



CALLING FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS BUDGET

Human rights need to be at the centre of the national budget planning process” was the message that came out loud and clear at the launch of Studies in Poverty and Inequalities Institute’s (SPII) latest policy brief series: *“Within its available resources”: Socio-Economic Rights and the National Budget.*

Hosted at the T H Barry Lecture Theatre of Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town just days after Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan’s National Budget Speech, the launch was attended by representatives of a variety of spheres, including academia, civil society, and labour. Its panel was equally diverse in its

representation and included Member of the Standing Committee on Finance Dr Makhosi Khoza, Chief Operations Officer: South African Human Rights Commission Shireen Motara and SPII Senior Researcher Daniel McLaren. The discussion was chaired by Executive Director: Foundation for Human Rights Yasmin Sooka.

SPII’s latest policy brief series focuses on the budgetary aspect of government’s socio-economic obligations. It aims to assess the extent to which government has effectively and equitably utilised the resources available to it to facilitate access to and fulfil the SERs.

“The goal of this work is to really start putting human rights and the Constitution back at the centre of the budget. This is a perspective which is, obviously, crucial but is often over looked in the debate about the sovereign rating, about debt and about various aspects of the budget,” said McLaren in his opening remarks.

McLaren said that the SERs enshrined in the Constitution and the ICESCR, require appropriate resource allocations by the state to be realised. He added that the question of the budget and how it is used to promote access and improve the quality of access to these rights is absolutely crucial.

IN THIS EDITION

Guest Writer: *Equal Education General Secretary Tshepo Motsepe*

Pg 4

SPII LED researcher pursues social protection masters studies

Pg 8

Hot Topic: *SPII joins the South African race debate*

Pg 10

SPII gains two more veterans on its board

Pg 12

The inclusion of social and economic rights in South Africa’s first democratic constitution envisioned the reconstruction and transformation of a divided and deeply unequal society. Socio-Economic Rights (SERs) to education, social security, health care, housing, food, water and sanitation, a healthy environment, and land establish a framework to heal the divisions of the past. Through its SERs Monitoring Tool project, SPII has endeavoured to track the progressive realisation of each right enshrined in the Constitution and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

NOTE FROM THE SPII DIRECTOR:

SONA: DIVIDED, DISCORDANT & DISSOLUTE

By Isobel Frye

Despite the opening references by the president as he (attempted) to lodge his call for legitimacy of the ruling party in the heroism of many people in overcoming the oppression of Apartheid and our colonial legacy, the outright inability of the parliamentary proceedings to maintain a semblance of order will be the overriding memory of 11 February 2016 – and that might well be exactly what some of the members of the House wished to effect.

Through their interjections and continued call for protection by the rules of parliament, diverse members of the opposition managed to have the president called to be silent, to sit and to rise at their behest, as it were. A nodding – and infrequently – laughing president did just that.

Sadly, the opportunity for the president to turn around the animosity that was noted, by delivering a speech that spoke to the real concerns of the majority of South Africans who face massive increases in food prices far in excess of CPI-indexed cost of living increases, was ignored. Reassurances to business that the cost of doing business will be reduced was not matched with similar reassurances for workers that the value for their work would be protected, let alone enhanced. Similarly, the only sop for the 21% of households that depend on social grants as their primary source of income, was that Treasury and the National Department of Social Development were committed to releasing their common vision for a



comprehensive social security – as they have been told annually for over eight years, with no apparent urgency, let alone compassion for people's daily struggles. Reindustrialisation of the manufacturing sector seemed to hinge around incentive schemes – in other words, a reshuffling of revenue or potential revenue as incentives mean revenue foregone to the national coffers.

Globally, states have committed themselves to increasing fiscal take by reducing the habits of companies to escape taxation through complex company architecture and transfer mispricing. No mention was made by the president of any commitment by government to implement steps to reduce let alone halt these practices. Simply reducing the number of state gala dinners is not, to be frank, going to put food on the tables of the families that go to sleep hungry.

This was an opportunity to affirm South Africa's commitment to providing a social protection floor to all in the country, as per the globally hailed recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. Commitments to increasing the zero rating on nutritional food would have been a very welcome relief to parents having to raise a child on R330 from a monthly child support grant.

