



THE PURPLE SHALL GOVERN

RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

IN THIS EDITION

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In an organizational context, a process of profound and radical change that orients an organization in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. Unlike 'turnaround' (which implies incremental progress on the same plane) transformation implies a basic change of character and little or no resemblance with the past configuration or structure.

DEFINITION: RAD-I-CAL

1. favoring drastic political, economic, or social reforms: radical ideas; radical and anarchistic ideologies
2. a person who advocates thorough or complete political or social reform; a member of a political party or part of a party pursuing such
3. favoring extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions

HEEDING THE CALL FOR RADICAL SOCIO- ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

By Isobel Frye



The President structured his recent 2017 State of the Nation Address (SONA) around the concept of radical socio-economic transformation.

According to the Medium Term Strategic Framework 2014–2019, “The NDP provides the framework for achieving the radical socio-economic agenda set out in the governing party’s election manifesto”. The electoral priorities included radical economic transformation, rapid economic growth and job creation, rural development and land reform, better housing, education, healthcare and social security for all citizens, a better world, and social cohesion.

It appears, sadly, that the distance between plans and life appears to be growing...

We continue to refer to the compass of the NDP, even though there is general agreement amongst the alliance partners that the section on the economy needs to be radically revisited, and the assumptions about growth, job creation and poverty reduction prove consistently wrong.

Yet we continue to make reference to ‘the plan’, and the need for all of government’s activities to be guided by ‘the plan’.

In his 2017 national budget speech, the Minister of Finance made reference to the need to include people better in the economy. That makes sense, as does the ‘super tax’ that he introduced, which we at SPII and others have been calling for since our inception. And he called for consideration of an ‘Economic Charter’. Inclusion in the economy is certainly necessary for a robust and well-functioning populace to flourish. What we wish to argue however is that ‘the plan’ in fact is not a plan for radical transformation of anything. Indeed, the priorities listed above are in fact the activities that government should be doing because it is government. What we do need to do radically different is to examine the distribution of wealth – both accumulated and new wealth – and resources, not just income.

In his comprehensive study on inequality – *Capital in the 21st Century* Thomas Picketty makes the argument that without redistribution of accumulated wealth, equality cannot be achieved, and neither can

substantial growth. In our democratic transition, debates were held on the feasibility of a tax on accumulated apartheid wealth by whites, but this never came to anything concrete.

At SPII, we think that we need to reform both Capital Gains Tax and Estate Duty/ inheritance tax. This would begin to address unequal wealth, and would provide further resources to achieve the transformation that the Constitution provides for through the socio-economic rights contained therein. A decent standard of living should be the birth right of everyone in South Africa, not just a few. An adequate sufficiency for all, as was proposed at the recent SPII/ Nelson Mandela Foundation roundtable, and as envisaged in the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on which we shall be reporting in April 2017.

Let us begin to have the discussion on dignity, decency and sufficiency, and begin to hold political parties to account in terms of their future electoral plans in this regard ahead of the 2019 general and provincial elections.

#DecentLifeForAll!

DEAR SUPPORTERS OF THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE - #NMW

Many thanks for your support for this critical policy intervention, designed to advance social and economic justice and begin to promote the prosperity for the people of South Africa that the liberation movement was built on.

We are pleased to advise that with your endorsements the final agreement resulting from the NEDLAC negotiations is imminent. More and more people are signing this call, and we are also expanding the support base through a number of community-based radio engagements.

Thank you again, and please widely circulate the call on www.spii.org.za/nmw to your friends, families, colleagues and comrades.

Isobel Frye/Director

SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW MINIMUM

R3 500



= **R20**

Based on a 40
Hour work week

#NMW



FARMWORKERS WILL RECEIVE

90%

OF THE R3500 MINIMUM WAGE, TOTALING JUST R3150 P/M, UNDER THE NEW AGREEMENT BROKERED BY PARTIES TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & LABOUR COUNCIL.



R15.39

THE HOURLY RATE AGRISA SAYS THE INDUSTRY WILL PAY ITS EMPLOYEES



75%

OF THE MINIMUM WAGE WILL BE PAID TO DOMESTIC WORKERS.

WE CALL ON ALL CONCERNED
INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS
WHO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN FOR A
DECENT NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

to sign on here:

WWW.SPII.ORG.ZA/NMW

"Peace does not just mean putting an end to violence or war, but to all other factors that threaten peace, such as discrimination, such as inequality, poverty."

