Human Sciences Research Council

Developmental, Capable and Ethical State

Newsletter

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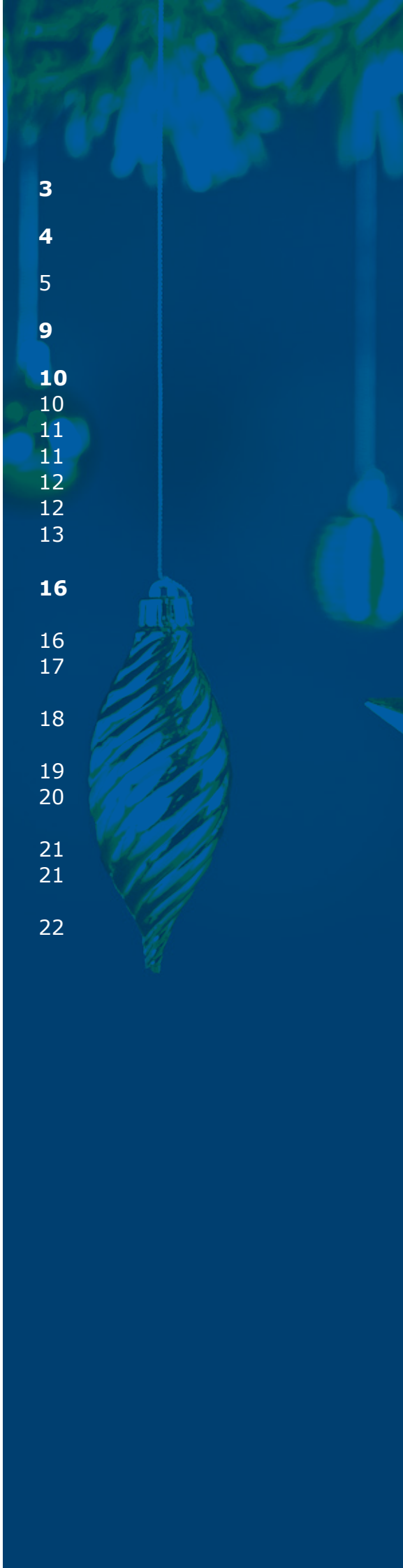
Table of Contents



Thoughts from the ***Divisional Executive***

It is the end of another year and almost the start of a new one, which is significant for South Africa as we start our Presidency of the Group of 20 in December 2024. This is important for many reasons: it is the first time the G20 will be hosted on African soil with the African Union as a new member, and wewill be the last country of the Global South to lead for a long time.
We follow in the footsteps of Indonesia (2022), India (2023) and Brazil (2024). I will be head of delegation for one of the engagement groups, Women20 (W20), with Ms Sibulele Poswayo of the InEquality Movement as co-chair. Our aim is to place gender equality and women's empowerment squarely on the G20 agenda. W20 is celebrating its 10th year during our presidency. You can read more about this historic moment in this newsletter.

The year 2024 has been a brutal year in many ways, with austerity and cost-cutting measures affecting each one of us in our work and personal lives. However, in many ways it has also been a good year with a series of contributions made to the betterment of South Africa and her people. We worked with the Electoral Commission on the watershed 2024 elections, our Voter Participation Survey and Election Satisfaction Survey, political party funding, and the potential for e-voting in the future. We also supported the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) in determining awareness and attitudes towards climate change and energy. Linked to the work with the PCC, our research on the human dimensions of climate change and disaster risk management is gaining momentum.

The Department of Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation in the Presidency drew on our expertise across the HSRC to finalise and disseminate a review of 30 years of democracy in South Africa. Our own Democracy@30 project has yielded interesting findings, with the Wentworth intervention leading to the launch of a book.

2024 also saw our five-year programme review provide guidance on how to improve what we are already doing so well, and to rethink other areas. We were commended for:

- Our contributions to the HSRC's standing and the broader research community through the outstanding and impactful South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) series.
- Our sustained production and publication of the signal, widely commended, much cited, and manifestly impactful State of the Nation series.
- Our significant contributions to electoral democracy in South Africa through critical research on elections, conducted in partnership with the IEC.
- Our use of innovative social indicators research, particularly of the "statistical series" kind, to inform government policy.
- Using the SASAS surveys to put a wider lens on the general public's understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and their attainment.
- Finding innovative means of completing research assignments given current staff shortages.
- Our remarkable performance in mobilising external funding.