Despite the numerous studies that have been shared with government on the very beneficial potential of a living national minimum wage to create jobs by increasing domestic demand as a result of the redistribution of disposable income, only concerns about potential job losses were noted when the issue was mentioned by the president.

Again, the opportunity for taking the nation into the confidence of our leadership was wasted. Details were few and far between. Even details on the concession to the university fee increases were deferred to the Minister of Finance's Budget Speech on February the 24th.

The very critical concern noted by many sectors – without any remedial assurances being uttered – involved the attainment of National Development Plan goals on an assumed growth rate that we are not anywhere near attaining.

Possibly in these points, as on the point of recognising points of order in the early part of SONA proceedings, these are issues that the ruling party does not want to recognise. But unlike members of opposition parties, they are not issues that can be directed to remove themselves.

Cover story continued

“What we do find concerning is reported information by government departments appears to lack a human rights basis so it is very much about ‘counting numbers and these are the figures’... in essence, it appears to have become a sort of tick box exercise,” said Motara.

“We are all painfully aware that a lack of access to basic services and rights, including education, detrimentally affects the ability of the poor in our country to reach their full potential and to emerge from the constant of poverty,” Motara said.

Motara added that the development of indicators can go a long way in ensuring that government and civil society have an accurate picture of the state of service delivery and SERs in South Africa.

“I think what this particular set of policy analysis does is it allows us to begin to interrogate at a very critical moment in the history of our country what the budget means in terms of addressing these questions of poverty and inequality,” said Sooka.

“Human rights cannot be realised without us considering the questions of the political-economy and I think for human right activists and practitioners more and more they are going to have to grapple with issues that they considered outside of their realm,” she added.

Khoza admits that there is a lot of work to be done from a government perspective regarding improved access and quality of access to service delivery. She added that we need to develop a culture of social security free of stigma.

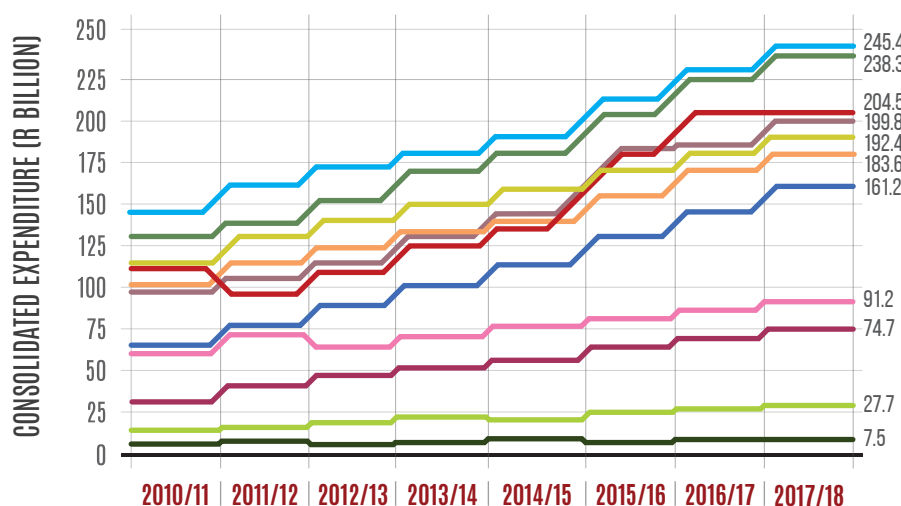
“If there’s one thing to take away from today, it is that the economy that we have in South Africa must be a human rights economy which is founded in the Constitution, and the budget also must be a human rights budget; it must exist to advance human rights in good times and in bad,” said McLaren.

As the policy brief notes, even in times of resource constraints, it’s even more important to make sure the budget is balanced in a way which reflects burdens and benefits on groups in terms of the Constitutional requirements of equality,” he said.