THE AFRICAN MINING VISION AS A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE CONTINENT

Vuyokazi Futshane & Nkateko Chauke

“Transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development”

Africa Mining Vision

In February 2009 the African Mining Vision was adopted by AU heads of state, as not only a progressive tool in the mining industry, but a transformative intervention in the ability for the continent to forward its own sustainable development agenda. It presents a means to the creation of a corridor for socioeconomic development from the continent’s existing natural resources. In essence the African Mining Vision (AMV) is a response to the “African Paradox”; for centuries mineral resources have and continue to be extracted from the soil of Africa, with little returns, the depletion has not only affected the physical and living environment in Africa, but has resulted in widespread brutal social, political and economic exploitation. The AMV aims to provide the means for fundamental transformation in the modus operandi of mineral resource extraction in the blatant disregard of pervasive poverty.

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"We are way more powerful when we turn to each other and not on each other, when we celebrate our diversity... and together tear down the mighty walls of injustice."

Cynthia McKinney - American politician and activist

The long standing narrative of Africa as a state requiring foreign rescue and intervention has to change. Within our own resources, it is within our scope as a continent to mobilise our domestic resources through reversing the precondition of mining equating to destruction and exploitation. Redressing this legacy requires a step further than just a mere improvement in the operations of the mining industry but an establishment of natural resource wealth filtering back into the social safety net, accruing its rightful beneficiaries at local, national and a regional level.



VUYOKAZI FUTSHANE //
INTERIM PROJECT LEADER

Vuyokazi Futshane is a social justice warrior dedicated to the realisation of a just and equal society who works at the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute as a researcher on the SADC BIG Campaign and the Basic Needs Basket Project. She holds a BA Honours in Anthropology and is currently pursuing an MA in Anthropology focusing on a human rights perspective towards decriminalising sex work in South Africa. Her special interests lie in pan Africanism, afro-feminism, intersectionality, social protection, social transparency and accountability.

Perceptions of whom is supposed to benefit from mining are often one sided, serving mainly the interests of foreign multi-national corporations, the critical question then begs, how do we retain mineral wealth in Africa to the benefit of the populations?

The AMV is a declaration of Africa's own capability for structural transformation, a paradigm shift from the current state of dependency of foreign development aid. It is a proclamation that Africa does not need a saviour; that Africa will dig itself out of the trenches of cyclical poverty and structural inequalities that have, for generations, plagued the continent.

Robust transformation requires a decolonised resource wealth redistribution system, one which promotes equal social, political and economic participation, which transcends across borders allowing for regional and continental integration and social cohesion, therefore reaffirming the strong but long forgotten notion of solidarity and "Ubuntu".

On paper, most of Africa is characterised by economically and politically sovereign states, where democracy, the rule of law and liberty rule. Yet true emancipation remains unattainable for most who remain shackled by poverty, inequality and destitution, , mostly affecting women who continue to feel the effects of shrinking economic opportunities, marginalisation and food insecurity. The price that many Africans have paid for their liberation has resulted in displacement, economic marginalisation and a loss of agency and socioeconomic mobility.

A developmentally focused mining industry in Africa is one that needs to come to terms with the fact that minerals are finite resources which will inevitably bleed dry, and that now is the opportune moment to establish contingencies to reap the benefits of mineral resource wealth long after the last diamond has been extracted out of Africa.

The notion of Sovereign Wealth Funds is slowly making its way back to policy debates, and strong consideration on the administration of these mechanisms needs to stem from the national level with concerted efforts on the part of governments, civil society and the business community.

An important dimension of tackling this difficult task is through broad based social and economic development, the expansion of social security nets and progressive social protection interventions to the benefit of the poorest populations, and to bolster economic development throughout the continent.

A SADC Basic Income Grant (BIG) is one such intervention. Going BIG with development will drastically reduce the existing pervasive extreme poverty levels and encourage greater economic participation. Through the mechanism of a sovereign wealth fund, the sustainability of African development can not only be achieved in the present, but guaranteed for many generations to come, shaking off the legacy of intergenerational poverty. Progressive social protection not only serves as a means for poverty reduction, but a tool for regional integration, a realisation of Pan Africanism, an Africa united in all its splendour and might. The Africa we all want!