We hope that these successes will inform our new strategy and structure for 2025 to 2030.

This month, we bade farewell to Dr. Jarè Struwig and celebrated her 35 years of service to the HSRC, 21 of which have been dedicated to SASAS. Jarè has mentored many young researchers over the years and earned the respect of colleagues. See a few beautiful and heartfelt messages in her farewell video here. (More farewell news is included below).

Finally, as we stagger, tired but proud, into the festive season, we may find time to catch our breath and spend valuable time with family and friends. January 2025 awaits, full of promise but, for now, let us use the precious time we have to switch off and re-prioritise.

Happy holidays!

Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller

Visiting International Research Fellow from China

We welcome visiting International Research Fellow, Dr Chao Chen, to the HSRC.

Dr Chen is a senior researcher at Beijings Center for Governance Studies, the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies (ACCWS). She has more than 12 years of experience in national think tanks and government ministries.

From 2012 to 2015, Dr Chen implemented projects on interdisciplinary trade and environment issues at China's Ministry of Environment and Ecology. She represented the Chinese delegation, coordinating and negotiating environmental issues in Free Trade Agreements and Investment Treaties signed between China and other counterparts.

Between 2015 and 2023, she worked with the National Development and Reform Commission, focusing on overseas investment and international capacity cooperation, reviewing major projects. In this time, she acquired her PhD in international relations, focusing on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Global Development Initiative (GDI), especially the infrastructure connectivity and capacity building.

In 2023, she joined ACCWS due to her academic interests. This led to expanding her work from infrastructure into people-to-people exchange and knowledge sharing of international development. She promoted and implemented projects on the Joint Research and Knowledge Sharing Initiative and Global Academic Partnership Network for Dialogue among Civilisations, collaborating with global research institutions. She has been actively involved in regional mechanisms such as BRICS and China-Africa Cooperation.

As the BRICS project coordinator, she participated in the BRICS Seminars on Governance and Cultural Exchanges and contributed to the collection of books. She is the lead editor in a book series and also has written articles for websites and newspapers in her field, sharing her deep thoughts.

Dr Chen also has published in academic journals and has written policy recommendations.

Up close and personal

Farewell to Dr Jarè Struwig

As we bid farewell to Dr Jarè Struwig after 35 years of service to the HSRC, we also get to know her better.

Tell us about your upbringing

I grew up in Pretoria as an only child with older parents. I had a privileged life and a wonderful childhood. I attended Laerskool Pretoria-Oos, Hoërskool Menlopark, and completed all my tertiary studies at the University of Pretoria.

How did your parents influence you?

My parents have been the strongest influences in my life. My father was an academic at the University of Pretoria, teaching physiology and anatomy to medical students. He was recruited from the University of Stellenbosch and established the medical school at the University of Pretoria in the 1940s. Growing up with him as an academic played a significant role in my decision to pursue an academic career.

What led you to your career?

I was accepted to study physiotherapy but, during orientation week, I discovered that a girl from my school, whom I didn't like at all, had also enrolled in the course. This prompted me to change my plans and pursue psychology instead. A friend mentioned that psychologists could earn R45 for a 15-minute session, which, at the time, was a substantial amount. The idea of a well-paying career where you simply listened to people's problems seemed very appealing! I had an aptitude for numbers, and, after my honours in psychology, decided to pursue research psychology instead of clinical or counselling psychology.

What was your first impression of the HSRC?

When I started at the HSRC, I was struck by how impressive the building was. I thought to myself, if the building is this remarkable, surely the operations, technologies and achievements must be just as impressive.

What is your first memory of working here?

When I walked into my office, I saw flowers on my desk, which made me feel welcome.

What do you find most challenging about working here?

The most challenging aspect is balancing multiple, complex projects with tight deadlines, fundraising, and writing academic articles simultaneously.

What's the best or worst thing to happen since you started working here?

The best thas been working with fantastic people and colleagues, while the worst was navigating bureaucratic hurdles.

If you could change one thing about the HSRC, what would it be?
I would focus on implementing cutting-edge technology for real-time data analysis, using techniques such as machine learning that could enhance research quality and impact.

What do you wish other people knew about the HSRC?
I wish more people understood how challenging it is to be a researcher at the HSRC. Researchers are expected to fundraise and write academic articles, effectively balancing the roles of a business consultant and an academic. Mastering both skill sets, along with managing other responsibilities, is no small feat.

