

## Thought piece: **Taking ownership of our future:** **Bokamoso Skills and Economic Development Centre**



*Our guest author, Bheki Maduna, pictured, is a Youth Facilitator at the Bokamoso Skills and Economic Development Centre.*



**1** 994, the birth of a democratic South Africa was meant to usher a prosperous country, one that is united and willing to acknowledge the injustices of the past, but also committed to shape a bright future for all. The articulation in this article serves not to blame that past, nor does it dwell in the past. However, the plights of many young South Africans who are socially and economically marginalised, the fruits of democracy remain a fleeting illusion to be pursued. Bokamoso Skills and Economic Development Centre (BSDC) is a development centre that aims to address the lack of skills amongst the youth. The skills provided at the centre include; plumbing, welding, electrical repairs, computer skills, bricklaying and life skills which are tailored to equip young people with the skills that will enable them to be employable and self-sufficient.

BSDC is based in Evaton, Small Farms, which falls under the Emfuleni Local Municipality in the Greater Sedibeng District. Youth unemployment is a national crisis, and at a community level we are experiencing it first-hand. The youth that we encounter at the centre come from poverty stricken households with little hope for a brighter future. In the absence of employment opportunities for the youth, the area has experienced an increase in the number of youth

abusing drugs. The drug of choice is 'whoonga' (also known as 'Nyaupe'), a new deadly drug that is crippling the youth across South African Townships. The drug is a mixture of various substances such as rat poison, soap powder and Anti-retrovirals (ARVs) or AIDS medication. Whoonga is a fine white powder that is mixed with marijuana or tobacco it is regarded as one of the most lethal drugs in the world. Not only is this drug easily accessible, it is sold very cheaply.

## DID YOU KNOW!

According to the Census 2011, there were 41 million Africans living in the country and only 2.2.7% of them were employed; meaning 9 million Africans had employment in that period. (Stats SA, 2011)



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Young people in the area have become victims of this drug, and as a result, the area has also experienced an increase in drug related crimes such as rape, housebreaking, stealing of metal objects such as window frames and wheel barrows to sell at scrap yards. Human trafficking, teenage pregnancy and sex trade is also a major concern in the area, with some of the youth that we encounter at the centre sharing their experiences on how parents are using their children as sex slaves in order to raise money for the household's survival.

Through the financial assistance from the Thabiso Skills Institute, we have managed to establish an effective experiential life skills course. The program forms the cornerstone and catalyst for motivating youth in the area. We have come to realise that through life skills training, young people's interest and focus can be shifted towards self-actualisation and maximisation of their potential. This philosophy has enabled young people at the centre to establish new small and micro businesses and to form new cooperatives from the new

skills received. It is envisaged that this will result in the creation of new job opportunities and reduce the high levels of poverty. Our work is in line with the National Development Plan (NDP), which is a key policy framework for the future of this country. Small business development and sustaining current livelihood strategies is one of the highlighted policy solutions for poverty alleviation and employment generation.

The new shopping complex in the area has also brought new areas for partnerships/linking between our students and new retailers owners. We have taken advantage of this great opportunity whereby some of our students are absorbed as part of the skills transfer program and new job opportunities. Others are encouraged to start cooperatives and we expose them to various potential donors and funding agencies like the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) and National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), to state a few. Through partnership/linking with the Gauteng legislature, awareness is also raised on available opportunities in the public sector.

At Bakomoso we firmly believe that there is need for Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and government to constructively engage with the issues of the youth. One of the key areas that we believe is fundamental in this discourse is getting back to basics, which includes life skills training as the foundation addressing the plight of the youth and the need to develop self-worth. This social, economic and psychological calamity faced by the youth can be eradicated if we collectively acknowledge as a society that the future of our country needs intervention and for us to rally behind the resolutions tabled in the NDP with regards to the youth.

*Should you wish to contribute as a guest author on SPII Talk, please contact Brian Mathebula at [brian@spii.org.za](mailto:brian@spii.org.za).*





# Bread and Butter issues: the cost of living for low-income households

The Household Expenditure Survey (HES) survey was conducted on 142 households in Evaton Township from April 2011-March 2012. Evaton Township falls under the Sedibeng Municipality, located 60km south of Johannesburg.