To access SPII’s National Budget Policy Brief Series, visit: <http://www.spii.org.za/index.php/spii-policy-brief-20161> or email advocacy@spii.org.za to be included on the organisation’s mailing list



FIGURE 1: CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS RELATED AREAS AND OTHER MAIN EXPENDITURES, 2010/11 - 2017/18



PERCENTAGE INCREASE FROM 2010-2018 PER EXPENSE

BASIC EDUCATION	59%
SOCIAL PROTECTION	55%
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	56%
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE	48%
DEFENCE, PUBLIC ORDER & SAFETY	60%
HEALTH	56%
DEBT SERVICE COSTS	41%
GENERAL PUBLIC SERVICES	67%
POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	44%
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND REFORM	57%
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	67%

EDUCATION IS HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

BY GUEST WRITER, TSEPHO MOTSEPE

Over the past 21 years of democracy, South Africans have observed Human Rights Day to commemorate those who died during the Sharpsville massacre, as well as look back at our past, reminding ourselves of the powerful words stated by Nelson Mandela on how we ought to treat each other as human beings and that “never again shall it be that our beautiful country will experience the oppression of one by another”. With these words, we had started a journey towards correcting the many gruesome wrongs inflicted on black South Africans as a result of racial oppression advocated by the architects of apartheid.

While we have made significant gains in our democracy we still carry on a daily basis the burden and pain that apartheid, as an act against humanity, inflicted on the social fibre of South Africa. I would want to turn my attention to education and highlight how painful a past we come from – and how we are still battling to reverse the apartheid legacy that continues to inflict unbearable pain on future generations of young people between the ages of seven and 18 years who happen to be enrolled in 23,740 schools across South Africa.

It is worthwhile to note that we as a country have made significant gains in addressing some of the challenges we face in education; we also ought to note how even the highest court in the land passed a judgement that grounded education as an “immediate realisable right”. This means in the provision of education in South Africa, excuses are not sufficient and all should be done within the law and policy to provide education. With such powerful legislation and constitutional court judgments that support the realisation of education immediately, why are we still having an education crisis in South Africa?

South Africa has managed to increase universal access to schooling for children particularly from poor backgrounds; the current enrolment number for children who were in school in 2014/15 was

12,655,436. This is an incredible number of young people who on a daily basis are engaged in a pedagogical process. However, we still struggle to provide necessities like school infrastructure, proper and safe sanitation, tables and chairs, textbooks and good qualified teachers. Why are children learning under trees and still attend overcrowded classrooms? Surely this is a human rights violation against learners who walk over ten kilometres to school in the most rural provinces only to be confronted with most of the challenges stated above.

I should admit all is not lost. We know that government has prioritised education spending, but we ought to be honest as to where the bulk of the money in the national budget is going. The majority of the money is spent on salaries and not where the need is: improving the conditions in which learning and teaching is taking place.

According to the 2014 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), of 23,740 public schools, 604 schools have no water supply (3%), 1,131 have no electricity (5%), 474 (2%) have no ablution facilities, 10,721 (45%) have no access to libraries, 20,463 (86%) have no laboratories, and 16,146 (68%) have no computer labs.

While we might have reclaimed our place as a country in the League of Nations by not being the “skunk of the world”, the


education system continues to reproduce poverty as high inequality levels continue to find expression in the classroom across South Africa. Children from wealthy families continue to gain access to better schools while children from poor backgrounds continue to be recipients of a sub-standard education only because their parents cannot afford to send them to well-equipped schools. This should not be how equality is achieved with such a painful past as ours.

In highlighting how unequal our school infrastructure is, as a country, we were shocked and horrified when a learner by the name of Michael Komape aged 6 met his untimely death by falling into an unsafe pit toilet in Limpopo when he asked to be excused by his teacher to go and relieve himself. It is under these conditions that, as Equal Education, we feel that education 21 years later still remains a national priority and the current infrastructure crisis in education remains a human rights issue if not confronted it should be regarded as a human rights violation against the millions of learners who look upon gaining an education as a pathway out of poverty and underdevelopment.


Tshepo Motsepe is the General Secretary of Equal Education, a movement of learners, parents and teachers striving for quality and equality in education.