When your friends and family find out that you work for the HSRC, what do they say or ask?
They usually ask if it is as intellectually stimulating as it sounds, and how it influences society.

How would friends and acquaintances describe you?
Analytical, curious and passionate about life in general.

What might surprise us about you?
I am very adventurous and love outdoor activities like hiking and scuba diving.

What are you most proud of accomplishing?
I am most proud of having been able to raise four beautiful, successful children – two daughters of my own, and a stepson and stepdaughter.

What would you do differently if you had a chance?
I would have pursued my PhD earlier in my career.

Share something about yourself that you want to improve.
I would like to be more patient.

Describe your vision for the future.
My vision for the future involves a world where evidence-based policies drastically reduce inequality and improve well-being.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about being a researcher?
I would tell them that being a researcher requires persistence, curiosity and a commitment to truth.

If you weren't a researcher, what would you be doing?
I could have been a marine biologist, which implies that I would be permanently tanned and wash turtles and penguins for a living.

What do you do when you are not working?
I enjoy spending time in nature, swimming, drinking wine and visiting friends and family.

What has surprised you most about the HSRC?
The HSRC has an incredible diversity of highly intelligent people working in the organisation, each with unique personalities and skills.

Dr Jarè's farewell party

Click here for a tribute video.

Farewell to Tshegofatso Ramaphakela

On behalf of the DCES, I would like to thank Tshegofatso Ramaphakela for her exceptional contribution as a research trainee. Her dedication, professionalism, and positive influence have left a lasting impact on our team and projects.

Tshego's enthusiasm, adaptability and strategic thinking have driven innovation in our projects, while her approachable nature and team spirit have fostered collaboration and positivity.

Thank you, Tshego, for your tireless dedication and hard work! Working alongside you has been a privilege, and we look forward to witnessing your continued success.

Education is a journey: The more I explore, the more comfortable I become navigating it – Dr Samela Mtyingizane

Part of my journey has always been focused on acquiring a university degree. Before I even set foot in high school, my mother, who was a nurse before she retired, and my father, a thriving informal businessman who never made it out of high school, said to me, "A lack of an academic qualification is not an option—I will attend university in the future and achieve a degree."

I said to myself, "Rain or sunshine, this was to be achieved!"

In September 2024, I graduated from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and proudly claimed my success as a scholar. My educational journey is one that I had to learn to navigate, and it has been an experience I will always remember.

I attended school and university in five different cities in two different provinces (the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal), and this diverse educational experience allowed me to interact with various cultures. It also exposed me to social, political or academic topics inside and outside the classroom. The younger me could not fully comprehend the implications of certain situations, but the woman I have become is now aware and can fully comprehend the experiences during my journey, whether optimistic or adverse.

My journey was not one of solitude; I maneuvered my road to success with immeasurable love and support from family, friends and colleagues. The list is too vast for me to detail at this point, but I am forever grateful.

To name a few, I am grateful to my parents, Gcininkosi John Mtyingizane and Nondumiso Mtyingizane, who believed I would succeed. My father always reminds me of his pride in me and that he was a bright student who never had the opportunity to get a proper education. My mother, too, takes pride in and is supportive, and I thank her for her daily prayers.

Professor Mvuselelo Ngcoya ,my main PhD supervisor, has proactively contributed to my success, as has Dr Benjamin Roberts, Acting Research Director at the DECS. I am grateful for his support as a mentor and co-supervisor from the beginning of my journey as a Master's researcher in 2016 until my graduation as a Doctoral researcher in 2024. Dr Roberts played a significant role in making my journey a success. My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr Steven Gordon, who guided, advised and supported me until my studies were concluded. God is great, and I remain blessed!

South Africa's G20 presidency

How W20 can play a role in shaping global change

In 2025, South Africa assumes the Group of 20 (G20) presidency, a forum of the world's largest economies. This presidency is particularly significant as South Africa is the only African nation in the G20 and is the last of four consecutive Global South presidencies, following Indonesia, India and Brazil.

South Africa brings a unique perspective to the role, drawing from its position as a bridge between the Global North and South. It aims to prioritise the needs of Africa and the Global South while fostering practical solutions to global challenges. With themes of solidarity, equality and sustainable development, the presidency reflects South Africa's broader vision of fostering a world where all nations and individuals can thrive.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for bold international cooperation, stating that: "in an interconnected world, the challenges faced by one nation affect all nations" .The 2025 presidency is therefore an opportunity to influence global policy and leave a lasting inclusive growth and sustainability legacy.