**A** slow economic growth and rising unemployment affects many poor household in South Africa. Last year, economic growth was 2.5% compared with 3.5% in 2011 (StatsSA, 2012). The cost of living debate revolves around; how much money is needed to sustain a certain level of living? This includes expenses such as housing, food, taxes and healthcare. In the last two years, many South Africans, especially the poor have had to live with the reality

of a rising cost of living as a result of increases in electricity, fuel and high levels of indebtedness having been gnawing away at disposable incomes.

**Part 3 of 3 of the HES will unpack the coping mechanism adopted by households when they are unable to meet their monthly expenses. More importantly, the mechanism adopted by households in order to meet their monthly expenses.**

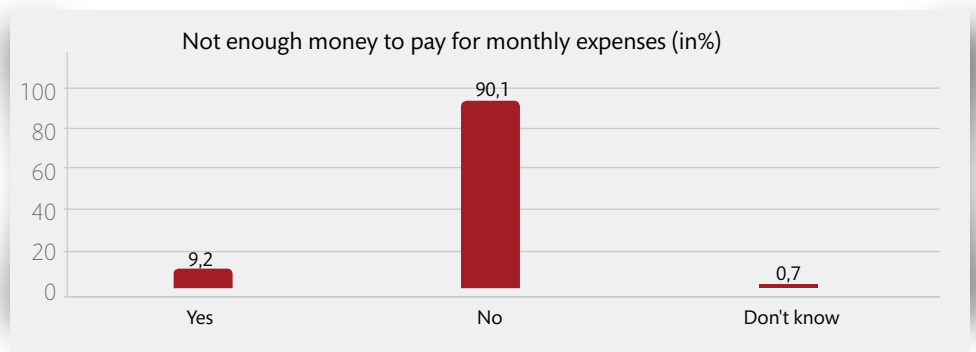
This edition of the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) is the last of three editions that SPII Talk has covered. The HES aims to capture the lived realities and coping mechanisms for many poor South Africa as the country struggles with the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment. In this edition, we will portmanteau key coping mechanisms that households undertake during these tough economic times. In 2011, just around the same time we undertook the HES, Statistics South Africa's Consumer Price Index (CPI), which was released in October 2011 indicated that the food and non-alcoholic beverages index increased from 8.5% in September 2011 to 10.6% in October 2011. The top three food items that recorded the highest increase were vegetables (7.5%), meat (2.7%) and bread & cereals (1.4%).

During the HES, 76.1% of surveyed households reported that they

## DID YOU KNOW!

Of the 4.6 million unemployed persons, 2 million were new entrants; those are identified as persons who were unemployed during the reference period that had never worked before and were currently looking for work. (Stats SA, 2013)

Figure 2: Not enough money to pay for monthly expenses



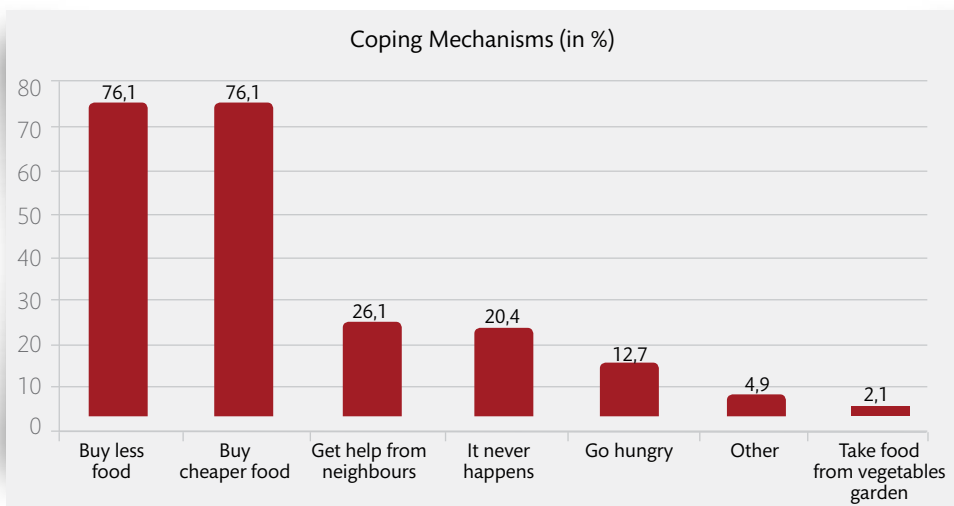
purchased less food, or were forced to consume cheaper substitutes with less nutritional value. About 26.1% of households reported that when they run out of food, they ask neighbours for assistance. Only 20.4% reported that not being able to purchase food happened at their households. However, 12.7% of the households surveyed reported that they went to bed hungry and 2.1% of households reported that they use food gardens to supplement the shortage in household food intake. In addition, 91.6% indicated that their children have never gone to bed hungry and only 7.1% reported that their children seldom go to bed hungry.