OF 23,740 SA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ACCORDING TO THE 2014 NATIONAL EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NEIMS):

 **604**
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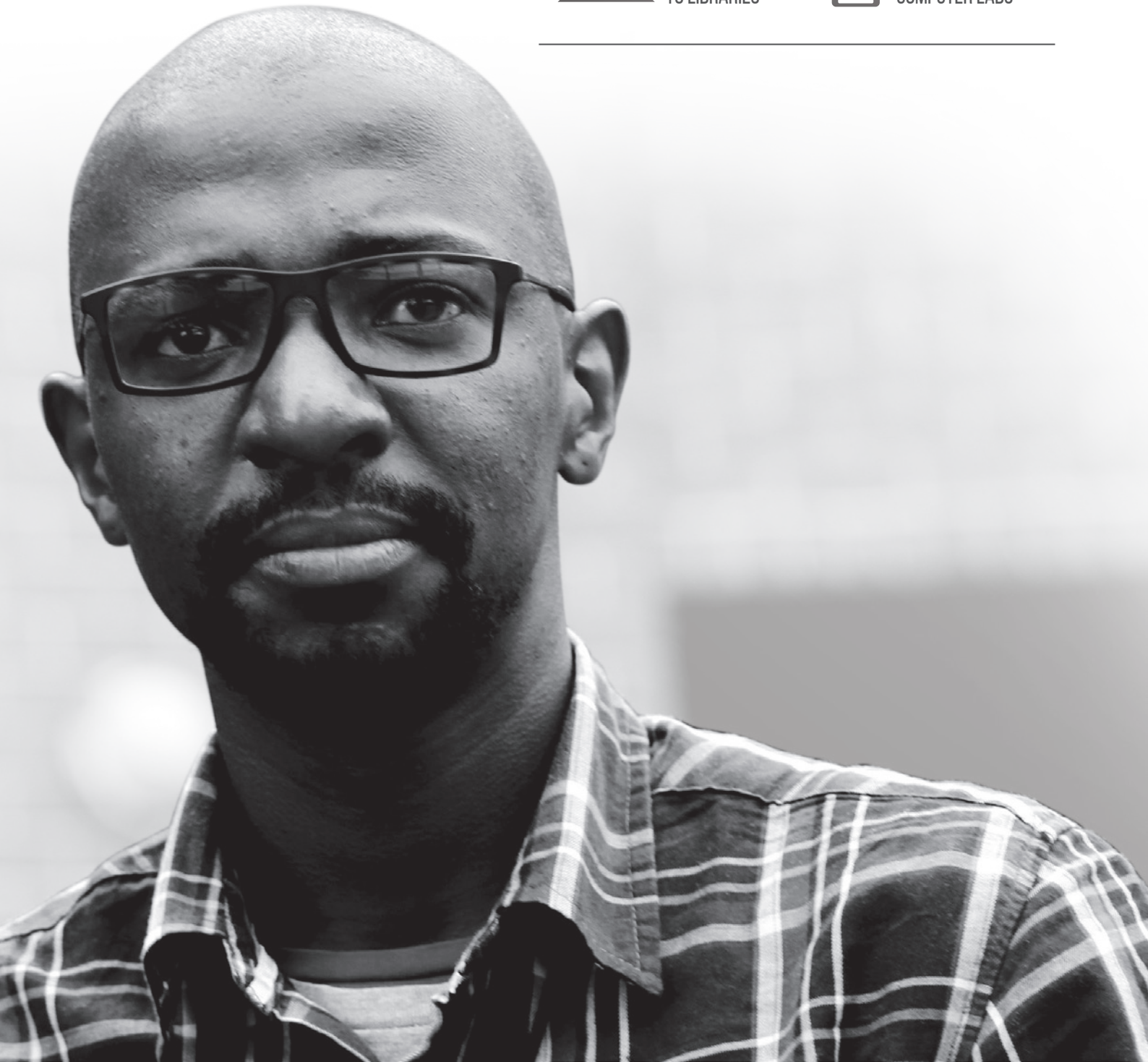
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“SPONSOR A SCHOOL” CAMPAIGN

10 YEARS OF SPII

Ahead of Human Rights Day, Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) and ShakeXperience announced on national radio station SAFM that they have joined forces to find creative solutions in the fight against inequality in South Africa as part of the institute’s 10-year celebration this year.