From **G20** themes to **W20** focus

As South Africa takes on the G20 presidency, the themes of solidarity, equality and sustainable development provide a unifying framework to address global challenges. These values are central to the G20 agenda and deeply resonate with the mission of Women 20 (W20), the G20's engagement group dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Since its inception in 2015, W20 has played a crucial role in shaping G20 outcomes by ensuring gender equality remains central to global policymaking. As an official engagement group, W20 provides policy recommendations that inform the G20 Leaders' Declaration.

Over the years, W20 has successfully influenced key areas, including:

- Recommendations from W20 have led to commitments by G20 nations to reduce the gender gap in financial access, resulting in targeted policies that enable women entrepreneurs to access credit and financial services.
- W20 advocacy has been instrumental in fostering initiatives to reduce the digital divide for women, including funding for digital literacy programmes and infrastructure.
- W20's work has pushed for the inclusion of gender-based violence on global agendas, leading to enhanced funding and international collaboration to address this pervasive issue.

Building on its impressive track record of influencing G20 outcomes, W20 South Africa seeks to ensure that women's voices are heard and that meaningful change is driven during this presidency.

W20 South Africa: a decade of advocacy and progress

As part of South Africa's presidency, W20 celebrates its 10th anniversary under the theme "Women in solidarity towards sustainable socio-economic development". Rooted in the African philosophy of *ubuntu* – "I am because you are, I am because we are" – the W20's guiding principles emphasise unity, inclusivity and mutual respect.

In 2025, W20 aims to:

- Integrate W20 recommendations into the G20 Leaders' Declaration.
- Document successes, especially from the Global South, and identify areas for further development.
- Strengthen outreach and engagement through platforms like the iSAW (International Strategic Accelerator for Women) network.
- Develop three-year, recommendation-based initiatives focusing on inclusive economic recovery, climate resilience and strengthened health systems in Africa and the Global South.

Thematic priorities of W20

To achieve its objectives, W20 South Africa has identified six thematic priorities, each designed to address the most pressing challenges for gender equality and women's empowerment on national, continental and global scales.

W20 South Africa has identified key areas requiring targeted action to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. They are as follows:

- Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship
- The Care Economy
- Gender-Based Violence and Femicide
- Climate Justice and the Environment
- Women in STEM and the Digital Divide
- Health Equity for Women and Girls
- Women, Land and Agriculture

Task teams of experts and stakeholders from the Global South and North will lead each area, ensuring a balanced and inclusive approach.

As W20 marks a decade of impactful advocacy, it continues to strengthen its contributions to the G20 through a robust and collaborative structure. By working closely with other G20 engagement groups and stakeholders, W20 ensures that its recommendations are well-integrated into the broader G20 agenda.

G20 Leaders Declaration

The G20's work culminates in a Leaders' Declaration, a document that reflects the collective commitments of member states. This declaration is informed by independent engagement groups, including W20, composed of experts and civil society leaders who develop and submit policy recommendations to G20 leaders.

For W20, this means ensuring that gender equality is not only a topic of discussion but a core pillar of G20 policymaking.

W20's 10th anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on its impact, particularly in promoting policies that empower women in the Global South. This milestone will be marked by a consolidated record of W20's recommendations, successes and guidelines to shape future presidencies, starting with the United States in 2026.

To ensure continuity, W20 South Africa will collaborate closely with Brazil and the US through the G20 Troika system, which ensures coordination between the current, previous and next presidencies.

A call to action

As South Africa leads the G20 in 2025, it does so with a profound sense of purpose: to champion solidarity, equality, and sustainable development. The W20's commitment to these values ensures that women's voices remain central to global decision-making. In the spirit of Ubuntu, South Africa invites the world to work together toward a future where no one is left behind.

The Care Economy at the G20 and W20

In November, Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller attended an international conference on the Care Economy, held on the sidelines of the G20 Social Summit. The conference, "Building caring societies across the G20 and beyond", was organised by W20 andT20 Brazil in Rio de Janeiro.

The Care Economy refers to the value of the care work critical to sustain life, as this work enables humankind to thrive and grow as individuals and in society. Typically performed within or for households, and carried out by women and girls, it encompasses a wide range of services and activities that meet daily needs.