With regards to having enough money to pay for their monthly expenses, 90.1% of surveyed households reported that they do not have enough money to pay for their monthly expenses, whereas 9.2% reported that they did not know. When respondents were probed further with regards to their coping mechanisms when they did not have enough money to cover household necessities, 84% reported that they borrowed or would ask for assistance from family members and friends, whilst 7.7% reported that they would skip or default on some repayment in order to cover basic needs in the household. Interestingly, there were no responses captured

with regards borrowing from stokvel. Lastly, none of the households reported having taken a loan from a bank or loan shark or having to sell household goods to cover shortfalls.

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Figure 1.1: Coping Mechanisms



**The cost of living debate revolves around; how much money is needed to sustain a certain level of living? This includes expenses such as housing, food, taxes and healthcare.**

In order to evaluate whether households were forced to substitute foods which had more nutritional value, the HES also included a food diary. Food diaries captured the most purchased goods by the surveyed households. In the food diary, 99.3% of surveyed households in their food diary purchased grain products and vegetables on a monthly basis. This second highest ranked product was sugar with 98.6% reporting to be purchasing sugar on a monthly basis. About 97.9% and 97.2% of surveyed households reported that they purchased fats, oils, coffee, tea and cocoa products on a monthly basis. Other main food items which households reported to have purchased include: milk, cheese and eggs (96.5%), fruit (91.5%), fish (88%) and other food products (83.8%).

**Table 1: Food and essential food items for a an average household of 3.5 members**

<b>FOOD ITEMS</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Number of Item Purchased per month</b>
Brown Bread	700 Grams (G)	7
Poultry Products (Chicken Portions)	2 kilograms (KG)	10.5 KG
White Bread	700 Grams (G)	5
Maize Meal	5 kilograms (KG)	10 kg
Tomatoes	1 kilograms (KG)	
Beef and Veal	1 kg	4 kg
Cabbage Fresh	1 Head	3 heads
Fresh Full Cream Milk	1 litre (ltr)	4 litres
Potatoes	1 kilograms (KG)	4 kg
Maas	2 litre (ltr)	7 litres
Cooking Oil	2 litres (ltr)	4 litres
Mixed Vegetables	3 kilograms (KG)	3 kg
Rice	2 kilograms (KG)	5 kg
White Sugar	2.5 kilograms (KG)	4 kg
Large Eggs	6 Dozen	9 Dozen
Canned Pilchards	400 Grams	
Onions	1 kilogram (KG)	2 kg
Salt	0.5 kg	1.25 kg
Tagless Teabags	0.1 kg	0.1 kg
Apples	1.5 kilograms	3 kg
Baked Beans	410 Grams (G)	
Medium Fat margarine spread	0.5 kilograms	1kg
Mayonnaise	0.75 kg	0.75 kg
Bread Flour	10 kilograms (KG)	7.5 kg
Instant Yeast	200 Grams (G)	200 grams
<b>NON-FOOD ITEMS</b>		
Washing Powder	2 kilograms (KG)	2 kg
Toothpaste	100 Grams (G)	1.5 kg
Toilet Paper		
Body Soap	200 Grams (G)	0.4 kg
Deodorant	500 Grams	0.8 kg
Sanitary Towels and Tampons	10	10
Matches	1 Pack	
Paraffin	1 litre (ltr)	2 litres
Candles	1 Pack	