RETHINKING ECONOMIC POLICY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE RADICAL POTENTIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Radhika Balakrishnan, James Heintz & Diane Elson
(Published by Routledge as part of the "Economics as Social Theory" series)



Image courtesy of Rutgers University

Daniel McLaren (Snr. SPII Researcher) interviews author **Radhika Balakrishnan**.

Q: What prompted you and your co-authors and editors, James Heintz and Diane Elson, to produce this book?

A: The 2008 global financial crisis and ensuing recession confirmed what a lot of us had been talking about for some time: that neo-liberal globalisation was not going to deliver the goods for the majority of people. Since the recession, which led to massive job losses and regression in terms of people's enjoyment of human rights across the world, inequality has actually increased. Less than 100 individuals now control the same amount of wealth as 3.5 billion people.

We wanted to ask: who is the economy for? By what standards do we evaluate progress in our economy and society more broadly? Human rights can provide a widely accepted ethical and normative framework for what a fair and socially just economy would look like. We need new thinking on economic and social policy, which should be based on ensuring people's enjoyment of fundamental human rights, and that's what inspired this book.

Q: What are the key principles that underlie a human rights based approach to economic policy making?

A: First, the human rights approach is not new. It has evolved and developed over many years, particularly since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. But the human rights community has been slow up till now to integrate human rights norms and standards into economic policy thinking and debates. So we consider this book in some ways as the beginning of that conversation.

Human rights frameworks (on civil and political rights, socio-economic and cultural rights, women's rights, etc) provide a means by which we can evaluate government

policy. It is possible, for instance, to audit economic policy in terms of its compliance with human rights treaties – most of which the vast majority of nation states have ratified and committed to implementing.

The role of finance in our economies has also transformed them but in this area too we can assess whether this role has led to a closing or a narrowing of human rights enjoyment. A primary human rights principle, for example, is that the state must protect people from violations of their rights by private actors, such as businesses.

Q: Where do these principles come from?

A: All human rights treaties are the result of lengthy inter-governmental negotiation. At the United Nations, states debate what rights are, what obligations governments have, and how these can be articulated

in treaties. This process of negotiation gives human rights their force. The vast majority of nation states have agreed to them (most treaties have been ratified by more than 160 countries).

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Q: How can human rights advocates and researchers use these standards for advocating for changes in economic policy?

A: The South African Human Rights Commission is well-placed, indeed, constitutionally mandated, to monitor the government's compliance with human rights. They could, for example, call public hearings which interrogate economic policy from a human rights

perspective. Ultimately, all states are responsible for complying with human rights treaties and citizens can use these to hold their government accountable when they are failing to respect fundamental rights.

Q: What are the advantages for countries in the Global South, including South Africa and other African countries, to taking a human rights based approach to economic policy making?

A: The core obligation on states to use the maximum available resources to fulfil socio-economic rights provides a good example. This obligation requires states to maximise revenue on a progressive basis to spend on fulfilling everyone's socio-economic rights, such as to housing, health care, social security and education. Countries with limited resources must ensure that the resources they do have available are spent in a way which maximises gains in terms of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality. Even monetary policy and policies on the movement of capital should be answerable to their ultimate impact on the resources that are available to the state to ensure people's rights.

How resources are raised and utilised is always a political question, and those with the most power tend to have the greatest say. But when human rights frameworks are applied to these decision-making processes, it can be possible for more equitable outcomes to be reached.

If no consideration is given to human rights, then we end up with situations where resources are monopolised by the powerful sectors of society and those with the least power end up losing out. An obvious example is the huge sums of money that were given to failing banks in Europe and America in 2007/2008 (which still continues today).

Q: A key question on the economic and political agenda of South Africa in recent years has been the demand for and possibility of free education, both at the primary and secondary level and the university level. Given that our constitution recognises the right to basic and higher education, how could a human rights based approach help us to make the difficult choices that need to be made to find a way forward with critical debates such as these?

A: Education is among other things, the future of the economy. When access to quality education is limited and opportunity not equally shared, this has massive impacts on the economy's ability to create and sustain jobs for everyone. Unequal education therefore has massive consequences for the development of a

country. But education is also a human right, and when advocates for more equal access to education frame their demands in terms of the rights which they have, the constitution as well as international human rights law provides them with more power and tools that they can use in their struggle.