Every individual, regardless of age, gender, or circumstances, will both give and receive care or support at various stages of life. Some individuals, such as children, older persons and people with disabilities, may require more intensive care and support. Their needs can also be shaped by intersecting factors such as sex, age, location, type of disability and family circumstances, and these require tailored approaches.

The Care Crisis is here

Unpaid care work represents between 10 and 39% of national gross domestic product worldwide and is a pillar of the economic system. However, its value is often unrecognised and neglected. Over the last 50 years, a care crisis has emerged, namely that despite women's increased involvement in the labour market, men have not assumed a more significant share of unpaid work. Additionally, policies have failed to support households, who must resolve their care needs mainly on their own.

To engage in paid work while meeting care and support needs, women's labour pathways are often penalised. Women's time to engage in public life, education, political processes, rest, leisure and self-care is also reduced. Thus, care is a pervasive barrier to women's full and equal economic and political participation, as well as for girls' engagement in education.

Women are the majority in the paid care and domestic work sector. Globally, they comprise around 70 to 80% of the workforce but they often face precarious working conditions. They frequently work in the informal economy, receive low salaries, have limited opportunities for professional growth, lack access to representation and are exposed to gender-based violence. These disparities perpetuate gender inequality in the labour market.

The care crisis is also interlinked with the climate emergency, as climate change intensifies care work. The impacts are particularly evident for women and girls in rural and marginalised communities, where access to quality public services is often restricted and worsened by climate change and environmental disasters. These combined effects deepen the unequal distribution of unpaid work, which is at the basis of gender inequality.

Investing in the care and support economy is critical to protect the rights of those in need of care, as well as caregivers, care workers and the economy. This investment can improve outcomes for women's workforce participation, child development and the well-being of populations in higher need of care and support. Care investments can stimulate sustainable economic growth by creating green jobs and boosting productivity. It can also increase resilience to climate change.

Since 2023, more than 20 organisations, including think tanks, international institutions, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, have joined forces to make care a global priority within the G20. By fostering collaboration, producing policy-relevant knowledge and coordinating outreach efforts, the W20 has worked together to highlight the relevance of care and offer recommendations to advance concrete policies. Its collective efforts have advocated for a "Care 20" agenda translated into concrete actions.

Building a more caring society globally is critical to enhancing well-being, resilience and prosperity for people, communities and the planet. This means rethinking political and economic systems to put care needs at the core, understanding the shared responsibility of governments, the private sector, families and communities in this quest.

Elevating the care agenda

The Care Economy conference aimed to elevate the care agenda and enhance collaboration with South Africa as the G20 presidency transitions to Africa in 2025. Its objectives are to:

- Emphasise the relevance of the care and support economy for the G20 and beyond, elevating the voices of the Global South.
- Recognise progress and identify areas for improvement in G20 economies to address care and support needs, building on previous commitments made in regional and global gatherings.
- Bring together diverse stakeholders to learn from each other, explore different dimensions, areas of intervention, coalitions and solutions for the care and support economy. This includes intersections with other key development agendas such as climate change.
- Propose specific solutions to guide the actions of G20 countries in tackling the challenges of the care and support economy, advancing a global framework on the care economy.

- Pave the way for keeping care as a priority in the G20 process, particularly through fostering collaboration within the Global South and engaging with South Africa due to its leading role in the next G20 presidency.

The DCES Divisional Executive presented in Panel 1 on "Weaving care across the G20: insights from the G20 engagement groups". With its multiplicity of stakeholders, the G20 offers a unique space to address the care and support economy from various dimensions. This session brought together leaders of different engagement groups and taskforces to share their experiences on incorporating the care economy into their discussions and making policy proposals to G20 leaders.

By fostering dialogue and collaboration, the session aimed to equip future G20 presidencies with concrete insights and recommendations. Furthermore, the discussion aspired to elevate the care agenda within the G20 and strengthen collaboration with representatives from South Africa and the broader African continent.

Highlights from the past quarter

Presentation on Batho Pele Principles Service Delivery

On 27 November the National Planning Commission (NPC) hosted a Social Protection Workshop on Basic Services. The workshop's main purpose was to engage with stakeholders on possible ways to improve the provision of several social protection elements and their coverage in the context of current socio-economic challenges. It was hoped that the engagement would enable the NPC to solicit commitments or comments from various role players on further developing and extending the country's social security system. The themes for the workshop included fiscal consideration for improved social security measures, including social assistance and work activation programmes, and basic services such as access to clean water, housing, and healthcare.