Source: SPII HES, food diaries (Basic Needs Basket), 2011-2012

Table 1 provides details the most purchased food items by an average family of 3.4 household members. The compiled Basic Needs Basket (BNB) was sent to nutritionist for analysis on the nutritional value of the basket and was compared against the South African Food Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG). The analysis of the food diaries, the nutritionist as shown in table 2 (captured below) found that the food diary data didnot represent a well-balanced diet, compared against the FBDG. The analysis also shows that the energy intake provided by the basket should be sufficient for most a family members (children and women) but for those doing physical strenuous work, it contained insufficient energy.



**Table 2: Analysis of the nutritional value of the food basket from household food diaries**

Energy	9 116kj
Protein	13.4% of total energy (71.9g/day)
Carbohydrates	53.1% of total energy (266g/day)
Fats	33.5% of total energy (82.5g/day)
Dietary fibre	18.3g of recommended 25g/day
Minerals	At risk (<70% of RDA) Calcium, Zinc, Selenium, Copper, Chrome, Iodine
Vitamins	At risk (<70% of RDA) Vitamin A, Riboflavin, Vit B6, Vit C, Vit D, Biotin

Source: SPII HES, Food Basket Analysis, 2013

The Protein (13.4%) is in proportion to the recommended guidelines (15–18% of total energy) – providing 72g protein per day of the 58g minimum recommended, the worrying factor is considering the source of protein. It is recommended that 75% of protein should come from an animal source to provide all the essential amino acids needed for growth, and 25% from a plant source. The food basket provides only 56.4% animal protein and 43.6% plant protein. This will contribute to a lack in essential amino acids, contributing to the known stunting

problem in children. It may also play a vital role in the lack of protein to support HIV and TB patients' needs.

The Carbohydrates is sufficient (53.1%). According to the prudent diet guidelines 50 – 60% of an individual's total energy should come from carbohydrates. In this basket, it was clear that more fruits and vegetables are needed.

In conclusion, key issues are abundantly clear from the HES data. Firstly, there is a correlation between

a slow economic recovery and rise in cost of living and the ability of low-income households ability to cover essential and non-essential basic needs. Secondly, in the absence of a means for people to cater for themselves economically, neighbours are stepping in to help. Lastly, although the macronutrient distribution meets the prudent diet requirements, the lack in total energy and complete lack in vitamins and minerals makes this menu failing the basic requirements for a healthy diet.

# Workshop report: Monitoring the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights in South Africa – the case for a comprehensive monitoring tool



*Retired Constitutional Judge Zak Yacoob giving the keynote address*

**T**he progressive realisation of social and economic rights is central to the transformation of our society. The persistence of systemic poverty and inequality in South Africa has shown that unless the realisation of socio-economic rights (SERs) promised in the Constitution is monitored and tracked over time, their inclusion on paper might not be felt in reality by millions of poor people.

The implementation of SERs, however, is subject to the internal limitation of “progressive realisation subject to available resources”, contained in the South African Constitution. The limitation clause is silent on timeframes, the percentage or coverage of people over time or even how the state should finance access to SERs. The challenge for policy makers and oversight bodies alike is how best we are able to evaluate government programmes and budget allocations against this binding obligation on the state. Nineteen years into our democracy, it is important to not only evaluate the extent to which the



“Everyone has the right to have access to, (a) health care services, including reproductive health care; (b) sufficient food and water; and (c) social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights”

(South African Constitution, 1996)



transformation envisioned by our Constitution has been achieved but ask how such transformation is to be measured - to what end, against what benchmarks, over what time span and by whom?

SPII with the endorsement of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), which is constitutionally obliged to report annually on the defence and advancement of the rights in the Constitution, has developed a monitoring tool based on a combination of policy and budget analysis and statistical indicators to monitor and evaluate the progressive realisation of rights.