Q: Finally, how can civil society organisations and government policy-makers begin to apply the lessons of this book? Where should we start?

A: Don't allow economic policy-making to be left to technocrats. Take on economic policy as part of your broader fight for social justice. We all need to make an effort to democratise and demystify economic policy-making, both in terms of process and content.

where a hundred people control the same amount of wealth as half the world's population. Economic policy has played a big role. Integrating human rights into economic policy-making could be the first step to re-imagining our economies and ensuring that the future benefits of globalisation are shared more equally.

Above all, we must ask how we have reached a situation

"A political struggle that does not have women at the heart of it, above it, below it, and within it is no struggle at all."
Arundhati Roy, Indian author

STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE AND SURVIVING TO STRUGGLE

Vuyokazi Futshane & Nkateko Chauke

Statistics South Africa has indicated an increase in the consumer price index by 0,6 % month to month in January 2017, food costs constitute the biggest allocation of household budgets. Increased inflation means heavy pressure on the spending power of households, especially those that are the hardest hit by poverty and inequality coupled with the dire socioeconomic environment in South Africa which is characterised by shrinking employment opportunities. Pervasive food insecurity is nothing new in Southern Africa, for many years the region has been plagued by famine, drought and devastating levels of poverty. The recent drought in South Africa, attributed to EL Nino, which has been moving through Southern Africa since 2015, has been more severe than it has been in years. Poverty and destitution are largely visible in rural areas and informal urban areas, where many lower income households rely on

growing their own crops to alleviate the burden of having to purchase some of their basic requirements. For many lower income households, farming is not only a livelihood mechanism to feed their families, but a means in which to cut costs and expenditure on food by growing crops.

During the Basic Needs Basket workshop held last year from 8-9 December, many of the participants – whom are comprised of volunteers from the Association of Community-based Advice Offices of South Africa (ACAOSA), echoed the cries of the general S. African population, emphasising that putting just one meal a day on the table has increasingly become unaffordable, lower income households are unable to absorb the shocks of increasing food prices, leaving them more destitute than ever.



Photo credit: Oxfam



Photo cred: DFAT Photo Library

As it stands mainly lower income households are reliant on social security grants to aid in the struggle for daily survival, the current social security net has thus far proven insufficient in this regard. The continuous instability of the South African economy has rendered many unable to sustain a decent standard of living.

The concept itself of a decent standard of living is a foreign one for those living in poverty, aspirations of a better life only includes what is necessary for survival. Broader human development and socioeconomic mobility are out of reach, coupled with little or no economic growth, with little hope remaining to remedy the situation or respond to both regional and international economic shocks. The question remains, how do we

fight poverty and inequality in South Africa, with the odds continuously stacked against the working poor and the unemployed and uncovered (by social security grants) population falling between the ages of 19-59? What interventions at state and policy level are required to meet the vision of the national development plan (NDP) and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of realising an adequate standard of living for all South Africans?

The answer to these questions and many more lie in the progressive and radical transformation of not only the country's welfare system but a revolution towards a human rights based economy. The 2017 Budget Speech has promised to bring to the fore the issue of a more inclusive

economy, to foster transformation through participation and sustainable mobilisation of economic resources. The focus of economic development must therefore be on a much needed socioeconomic reordering; the agreement by the government to implement a national minimum wage is a stride in the right direction. What remains to be seen is whether deliberate socioeconomic redistribution will actually be prioritised by the government?

The time for the state to fulfil its constitutional and international obligations is now, for far too long the unwelcomed legacy of structural inequality and racial poverty has plagued South Africa. The struggle to survive must come to an end.

"Get up, stand up, Stand up for your rights. Get up, stand up, Don't give up the fight."

Bob Marley - Jamaican musician

“HASHTAG” THE #CAUSE



The SADC BIG Campaign advocates for the introduction of a SADC wide universal social protection that can be funded from the proceeds of extractive industries mainly. SPII acts as the secretariat for the campaign and heads up the advocacy initiatives with other members of the steering committee.

Support at: <http://spii.org.za/sadcbigcampaign/>

#DECENTSTANDARDOFLIVING

#QUALITYOFLIFE

SPII
STUDIES IN POVERTY AND
INEQUALITY INSTITUTE
*Building up knowledge
to break down Poverty*

- Isobel Frye -
POLICY BRIEF NUMBER 4

TOWARDS A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING

“Everyone has inherent dignity and the Right to have their dignity respected and protected”
Section 10, Constitution of South Africa.