The workshop on social protection and basic services was opened by Commissioner Phakama Ntshongwana, with Jasmina Papa the presenter. Representatives from civil society, academia, senior government officials from relevant departments, and international governmental organisations attended the online workshop at which two representatives of the HSRC DCES spoke.

The DCES's Dr Roberts presented on the Batho Pele principles and service delivery using the South African Social Attitude Survey (SASAS) data. He indicated that despite introducing the Batho Pele principles, service delivery transformation remained unrealised. Dr Roberts also highlighted challenges such as administrative inefficiency, underperformance, corruption, lack of accountability, rising costs, population growth and aging or damaged infrastructure. Key strategies to address these challenges included professionalising the public service, retaining skilled officials and expanding meaningful public participation in governance processes.

DCES Chief Research Specialist Dr Yul Derek Davids shared information on using the SASAS data on public attitudes to service delivery. He indicated that service delivery as a national priority has shown a steady increase since 2003 (12% in 2003, 27% in 2023). Dr Davids highlighted how most South Africans were dissatisfied with the provision of public services, with a high degree of dissatisfaction with the way democracy was working in this country.

Africa Dialogue on Ocean Governance

The Africa Dialogue on Ocean Governance brought together representatives from West Indian Ocean states, UNESCO and the Global Ocean Accounting Partnership, along with UK International Development for a critical discussion on sustainable and inclusive governance. Hosted by Nelson Mandela University's Coastal and Marine Research Institute in Gqeberha on 26 and 27 November 2024, the event gave a platform to explore collaborative solutions to regional and global oceanic challenges.

Prof Joleen Steyn Kotze from the DCES presented on the project *"Charting gender tides: exploring gender dynamics within ocean accounting frameworks".* This project forms part of the National Research Foundation's Community of Practice on Ocean Accounting and Sustainable and Inclusive Ocean Development, and brings together a community of national and international scholars and researchers.

DCES has two projects under the umbrella of Charting Gender Tides. The first project, entitled "Waves of empowerment: women's narratives and visual ethnography: lessons from Algoa Bay", is a photographic ethnography detailing women's lived realities and contributions to ocean conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

The second project, "Voices from the depths: expert insights into advancing gender-inclusive ocean accounting frameworks", is building an expert survey. This aims to explore and analyse the construction of gender within the international development frameworks that govern the use of the oceans, and how this may affect developmental pathways towards inclusive and sustainable ocean governance and accounting.

Through this collaboration, Prof Steyn Kotze has been invited to form part of the Global Ocean Accounting Partnership Working Group on Social Accounting, focusing on women and the oceans. She has also been accepted as a United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Network member in the Ocean Practices for the Decade Programme, and the Empowering Women Forum.

Seminar on transdisciplinarity, innovation and disaster risk communication

The HSRC, in collaboration with DSTI, convened a seminar at the Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria in October. The seminar explored the intersection of transdisciplinarity, citizen science, grassroots-inclusive innovations, and disaster risk communication in developing countries. The event focused on the Innovative and Inclusive Development (IID) book titled *Innovation for Inclusive Development and Transformation in South Africa,* edited by Prof Cyril Adonis, from UNISA, and Professor Charles Hongoro, from DCES. The book was funded by DSTI.

Prof Bohler-Muller opened the seminar before the DSTI's Ephraim Phalafala highlighted IID projects in which DSTI is involved. Prof Adonis – who also was programme director – and Prof Hongoro outlined how the book came about.

Other speakers included Dr Hester du Plessis from the University of Pretoria's Future Africa, who provided case studies of a transdisciplinary approach to citizen science and grassroots innovation. She discussed citizen science, grassroots innovation and science literacy as a precondition for grassroots innovation, and the role of technology in supporting these actions. Dr Wilfred Lunga, from DCES, and Dr Konosoang Sobane, from the Impact Centre, explored the value of inclusive innovations for disaster risk communication and management in developing countries.

HSRC stakeholders from universities and government, including the Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation, the Department of Social Development, the National Disaster Management Centre, the North West District Municipality, and others, were in attendance.

Update on the e-Participation and Policy Modelling Platform

Researchers from DCES and the Impact Centre on the e-Participation and Policy Modelling Platform for South Africa (ePPMOSA) project facilitated and presented at various conferences and workshops in October.

