey were conducted in April-May, July-September, and December-January. For each round, a URL to the survey was also forwarded to hundreds of non-users of Moya, to broaden the representivity of respondents. The number of usable responses to the three rounds were 12312, 7967 and 10617, respectively. We weighted the data to match the latest StatsSA estimates of the race, age and educational characteristics of the national adult population, thereby minimising any bias that might have emerged from our realised non-probability samples. The findings of our research have continually proved to be highly newsworthy and often seminal. Since April 2020 we have crafted a range of media releases, op-ed articles and journal papers targeting various audiences. Many of our research team members have been interviewed on radio and television to convey key findings. Our ongoing monitoring of the impact of the project suggests that the survey's public opinion findings on several issues have been influential in guiding government policy decisions.

Amongst these have been directives issued by Cabinet on delays in the reopening of schools in phases, during peak infection phases in July 2020 and again in January 2021. Our finding that around 60% of adults opposed the opening of schools alerted government to popular sentiment, and the need for careful and reassuring messaging about school-level preparations to open during the pandemic. Additionally, the tendency amongst less than 75% of the population to wear a face-mask whenever away from home, will have reinforced government communication strategies to explain the benefits of, and necessity to wear masks, in addition to the social distancing and sanitising precautions.

We highlighted the huge toll of the disaster on people's mental health, with almost half (48%) of the population reporting having experienced stress, 28% depression and 22% loneliness, at some time during the lockdown. Other findings quantified the relatively limited extent of the opposition to temporary bans on the sale of alcohol (12%) and cigarettes (19%), the former resulting in massive declines in trauma case admissions to hospitals experiencing pressure from increased COVID-19 cases, probably emboldening the government to renew restrictions on alcohol sales since December. Our surveys also have indicated majority positive assessments of President Ramaphosa's handling of the pandemic; the willingness of large proportions of the population to sacrifice some of their constitutionally-guaranteed human rights in the interests of reducing the spread of the virus; and views about vaccination.



Source: UJ/HSRC COVID-19 Democracy Survey, Round 3 (29 Dec-6 Jan)

The HSRC research team comprises Narnia Bohler-Muller, Ben Roberts, Derek Davids, Ngqapheli Mchunu, Yamkela Majikijela, Samela Mtyingizane, Thandeka Mcameni and Stephen Rule; the UJ research team, Kate Alexander, Martin Bekker, Carin Runciman, Kelebohile Afrika and Mark Orkin.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS CONT...

DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP



COVID-19 and the national response has resulted in significant hardship for persons with disabilities in South Africa. To date, the ways in which persons with disabilities have experienced this period have yet to be deeply investigated. Responding to the evidence gap, DCES has partnered with the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and the Institute of Development Studies in the United Kingdom. With funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the collaboration intends:

- To undertake a national DATAFREE online survey with persons with disabilities to identify experiences and challenges faced during the pandemic
- To explore whether the South Africa National Disaster Management Act is compliant with the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and South Africa's White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- To provide new data to inform the Ministry of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities' monitoring framework for the inclusion of people with disabilities in mitigations during and after pandemics, shocks and crises

Most importantly the research will focus on eliciting the voices of persons with disabilities' experiences during

the pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures and ensuring that these voices are heard. To ensure maximum participation the study will be DATAFREE and thus of no cost to persons with disabilities who are using mobile data. The intention is to formulate appropriate recommendations to the South African government.

Tim Hart (DCES) commented that "notwithstanding policies aimed at supporting people with disabilities in South Africa, these are not sufficiently enforced and sometimes not at all, with empowerment targets not being reached across many social and economic sectors. Much of the COVID-19 research ignores the diversity of the experience of people with disabilities and the impact of the lockdown measures on their wellbeing and access to essential services they need. This partnership is a fantastic and timely resource to inform and advise government accordingly."

DCES's Divisional Executive, Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller reiterated that "DCES is proud to be part of this international partnership that will help raise the voices of persons with disabilities so that their experiences of COVID-19 can be better understood and mitigation strategies specifically oriented to ensure their well-being now and in the future."

CHICAGO CENTER ON DEMOCRACY



In late 2016, the Chicago Center for Democracy at the University of Chicago, together with political scientists at Dartmouth College, the University of Michigan, and the University of Rochester, established a multi-university initiative called Bright Line Watch (<https://brightlinewatch.org>). The purpose of this initiative is to monitor democratic practices, their resilience, and potential threats in the United States, and increasingly in other nations around the world. Bright Line Watch's flagstone activity is a set of quarterly surveys of political science experts and the general American public that provide a fine-grained picture of the performance of U.S. democracy over time. Since February 2017, they have completed seven "waves" of surveys, which ask respondents about their

views on the importance and U.S. performance on 27 principles of democratic governance. A new partnership has been formed with the Chicago Center on Democracy to replicate the Bright Line Watch expert survey in South Africa. In coming months, political scientists at tertiary institutions and other academic institutions around the country will complete a survey on the importance of key components of democracy and assess the performance against these democratic ideals. The project is being led by DCES senior staff member, Prof. Joleen Steyn-Kotze. It is hoped that this will form the first in a longitudinal series monitoring the state of democracy in the country, and will be accompanied with matching surveys of the South African public.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS CONT...

INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION



DCES has a long-standing research partnership with the IEC. In order to better understand the electorate and maximise the reach and impact of outreach efforts, the IEC follows a specific framework of survey-based research on electoral matters. This framework of surveying includes a regular Pre-Election Survey, Voter Participation Survey (VPS), and Election Day survey, the Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS). These surveys are nationally representative, conducted in a similar format for national and provincial as well as municipal elections for more than a decade. Additional ad hoc research studies have been conducted, focusing on internal surveying of electoral staff on issues such as gender mainstreaming and the institutional vision, as well as research into ballot paper design, usability and spoiling. A recent data curation project focused on examining trends on key electoral indicators over time, with an emphasis on combining public evaluations together with administrative data. As part of the project, a national and provincial Elections Indicators Report series was developed, which showcases trends in key electoral indicators. In December 2020, the drafts of these reports were handed to the IEC for executive review, for sign-off and publication during 2021.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY VETERANS

The renewal of the new five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the HSRC and the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) was concluded in November 2020. The aim is to create a cooperative and collaborative framework whereby the working relationship will be managed. The MOU has already facilitated two Service Level Agreements. The first is the editing and publication of six life-story manuscripts developed by military veterans, led by Cyril Adonis and Greg Houston. The second is an analysis of the needs of Military Veterans, led by Stephen Rule and Derek Davids.

SPOTLIGHT ON SOME DCES PROJECTS

PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE SECURITY UNIT

Peace and Sustainable Security (PaSS) unit of DCES constitutes a deliberate focus by the HSRC on addressing issues that affect peace and security in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa. This requires a multi-disciplinary approach so as to holistically explore and understand these multi-dimensional issues and come up with comprehensive and practical solutions. The ultimate objective is to contribute understanding and policy options towards more peaceful, secure, sustainable, democratic and resilient communities.

There are two focal areas of our work, namely peace and sustainable security. The goal of a 'better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world' is only achievable if there is peace, socially cohesive societies, and a fair and just distribution of economic and political resources. Whilst these challenges have continually dogged humankind, the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that our overall human security, requires us to have peace amongst ourselves and that cooperation and collaboration is highly protective to us all. South Africa is well placed politically and economically to lead continental efforts to ensure that Africa has peace and sustainable security. Africa has its fair share of conflict, insurgencies and political tensions which are inimical to peace and security. In addition, there are pervasive challenges arising from environmental crises, hunger and food shortages, pandemics, recurring energy and water shortages, as well as the changing nature of employment. As a consequence, we have serious social vulnerabilities including the challenges of internal and external migration. We seek to better understand the drivers and consequences of these vulnerabilities created by such insecurities and more importantly how to resolve these issues peacefully.

Central to our work is an understanding of the concept of peace as two categories, namely, negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to the avoidance of conflict. Positive peace indicates the achievement of a harmonious society, justice, equality and the elimination of structural violence. Our recent and current projects include:

- Urban Governance Index for eight metros for the South African Cities Network
- Evidence Synthesis on the State of Health Policy and Systems in South Africa with DPME
- Technical report on a Policy Implementation Barometer (PIB) Survey 2 project for Uganda
- Technical report on Implementation Evaluation of the Service Delivery Improvement Programme (SDIP) for

DPME/DPSA)

- Government Technical Advisory work: Presidential National Health Insurance (NHI) War Room – leading work streams on Legislative Reforms, and a Strategic Purchasing and Implementation Plan
- Convened several collaborative webinars on COVID-19, climate change, and food security
- Prepared the National Youth Policy 2020-2030 Draft: for the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities – The Presidency

The following are some of the emerging themes and projects on which we are working:

- Migration studies (local and international) resulting from economic/ natural disasters/ pandemics/ conflicts
- 4IR/ technology innovation: assess impact of 4IR/ technology innovation in the mining sector in South Africa and Zambia and correctional services in South Africa
- Collaborative project with AISA - National Food Security and Nutrition Study funded by Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)
- SASAS NHI module – gauging public support for National Health Insurance and Universal Health Coverage in general

Our strength derives from the collective capabilities and competencies of a multi-disciplinary team of researchers that understands the merits of teamwork and shared glory.

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE & CITIZENSHIP (DGC) UNIT

We highlight here a few of the multiple current projects of the Democracy, Governance and Citizenship Unit of DCES.