“The State must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights”
Section 7(2) Constitution of South Africa

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**
1815-2015



@sadcbigcampaign

f FOLLOWERS	1 057
LIKES	1 056

@sadcbigcampaign

t FOLLOWERS	221
TWEETS	340



*Building up knowledge
to break down Poverty*

@studiesinpovertyandinequalityinstitute

f FOLLOWERS	1 207
LIKES	1 207

@SPII1

t FOLLOWERS	591
TWEETS	1 438

“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.”
Robin Williams - American comedian

TOWARDS A HUMAN RIGHTS BUDGET AND A HUMAN RIGHTS ECONOMY

Extract from Human Rights Budget Speech 2017 (Feb) - supported by SPII, +Section27, Children’s Institute(UCT), AIDC, CGE, Corruption Watch, SERI, SLSJ, SAFSC, COPAC, People’s Health Movement, PLAAS, Social Justice Coalition, PSAM

“The Constitution does not only apply to political governance, but also provides a framework for our economic governance.

For the first time, every aspect of this year’s budget is guided by the Constitution. In particular, this means that every measure in this budget has been evaluated according to its impact on reducing inequality and advancing people’s socio-economic rights.

Though global conditions remain tough, we have undertaken to increase the resources available to the state for advancing these rights. Where cost-cutting is necessary, it will not be at the expense of people’s rights, such as to adequate health care, education and social security. We know that any budgetary measure which leads to a deterioration in the quality of existing services is unlawful.

We are also considering how Cabinet can fulfil its Constitutional obligation to deliver a human rights economy. That is: an economy in which business is conducted differently to traditional ‘market practices’, which have too often led to racketeering and fraud and the exploitation of workers and consumers at the expense of national development. We will empower our Competition Commission to develop new dynamic regulations that will ensure viable markets in which profits are related to the meeting of the needs of people. Companies that ride roughshod of the rights of workers and consumers will not find a safe space in this new economy, while companies that respect rights will be rewarded for doing so.”

Area	What we wanted	What we got
Human rights approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A needs based budget • NO REDUCTIONS in spending on socio-economic rights • Empowerment of the Competition Commission and other regulatory bodies to stamp out unconstitutional market practices • A vision for a human rights economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not substantially • Social services just above or at CPI inflation • Commitments to re-focus on governance and accountability, but how? • “Charter of Economic Rights” proposed by the Minister, including decent, well-remunerated jobs; skills development; support micro-small-medium business and coops
Inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More redistribution • PIT: tax bracket freeze, top tax bracket drop, top tax rate increase to 45% • NO INCREASE to VAT • Inequality reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good sentiment BUT not redistributive enough • R1.5m top rate 45% • Increase of div withholding tax with 15% - 20% • Carbon tax? Very little new info
Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar tax implementation • Regulations to ensure COMPLETE corporate transparency • New measures on tax avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised design of the tax, will it be a priority for implementation? • Sharing tax info internationally from Sept 2017 • MNCs must now provide more info on cross-border activities
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed investment in local government capacity building conditional upon genuine public participation in local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Treasury and Provincial Treasury’s focus on improving municipal finance – 4 point plan – nice idea
ECD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditional grant increase from R400m to R1bn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much for ECD and disability? Not clear