Capitalising on public discourse around Take a Child to the Theatre Day on 20 March and Human Rights Day on 21 March – both of which are symbolic of the need for social redress in South Africa – the organisations jointly launched the “Sponsor a School” campaign. This exciting campaign urges corporate companies and capable individuals to fund school trips for underprivileged learners to experience the final run of Standard Bank Young Artist Neil Coppen’s *Animal Farm* in a bid to improve their understanding of the set work and, consequently, improve marks. “We have many projects, including the Socio-Economic Rights Monitoring Tool which tracks the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights in South Africa and that’s what led to this collaboration with ShakeXperience,” said SPII Advocacy Officer Angelo Louw during the show.

In November last year, SPII launched a report tracking the progress of the realisation of the right to education as per our constitution called *Realising the Right to a Basic Education in South Africa: An analysis of the content, policy effort, resource allocation and enjoyment of the constitutional right to a basic education*. One of the key findings of the report, which is the latest

in a series of reports from SPII’s Socio-Economic Rights (SERs) Monitoring Tool project, demonstrated poor performance of South African learners in subjects like Mathematics and English, as well as a lack of learning material.

“It’s exciting for us to collaborate with ShakeXperience in trying to find a practical solution to this problem,” Louw said. “Our logic is, when people engage with [the play] in that interactive way – because they have the opportunity to watch the play and then engage with the actors and director afterwards – it improves their knowledge of the play and their confidence to answer questions in the examination.”





The organisations hoped that direct exposure to the play will influence learners' ability to deal with questions asked in their final exam. Each production is coupled with a 30-minute discussion session where learners will be able to engage the cast and crew on the themes of the production.

According to a press statement released by SPII ahead of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address in February,

challenges to the right to basic education perpetuate a cycle of poverty and inequality. An in-depth analysis of national policy, budget and quantitative indicators illustrated a trickle-down effect between poor standards of basic education in South Africa and ongoing poverty.

"Investing in our country's education not only stands to benefit just individual learners it benefits the country in the greater scheme of things," said Louw.

HARVEST YOUNG MINDS

Plays like *Animal Farm* have always played an integral role in creating political awareness among the masses... and now, we would like to use it to create socio-economic change. You can be a part of the process!

Send an email to Lalu Mokuku or Tiffani Cornwall for more information on Lalu@shakexperience.com or taffani@shakexperience.com. Sponsors will have the option of selecting a specific school, or to choose one from our data base.

There will be daily performances on the following dates:

JOHANNESBURG | 11-15 April '16 | *The Joburg Theatre*

PRETORIA | 18-22 April '16 | *The State Theatre*

GRAHAMSTOWN | 05 -10 July '16 | *The National Arts Festival*

DURBAN | 01-07 Aug '16 | *The Playhouse*

JOHANNESBURG | 19 Sep - 02 Oct '16 | *The Market Theatre*

SPII SENIOR RESEARCHER WRITES FROM GERMANY



BRIAN MATHEBULA //
SENIOR RESEARCHER

ABOUT MATHEBULA

Mathebula holds an honours degree in Public Management and Governance and is pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Brian heads SPII's research programme on linking cash transfers to Local Economic Development (LED). For more information on SPII's LED Programme, visit www.spii.org.za

Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute Senior Researcher Brian Mathebula made the cut as one of 17 academics around the world to attend the International Master's Programme in Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems in Germany. He writes about his experiences.

The last six months have been exciting from a social and academic perspective. Initially, it took me by surprise how cold it was coming from a sunny and warm Johannesburg. As the German students constantly say to African students "wenn man sich warm genug anzieht geht es" (If you dress warm, you should be fine). I am one of 17 students from across the globe who have come to Germany to attend the new international Masters programme in "Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems" at the University of Bonn-Rhein Sieg.

The lure for many international students attending the programme is that the program offers an interdisciplinary and in-depth study of social protection systems. The programme promises prospective graduates to be equipped with skills that will enable them to design "smart systems, which can be sustainably, financed while being effective and flexible. Graduates will also be in a position to contribute towards optimising and, if necessary, reorganising existing social protection systems, adapting them to future demographic, economic and social challenges".

The programme is made up of students from the following countries: South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, India, Bangladesh, Venezuela, United States of America (USA), Germany, Japan and South Korea. Most of the students bring

experience working in different areas of social protection, whilst the lecturers are made up of different experts from ILO, Oxford Policy Making (OPM), and Guest lecturers from other universities around the world.