- On 24 and 25 October, an e-participation workshop was held as part of the inaugural conference on Public Innovation, Development and Sustainability, hosted by UKZN.
- On 28 October, the team facilitated an e-Participation Lab in Braamfontein alongside the annual Civic Tech Innovation Forum to introduce low-tech civic engagement tools to municipality public participation and planning officials.
- On 29 and 30 October, the HSRC presented at a workshop hosted by the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to discuss future public participation policies, including the role of technology.

ePPMOSA in action at eMalahleni Local Municipality

The ePPMOSA project team, represented by Dr Simangele Dlamini of DCES and Dr Paul Plantinga of the Impact Centre, were invited to the eMalahleni Local Municipality's Councillors' Meeting Forum in October. This was followed by the Mayoral Imbizo. The team presented on the progress made on e-participation in the municipality, and the Speaker, mayoral representative and councillors commended the strides they had made in enhancing e-governance and community participation within the municipality.

The eMalahleni municipality's annual Integrated Development Plan and Budget Community Outreach Programme (Imbizo) followed the forum, where municipal leadership gave feedback on projects and progress reports. The ePPMOSA team piloted a feedback form using QR codes with approximately 500 community members at the Imbizo. The exercise was a success, as the community was able to give feedback on Integrated Development Plan budgets and projects within their wards using QR codes. Through the Speaker, the Council resolved to ensure e-participation was integral to its processes, noting the improvements made in citizen participation since the inception of the ePPMOSA project within the municipality.

Webinar: transforming farming practices for emission reduction

On 31 October, DCES senior research specialist Dr Wilfred Lunga chaired a webinar "Transforming farming practices for emission reduction in South African agriculture".

A visiting scholar from Niigata University in Japan, Lindiwe Hayo, presented at the webinar.

The webinar covered aspects such as how the global push for carbon pricing is accelerating as a critical strategy to mitigate environmental impacts. South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) often underestimate the agricultural sector's potential for emissions reduction. This study highlights South African agriculture's crucial role in mitigating climate change. Examining the relationship between agricultural emissions and cereal yield, the research explores how carbon credit mechanisms could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while transforming farming practices.

Analysis of 61 observations from the years 1961 to 2021 revealed a correlation between emissions and cereal yield. The findings suggest that farmers can decrease GHG emissions and enhance sustainability by participating in carbon credit markets. Prioritising agriculture is essential for meeting Paris Agreement NDCs, and to safeguard the industry through policy and research. This work significantly impacts agricultural GHG emission policy, climate-resilient farming and sustainable practices.

Wentworth honours its history at book launch

On 9 November 2024, the community of Wentworth in KwaZulu-Natal hosted an event blending the themes of Democracy@30 with the launch of the book, *A Social History from Below: Life Stories from Wentworth, South Africa*. The event celebrated the social history of the citizens of Wentworth, acknowledging their significant place in South Africa's democratic history. The programme invited residents to remember their past, celebrate their progress and imagine the future they wanted for the next 30 years. It was a day filled with poignant stories, lively performances and thoughtful reflections that reinforced the idea that democracy must resonate in the lived experiences of communities like Wentworth.

The Democracy@30 initiative is a people-centred celebration, aimed at gathering local voices to take stock of the last 30 years. Through a coordinated series of events, the HSRC has been documenting the real, day-to-day impacts of democracy for ordinary people and asking the critical question: how has democracy delivered on the promise of a better life for all? In Wentworth, the question resonates deeply as this community has faced economic hardship, environmental challenges and social exclusion, all while fiercely advocating for justice and equality. For many, the celebration on 9 November was both a reminder of the promise of 1994 and a call to action to build a more inclusive, just society for the next generation.

Click here to read more.

Newzroom Afrika interview with Dr Fubah Alubafi

In a television interview with Newzrooom Afrika in November, HSRC senior research specialist Dr Fubah Alubafi unpacked the complex role that certain monuments play in social cohesion and the ongoing process of national rebuilding. South Africa's past is etched in history through statues honouring key figures and events, but many of these monuments represent a legacy of subjugation and oppression, sparking debate in modern society.

Click here to watch.

Thanks for reading!

I hope what you read is interesting and informative. This newsletter can only tell so much, so if you would like to partner with us, comment or ask for more information, please feel free to contact me: isekaledi@hsrc.ac.za

Or just complain about the weather. That's cool, too.
Until next quarter, many thanks!

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