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Area	What we wanted	What we got
Basic Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment for quality education Cost of that need: teacher training; school infrastructure; SGB capacity-building) School Nutrition Programme: in and out of school + local sourcing of food Increase in poverty redress component of Post Provisioning Norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is education still a priority? Funding is R2bn below expectations School building increase of 12.5% though
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More grants for low-income students who can't afford food, accommodation and academic resources Overhaul of NSFAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R77.5bn instead of R74.7bn – good No fee increase for students with HH incomes below R600 000 How will poor students in NSFAS be supported?
Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National action plan for implementing this right Beyond EPWP opportunities to decent WORK New understanding of the informal economy: permanent, legitimate, linked to formal economy, valued and in need of support Review of all local by-laws and provincial & national policies that violate the rights of informal traders and limit business activity Improved infrastructure Biggest boost to economic freedom that we could give 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very little information or proposals
Social Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening up of the Comprehensive Social Security Reform process to the public and commitment to conclude policy within 12 months CSG increase to food poverty line R470 (R16bn) and linked to food price inflation experienced by the poor New measures and resources to end abuse of the grants system Support for the insourcing of payment system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing Increases at or about inflation: R20 increase = 5.5%
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce and end subsidy to private health care = R20bn per year Increase in number of and support for Community Health Workers Accelerating implementation of NHI from 14 years to 5 years Review of intellectual property and patent laws in order to ensure more affordable access to medicines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase to medical allowance! When will NHI White Paper be released? NHI Fund (from tax credits for medical schemes) – but no new info
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right to Food Bill focusing on food sovereignty Public health campaign to educate and regulate unhealthy fast food industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nope No amounts for nutrition education, no measures on unhealthy fast food
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparency of housing waiting lists Permanency of informal settlements and implementation of UISP Support for local government to transform spacial planning and living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to R900 000 no transfer duty White Paper on Acceleration – looking forward

"Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free." - 14th Dalai Lama

YOUR SPII STAFF

The SPII Staff have turned over new forests for 2017 and agreed to show themselves to SPIITalk readers. We trust that many of you who have interacted with us over the years, will be pleased to put faces to the names. Human Rights month has prompted the SPII Team to share their most cherished Rights and Constitutional values.



DANIEL MCLAREN

Senior SPII Researcher & SocioEconomic Rights(SER) Project Leader

I love the founding provision of the Constitution, which reads:
"The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:(a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms."



ISOBEL FRYE

Director and Chief Spokesperson

South African Constitution, Section 7(2):
"the state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights."



ZENAIDA MARTIN

Communications Consultant

"To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination." - *Bell Hooks*



DELPHINE NGCONGO

Webmistress & Receptionist

"Freedom means the control of Human Rights"



VUYOKAZI FUTSHANE

SADC BIG & Basic Needs Basket(BNB) Interim Project Leader

"Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected"



ERIQUE DOUWIE

Finance & Human Resource Manager

"Freedom from fear' could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights." - *Dag Hammarskjold*



FORTUNATE MABUZA

Grants Administrator & PA to the Director

"To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

Dear Matshidiso Motsoeneng,

We would like to thank you for the enormous service to the organisation that you have provided over the past 3 years and more.

It is not often that SPII says farewell to as accomplished a staff member as you. From the Local Economic Development Project to the Socio-Economic Rights Monitoring Tool, to our first venture into Community-Based Monitoring, you have made invaluable contributions to so many areas of SPII's work. Your commitment to each of these projects has been proven time and time again and your departure no doubt leaves a big gap to fill. (Of course, we will also miss the lunchtime conversations with you too!)

As you move to the Afro Middle East Centre and contemplate your Masters degree, we wish you all the success that you deserve. We also hope that our paths will continue to cross and that we will not lose touch!



MATSHIDISO MOTSOENENG

GOOD LUCK!

From the SPII family

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS RADICAL TRANSFORMATION IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Matshidiso Motsoeneng

Since the 1990's development theories have increasingly stressed the importance of inclusivity and the accommodation of local knowledge for development in the third world. In South Africa, the National Development Plan (NDP) recognises the importance of this aspect to bring about development in the country that is mired by massive poverty and shocking inequality. The NDP promotes the notion of an active citizenry for the both economic development as well as social cohesion. Public participation is also contained and enshrined in the Constitution through various sections which promote openness, accountability and public involvement in the national assembly and the provincial legislative processes. At the local level, local government is mandated to facilitate public involvement and full participation



MATSHIDISO MOTSOENENG /
RESEARCHER

Matshidiso Motsoeneng is a researcher for the Socio-Economic Rights project at SPII. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts Honours in International Relations and Political Studies at the University of Johannesburg. She is a co-founder of the Bophelong Tutoring Programme which is a registered NGO which provides academic assistance and career guidance to learners from disadvantaged schools in the Vaal area. She has published work in the field of human rights, local economic development as well as presented at international and local conferences, visit www.spii.org.za

through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is the process of allowing local communities, affected by various issues, to decide and be involved in the decision-making process involving issues that affect them as community members. By the same token, Section 152 (e) of the Constitution refers the objective of local government as an obligation "to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government".