There are three universities within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region that offer degrees in Social Protection: firstly, Institute of Finance Management at the University of Dar-es-Salam (Bachelor of Science in Social Protection), secondly, University of Mauritius (Master of Science (MSc) in Social Protection financing) and lastly, the University of the Witwatersrand School of governance in South Africa (Master's Degree in management in the field of social protection). However, I chose to study in Germany because the study programme is free while the University of Mauritius programme costs \$10,000 and issues around access and affordability to tertiary education in South Africa have played out prominently in mainstream media. Also, the Germans have an internationally renowned social protection system, funded mainly through a social contribution system and living in Germany allows one to experience first-hand what can be achieved.

Of course, there are lessons to be learned from developed countries. However, it is important to note that there are other socio-economic context driven issues in the region that need an analysis of their own political economy of social protection, capacity to implement and financing social protection in the absence of contributory schemes. Many countries in the region have often argued against instituting various social protection programmes due to financial constraints. There is a



need to undertake an analysis of fiscal space at national level and alternative funding mechanisms. In addition, what lessons can other countries in the region learn from South Africa's social assistance programme? Issues of greater regional integration (social, economic and political), portability of social protection are other issues that the region need to respond to.

South Africa is ahead of many countries in the region with regards to social protection, as a result of the success of the social assistance programme. Key questions that I am hoping the study

programme would allow me to shed more light on include: where to for social protection in South Africa? Is there fiscal space and political will to extend social assistance to the unemployed and the 'working poor'? What does the current economic climate mean for social protection, and should we be calling for extension or be alarmed by slow economic growth? And what are the consequences of doing nothing now and for the future?

There is room to undertake comparisons between Germany and South Africa,

especially with South Africa grappling with the National Minimum Wage debate, and what constitutes a decent standard of living and how the Germans are dealing with the newly implemented national minimum wage. Structural issues that persist in socio-economic development seem to impede progressive discussions and decisions.

From a student's perspective, some lessons can be learned such as public universities are free and accessible to everyone and students have access to all public transport across their province or state.



HOT TOPIC: IS RACISM KEEPING BLACK PEOPLE IN POVERTY AND PERPETUATING INEQUALITY?



MASHIDISO MOTSOENENG //
RESEARCHER: SERS
MONITORING TOOL PROJECT &
HOT TOPIC COORDINATOR

HOT TOPICS are SPII's weekly internal discussion and learning seminars.

It was the beginning of January 2016, when we woke to the news that an estate agent from KwaZulu-Natal had done the most unthinkable; she had referred to black people as monkeys. For a country like South Africa, where past racial injustices are still a sore open wound of just twenty years ago, you have to understand the outrage that came out as a result. Penny, wallowing in her ignorance, said that her statement came as a result of the filth that was left at Durban beaches following the December holidays, beaches largely visited by people of African origin.

For me, one thing stood out of Penny Sparrow's ignorance with her initial Facebook post and her comments following the public outrage. For one, it is an indication of how racism through

its monopoly capital continues to rub salt, vinegar and methylated spirit to the wound of black labour exploitation, land dispossession, poverty and growing inequality.

Andile Mngxitama in his 2009 Frank Talk Series proclaimed "Blacks can't be racist", which essentially recognises the historical position of black people and how they have related to the white system of power. He asserts "...blacks by virtue of their historically evolved positionality, can't be racist." This is how then SPII's Hot Topic sessions kick-started the year with the themed as racism. Like Andile, we sought to define black people from Biko's point of view and said it is "as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and

identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realization of their aspirations”.

In our attempts to define what racism is we concluded that “racism is the system of white monopoly capital which has thrived under colonialism, apartheid and modern day democracy at the expense of black African people” and that this exploitation did not end with apartheid as people still earn very low wages at the expense of short-term profit maximisation by big corporations. To this day the government, civil society, labour and business, remain at logger heads at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) over the introduction of a minimum wage in South Africa, which SPII believes is one of the first steps we need to take toward a decent living level and safeguard the human rights of all citizens and residents.