The tool aims to be proactive in terms of aiding clarity on the advancement to full enjoyment of SERs, to identify achievements and what is working, and to detect failures, gaps and regression including discriminatory laws, policies, programmes and practices to ultimately re-orientate state action if required. The tool is ultimately not about being a watchdog, but about guiding policy around SERs and moving all actors towards developing roadmaps and time frames

## DID YOU KNOW!

In the 2013 Mid-year population report, it was reported that Gauteng has 12.7 million people living in the province; the highest number of all the provinces.

for how and by when to achieve universal access for all citizens, as envisioned in the Constitution.

On the 23rd of May 2013, SPII in partnership with the SAHRC and the Ford Foundation hosted a workshop in Johannesburg to launch the preliminary methodology with a specific focus on social security and health care. Participants represented organisations including the Foundation for Human Rights, Black Sash, the Community Law Centre, Centre for Applied Legal Studies and the Socio-Economic Rights Institute. The objective of the workshop was three-fold: firstly, to deliberate on the manner in which progressive realisation of rights is understood both by policy makers and by human rights practitioners, to reflect on SERs and their measurement and thirdly, to allow the participants to critique and provide feedback on the monitoring tool SPII has developed and in particular, the indicators for social security and health care.

The high standard of discussion at the workshop was set with an opening address by Justice Zak Yacoob who officially retired as a judge from the Constitutional Court at the end of January 2013 after 15 years of service. Justice Yacoob in his opening address emphasised the shortcomings of both juridical and legislative measures which have informed responses to SERs concerns to-date and instead stressed the need for a programmatic approach in which the government is a partner. The opening

address was followed by a panel discussion with Pregs Govender, the Deputy-Chairperson of the SAHRC, Yasmin Sooka, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights, Selwyn Jehoma, previous DDG of Social Security and Janet Love, Commissioner for SAHRC and Executive Director of Legal Resources Centre.

The workshop raised three issues, which if SERs are to carry any real meaning for transformation, need to urgently be re-visited. Firstly, the importance of values and assumptions which undergird policy and budget choices and therefore reflect the values we have as a society. Secondly, the need for a programmatic approach in which road maps or long-term plans for each of the SERs are developed. This will provide tangible benchmarks for measuring and monitoring progressive realisation. Important concerns include implementation capacity and the lack of co-ordination between different spheres of government. Thirdly, broadening participation to enable communities and people on the ground to monitor

**The challenge for policy makers and oversight bodies alike is how best we are able to evaluate government programmes and budget allocations against this binding obligation on the state**

and evaluate their rights at a local level.

The workshop succeeded in bringing different civil society organisations who work on SERs in South Africa together. The consensus gained throughout the day regarding the limitations of the courts and legislative measures emphasised the need for a methodology to monitor and address critical issues relating to the progressive realisation of these rights to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of SERs. The development of a comprehensive monitoring tool remains a work in progress with much scope for increased participation and input from both government and civil society.







**SPII**

*Matters*

## THIS MONTH:

22-23 August: SADC Basic Income Grant (BIG) Reference Team Meeting.  
Agenda: Model design, methodology, Scenario Settings

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please contact Fortunate Mabuza at SPII should you wish to have any information about any of the following announcement.

26-27 August 2013: Social Protection: Local Economic Development (LED): Graduation Pilot Project Reference Meeting. Agenda: Presentation of SPII's Proposed graduation pilot project.



[www.spii.org.za](http://www.spii.org.za)

## CONTACT US

Civicus House, 31 Quinn Street  
Newtown, Johannesburg  
PO Box 31747, Braamfontein, 2017  
Tel: + 27 11 833 0161  
Fax: + 27 11 832 3085  
Email: [fortunate@spii.org.za](mailto:fortunate@spii.org.za)

## SPII Services:

### SPII provides the following services:

- Bringing people together, “honest broker” at roundtables and seminars.
- Conference host, bringing together a variety of stakeholders to share new information.
- Basic Needs Basket research – a representative sample of poorest members of society
  - Research projects
  - Policy support & analysis
  - Training in research methodologies – on request.

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*Tax deductible donations and bequests are welcomed to enable us to build our sustainability and to continue to undertake these critical.*

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*Building up knowledge to break down Poverty*