In line with the NDP's vision of creating an active citizenry in South Africa, the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) undertook a six-month pilot project in assisting communities in the process of formulating spaces of participation and dialogue around the human rights challenges that they face in their communities. The project, titled; "Voices from the Ground: Community Mapping of human rights challenges in Evaton", was focused on giving members of the community the platform to voice their opinions, and propose solutions for them going forward. The project also aimed to strengthen and promote a meaningful and effective participation in governance and development at a community level.

Using participatory action research (PAR) the project trained community researchers to be able to utilise change practices in dialogue on socio-economic issues that the community faced and to empower participants to seek more inclusion in the policy decisions that affect their lives. Human rights challenges were mapped out by the community with the assistance of the

community researchers allowing the community carte blanche to express themselves.

The current South African socio-economic landscape is at a point where it needs to reflect and speak to the needs of the people on the ground, amid rising youth unemployment, service delivery protests and xenophobic attacks mostly fuelled by these socio-economic frustrations.

The promotion of community dialogue can be done in creative ways that allows the community to not only feel included but also form part of enacting the ideas that they put forward. To achieve this, SPII through the project, provided training in participatory methodologies of creatively mapping out human rights challenges in the community, this in turn provided human rights education as well as an empowerment process of identifying challenges but also identifying solutions to the challenges.

This process therefore recognised the importance of allowing free dialogue spaces and taking seriously the recommendations and reflections of people on the ground having had first-hand experience of their own issues. As long as public policy employs a top-down strategy, it will continue to violate people's human rights and continue to have very little outcomes in terms of transformation. Listening to **the people** is radical transformation and the cornerstone of democracy.

(A comprehensive report on the outcomes and findings of the project are available at www.spii.org.za)



DATA STORY - A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING

"WHAT IS SUFFICIENT"

For many South Africans, this is a question that very rarely enters one's consciousness. Our second data-story on this topic, aims to unlock the priority areas of discussion that will serve as catalysts in overhauling the living standards for the majority of working class South Africans.

Excerpt from: A DECENT LIVING LEVEL:

A PILOT OF THE 'MINIMUM INCOME STANDARD' APPROACH IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Christine Byaruhanga, Abigail Davis, Michell Mpike, Phakama Ntshongwana,
Matt Padley, Gemma Wright and Wanga Zembe-Mkabile)

"A definition was put together by the team with reference to the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and building on previous recent work undertaken by members of the team regarding socially perceived necessities (Wright and Noble, 2013). Both the Constitution and even the previous study had involved extensive consultation that far exceeded what could be accomplished within the remit of this pilot and so building a definition on this existing work was a pragmatic decision. The definition that the team assembled, based on this existing work, was as follows:

"People who have a decent living level are able to participate fully in society, however they choose to do so. A decent living level includes personal possessions, social networks, housing, services provided to the house and in the local area, and the ability to take part in social activities. A decent living level is not a luxury living level, but rather the level at which we think all people should be able to live in South Africa."

This definition emphasises full participation in society, and acknowledges the existence of personal choices and preferences. It refers to physical possessions as well as social ties and features of the neighbourhood which had all been prominent in previous research. A decision was made to explicitly distinguish the 'decent living level' from a 'luxury living level' – or what people agree is needed rather than what people may agree is an extravagance – to highlight the fact that the objective was not to draw up a wish-list of a luxurious lifestyle, but rather to reach agreement about the requirements for a decent standard of living that everyone ought to be able to have.

CURRENT ANALYSIS OF LIVING STANDARDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Unemployment by race, Q1 2016



Black African
40,9%



Indian/Asian
16.6%



Coloured
28%



White
8.6%

Race is a primary determinant of whether or not people are able to enjoy a decent standard of living.

"Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world."
Malala Yousafzai - Pakistani education activist

COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA A PIPELINE DREAM IN THE LAND OF NO IMPLEMENTATION?

Matshidiso Motsoeneng

Since 1994, South Africa has risen to the international stage as having one of the progressive Constitutions in the world with its special recognition of socio-economic rights such as housing, food, water, education, social security, environment, health amongst others. The country's commitment to the realisation of socio-economic rights is also recognised through the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which the state is due to report to this year. The Covenant, recognises the right to an adequate standard of living which is in line with the realisation of socio-economic rights such as social security, food etc.