Although it is agreed within SPII that theoretically, everyone can be racist, in principle it doesn't make sense to turn the white system of racism to a victim. The white system holds within itself

economic and systematic privilege that continues to benefit white people, even with Black Economic Empowerment in place. Looking at the origins of racism, we made an attempt to locate where racism comes from, how it has evolved within the capitalist economic system and how both black people and white people in South Africa experience it. Having said this, it is important to note that while the democratic government has made great strides in terms of addressing socioeconomic issues, millions of people continue to live in poverty. According to StatsSA, 16.3 million people in South Africa live below the poverty line. This poverty is also located amongst gendered lines, as the country's most poor are largely women, black women in particular. The Hot Topic discussions also revealed how people are significantly aware of the racialized nature of poverty and inequality in South Africa. As observed in a film shown in one of the discussions, “You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich.” This is a statement that many of my colleagues at SPII agreed with during Hot Topic discussions, showing

that poverty is something associated with being black while being rich remains largely in association with whiteness. A number of questions were raised: what should the government do to address poverty and economic inequality? How do we go about deconstructing racism and whiteness in the way that it relates to economic power? What about the land? What is the role of white people in the racism debate?

I do not profess to have the answers to these questions, but I know the injustice and the human degradation that comes with living in abject poverty, without proper sanitation, food security, access to clean drinking water, basic quality education, quality housing and health facilities. Being called a monkey and being shot at for demanding a living wage in Marikana or being called violent rascals when demanding the right to higher education without the shackles of debt happens because there are those who continue to be the gatekeepers of white racist monopoly capital that keep black people in poverty and it is an infringement of our human rights.

THE BELOW PERCENTAGES SHOW THE INCREASE IN POVERTY SHARE AMONG POOR BLACK AFRICANS, ACCORDING TO STATSSA'S POVERTY TRENDS.

94,2%

Of poor South Africans were black Africans in 2011

93,2%

Of poor South Africans were black Africans in 2009

92,9%

Of poor South Africans were black Africans in 2006



NEW TRUSTEES 'ON-BOARD'

Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) was pleased to welcome yet another two renowned veterans onto its board of trustees during this quarter: seasoned journalist and communications specialist Alan Fine and former inspector general for South Africa's intelligence service Dr Mohamed Fazel Randera. SPII Talk focuses in on the institute's newest members.



ALAN
FINE

Fine, who worked as a trade unionist for the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union in the 1980s after graduating from the University of the Witwatersrand, is currently the Communications Executive at Russell & Associates. Prior to this, he enjoyed an 11-year run as Public Affairs Manager at AngloGold Ashanti where he focused on matters of sustainability and public policy.

Labour relations, politics and policy have always been his forte having spent most of his 18-year journalism career writing on these themes – this insight will be useful to the organisation, particularly in its advocacy for comprehensive social protection and the engagement

with all social actors on critical choices and affected people regarding resource allocation priorities in a manner that supports formal political commitment to transformative social and economic transformation. Fine comes with a wealth of knowledge around communications that will strengthen SPII's stakeholder engagement.

"I look forward to supporting the invaluable work SPII carries out for the future of SA," said Fine about his appointment. "In particular, I hope to be able to contribute to SPII thinking about how best to engage with other social partners to achieve the adoption of measures recommended in the institution's research"

DR MOHAMED FAZEL RANDERA



Randera, who is currently the chairman of Nehawu Investment Holdings and MediTech South Africa, was once the health advisor at the Chamber of Mines. He served as board and council member of the World Medical Association from 1997 to 2000, participated in the World Health Organization international inquiry into the tobacco industry from 1998 to 1999 and chaired the global initiative on HIV/Aids reporting in 2004.

In South Africa, he sat on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 1995 to 1998, founded the Ethics Institute and served as chairman from 1997 to 2000, and served on the Human Rights Committee from 1997 to 1999.

Working in hospitals and facilities in the UK and South Africa, he specialised in a range of medical disciplines, including occupational health and HIV/Aids. He chaired the Private Healthcare Forum from 2004 to 2007 and was

a member of the South African Centre for Survivors of Torture from 2006 to 2011.

He served as the inspector general for South Africa's intelligence services from 1999 to 2001 and served on several ministerial advisory bodies. During his interview for the position, Randera told parliament's joint committee on intelligence his exposure to human rights abuses as a TRC commissioner had convinced him of the need for civilian oversight of intelligence bodies.