STATE OF THE NATION (SON) BOOK SERIES

Production of the SON 2021 manuscript is in progress, with a focus on 'Ethics and Politics of South Africa's Struggle Against Poverty and Inequality'. The volume is divided into six sections, each addressing the main theme. Publication is expected before the end of March 2021. Planning for the 2022 SON manuscript is well underway. Invited authors were requested to submit abstracts by the end of January 2021. The 2022 volume titled 'Quality of Life and Well-Being: A Good Life?' builds on an emerging thread shaping a trilogy of recent SON volumes focussing on poverty and inequality.

OSF-SA MUNICIPAL SKILLS AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT STUDY

A skills and capacity assessment of public officials working at municipalities in South Africa to inform training and capacity building interventions. To date we have completed assessments in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, Makana District Municipality in the Eastern Cape and Elias Motsoaledi Municipality in Limpopo. Further data collection is imminent in Ba-Phalaborwa, Ngaka Modiri Molema and Bojanalo Platinum municipalities. The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown has complicated access to public officials, as do political instability and municipal staff turnover.

CORRUPTION WATCH PROJECT

DCES has been contracted by Corruption Watch to develop rating metrics for a scorecard to objectively assess South Africa's compliance with Articles 5, 6, 8 and 10 of the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption (AUCPCC). These Articles relate to strengthening anti-corruption institutions, money laundering, illicit enrichment and political party funding. DCES is following a mixed-methodology approach in collaboration with Corruption Watch to develop the metrics for the scorecard.

SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY (SASAS)



SASAS is a nationally representative, repeat cross-sectional survey that has been conducted annually since 2003. The DCES team is currently finalising the 17th annual round of fieldwork, which began in February 2020 but was disrupted by COVID-19. Following a new ethical clearance, the survey was resumed in November 2020, with completion in all nine provinces expected by the end of January 2021. The pandemic has posed significant challenges to research involving face-to-face interviewing, and the DCES team was at the forefront of developing strict COVID-19



protocols that would ensure the safety of interviewers and survey participants. The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Africa kindly assisted with the donation of personal protective equipment and thermometers, which contributed significantly to ensuring that our teams were safe in field. To promote shared learning about social data collection in the context of the pandemic, DCES partnered with the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) and Social Surveys Africa (SSA) to host a virtual seminar series.

In the previous edition of our newsletter, we reported on the development of a COVID-19 related comic strip, which was being circulated during the SASAS field work



as a means of providing key Coronavirus-related health promotion messages to communities country-wide. Apart from disseminating hard copies of the comic strip in six languages, the interviewing teams shared electronic copies with households and community members upon request.

Fieldworkers and community members have expressed gratitude for the information and for the referral contact numbers. In many instances, people voiced concern that COVID-19 health promotion information had not been reaching them through local structures. Especially in rural locations it was found that knowledge of the pandemic was limited. The Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) also expressed interest in the comic strip, and is currently distributing it as part of their provincial Quality of Life survey, running from late 2020 until mid-2021.

SOLUTIONS-ORIENTATED COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

DCES is involved in several Communities of Practice (COP). One of these is the Fiscal Openness Accelerator Advisory Group (FOA AG). It is convened by National Treasury with support from the International Budget partnership (IBP) and the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT). It includes several government departments, the Auditor-General, as well as several civil society organisations. Gary Pienaar represents DCES, with Narnia Bohler-Muller as alternate. It aims to promote public participation in budget planning and monitoring. During the past few months, the AG has been considering alternative public participation models, one to be piloted during 2021.



NEW BOOK

Congratulations to the DCES team for the publication of the two-volume *The Fabric of Dissent: Public intellectuals in South Africa* (HSRC: Cape Town), which was edited by Narnia Bohler-Muller and Greg Houston with their collaborators at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria, Vasu Reddy, Maxi Schoeman and Heather Thuynsma. Greg contributed close to 40 vignettes in this publication, with other contributions coming from senior and junior DCES staff. This book project represents a critical contribution to providing up to date information on the multi-faceted contributions of South African intellectuals to our society.



MEDIA

Dr Yul Derek Davids was interviewed by the 'Tussen Ons' presenters on the scheduled 2021 Municipal Elections and ongoing service delivery failures (see picture by Romano Fortuin). The episode was aired on Wednesday 13th January at 17.30 on DSTV channel 145 and can viewed on DSTV catch up: [Tussen Ons](#) - [kykNET](#) - [DStv](#)

Correspondence: email ISekaledi@hsrc.ac.za, www.hsrc.ac.za

Pretoria: Private Bag X41, Pretoria, South Africa 0001, Tel: +27 12 302 2000

Cape Town: Private Bag X9182, Cape Town, South Africa 8000, Tel: +27 21 466 8000

Durban: Private Bag X07, Dalbridge, South Africa 4014, Tel: +27 31 242 5400

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