An adequate standard of living in South Africa, is not only an implicit recognition of redistributive justice, but it is also an explicit coverage of those living in poverty in the country. Social security is therefore imperative in a country faced with these challenges.

Social security is thus seen as a poverty alleviation measure as well as an economic blanket against unpredictable economic shocks such as unemployment, disability, old age etc. The nature of social security in South Africa, is through social assistance in the form of cash grants from the state as well as social insurance through contributory schemes in both the private and public employment sectors such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund, maternity leave benefits, pension funds or retirement annuities etc.

Since 1994, various policies have shaped the face of social security in various ways and since then social security has become increasingly progressive with increasing coverage of children, the elderly and people with disabilities across the board. Despite this, a move towards a more comprehensive social security landscape has been moving at a snail pace despite policy recommendations from the Taylor Commission

(2002) on social security which proposed the need for a more comprehensive outlook on social security. In recent days, the implementing department of social assistance the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) have been mullied in a tug-of-war with civil society over illegal deductions of social grant pay-outs as well as a looming crisis of distribution of the pay-outs following the Constitutional Court finding that the contract with Cash Pay Services (CPS) was illegal and should be scrapped.

In 2016, the state released the long awaited 2012 '*Comprehensive Social Security Discussion Paper*' after immense pressure from civil society groups and the trade union movement. This delay in the release of the discussion paper indicates the tensions and disagreements over the face of social security in South Africa. The main point of the discussion paper on comprehensive social security is for government to establish a National Social Security Fund (NSSF) which will serve as a national pot for pensions, death benefits, and disability and unemployment benefits.

Spearheaded by the Inter-departmental Task Team on



The right to social security is enshrined in the **Constitution under Section 27** and is subject to progressive realisation using the state's maximum available resources. Social security in South Africa has been defined as:

"a wide variety of public and private measures that provide cash or in-kind benefits or both" as stated in the 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare.

Social Security and Retirement Reform (IDTT), it seeks to reform the national social security framework by expanding social assistance through the recommendations of the Taylor commission to phase out means-testing to access social grants.

The paper also seeks to enhance social insurance funds, introduce regulatory reforms of the pensions and life insurance industry and also improve the links between social security and labour by improving unemployment benefits.

The paper further takes a broader social protection outlook by seeking to align social security with the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI). This alignment forms part of a broader aim of consolidating departments that have an aspect of social security within them, such as the department of Labour (UIF, pensions etc.), Department of transport (Road Accident Fund etc.), Department of health and the Department of Social Development (social assistance grants etc.)

The discussion document shows a commitment by government to phase

out means-testing of social grants which prevents many from accessing their Constitutional right to social security. By the same line, the discussion document does not mention anything in terms of a basic income grant which could've been expected considering the influence of the Taylor Committee report.

Government policy needs to start addressing the needs of the majority who face many socio-economic challenges.

By shying away from the question of a basic income grant, the state once again leaves behind vulnerable workers in the informal economy which are mostly women and the youth. The youth are dealt a double blow with high unemployment levels rising amongst the youth. The absence of any form of social security to cover those who have not found any form of work and are vulnerable, shows that South Africa still has a long way till it reaches a comprehensive social

security framework. Current policy debates have little but shied away from speaking about a basic income and this is indicative of the neo-liberal policy stances government had adopted since 1996 with the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy.

Government policy needs to start addressing the needs of the majority who face many socio-economic challenges and it is important for government to be reminded of their Constitutional obligations and what these should mean for the people on the ground. It is also important for government to come up with proper implementation strategies in terms of addressing the realisation of these socio-economic rights to avoid the crises such as the on-going social grant distribution debacle with the department of social development or the horrific saga of the Life Esidimeni patients.

If good policies are not implemented properly, it is ordinary people's lives that are impacted and this is a violation of people rights as enshrined in our Constitution.



SPII *Matters*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 2017

Launch of #DecentStandardofLiving & #QualityofLife Community Dialogues

June 2017

Launch of '*Within its available resources*': An assessment of government spending on socio-economic rights between 2008/09 and 2017/18 – check our website in May or subscribe to our mailing list for further information.

June 2017

Launch of #DecentStandardofLiving and #QualityofLife voluntary Survey

September 2017

Decent Standard of Living Conference



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to break down Poverty*

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