"As to my contribution to SPII it will be primarily around the experiences working in a number of areas be it in government and the private sector; the human rights work done in the years leading up to our democracy and then in the TRC," said Randera. "Working in a collegial and collective way with the other trustees but recognising at all times that we have a professional dedicated team and supporting them in their often difficult work."

GLOBAL SOUTH MEETING IN NEW DELHI

The Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors met at a Global South Meeting in New Delhi between 27 and 29 January. The outcomes of this meeting will feed into a number of global inputs, including to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in July 2016, writes Isobel Frye.



Established in 2010 with the adoption process by the International Labour Organisation of the Social Protection Floor recommendation to foster a human rights perspective to development goals, one of the key objectives of the coalition is to ensure that the Social Protection Floors are implemented at a national level with national monitoring, as well as to plot a symmetry between the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals based on human rights and monitoring, especially from a South-South perspective.

One of the dominant challenges in the South was that of gender. Another challenge was to transcend the national focus on social protection, linking to the regional and international levels. We set out to do this with a room full of experts.

FOCAL AREAS OF PARTICIPANTS:

Transformative social protection; social protection for informal workers, including domestic workers. People need to be better aware of their rights to social protection and to be involved in systems from the inception stage right through to enjoyment and M and E.

Even where funding is low, we CAN still enjoy the protection we wish for.

Social transformation needs economic, social and political reforms, not just the bare policies, however progressive those appear on paper.

From the three-day convention, it was clear that universalism was a common demand – this was consistent too with the recent Southern Africa Social Protection Experts Network meeting in Zambia. This, however, came into conflict with South Africa's position of reducing social spending, and its need to find a lot more money for tertiary education. It was also important to note that potential impact on our current very fragile negotiations around the National Minimum Wage setting.

PRIORITIES IN SOCIAL PROTECTION WORK GLOBALLY

COMMON THEMES:

Inclusion of all in all stages of social policy including those affected the most, and in coverage.

Influence of development partners to mainstream social protection

Universality, that gives dignity to people

Links between labour market and social protection, including a National Minimum Wage

Capacity building, rights education and education of the responsibilities of duty bearers

Resisting the encroachment of the private sector

Need for advocacy at all stages

Ideology is critical, together with rights education and how to enforce and realise rights

OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED SADC BIG CAMPAIGN

SPII representing the SADC BIG Coalition Secretariat with support from the Church of Sweden (CoS) and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) hosted a conference on the 18 to 19 November 2015 to further discuss the way forward for the SADC-wide BIG Campaign in shifting the social protection sphere within the region.

The main objectives of the conference were to provide an opportunity for Coalition partners to reflect on the campaign strategy and challenges, generate debates on the feasibility of the SADC BIG being institutionalised in SADC member states and, of course, to officially launch the SADC BIG Campaign.

TWO-DAY CONFERENCE PICTURES



SPII *Matters*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

12 & 13 May 2016

TOWARDS EQUITY-

A STRATEGIC ROUNDTABLE ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

The Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) is planning to convene a strategic roundtable on public school funding on 12 and 13 May 2016 in Cape Town. SPII Senior Researcher Daniel McLaren will join the panel, sharing insights gained through his research on the realisation of the right to basic education in South Africa under SPII's Socio-Economic Rights Monitoring Tool project. With the emergence of a national current of student activism on university campuses, poverty and financial barriers to access to education have rightly been placed at the forefront of our political discourse. School children across South Africa face the same struggles.

The strategic roundtable will be an intensive coming together of activists and experts to deepen our understanding of education funding models, and develop comprehensive strategies toward an equitable model of school funding.

Please contact Fortunate Mabuza at SPII should you wish to have any information about any of the announcements - Email: fortunate@spii.org.za



www.spii.org.za

*Building up knowledge
to break down Poverty*

SPII Services:

SPII provides the following services:

Bringing people together, "honest broker" at roundtables and seminars

Conference host, bringing together a verity of stakeholders to share new information

Basic Needs Basket research – a representative sample of poorest members of society

Research project

Policy support and analysis

Training in research methodologies – on request

SPII is a not-for-profit Public benefit Organisation

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