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POVERTY, DEVELOPMENT AND DONOR ISSUES

Survey of philanthropy and giving by ‘high net worth individuals’ in South Africa

More than 9 out of every 10 ‘high net worth individuals’ (HNWIs) in South Africa are involved in some form of giving to worthy causes in the country on a frequent basis, and for most ‘giving’ is something they have done over extended periods of time, often throughout their lives. These are the top-line findings of a major new philanthropy survey, the Giving Report 2010, the first of its kind in South Africa, which was commissioned by leading wealth management company BoE Private Clients. The full results of the survey, as well as a handy infographic can be downloaded from here http://www.thegivingreport.co.za/.

Anna Vayanos, Head of the Philanthropy Office at BoE Private Clients, says that the findings have been very interesting and have pretty much confirmed their experience that the majority of HNW individuals were involved in some form of giving and at least half of those who didn’t give, are planning on doing so in the future. Whilst most of the contributions of HNW individuals during the period surveyed amounted to less than R25 000 (US$3 200), there were individuals whose giving far exceeded this and some individuals who volunteered over 500 hours of their time. “64% of the respondents had been involved in giving for at least a 10 year period,” she says. “Interestingly, the areas most supported include community and social development, religious causes and education whilst human rights, arts and culture and the environment were some of the least funded.”

“The findings should provide valuable information for both donors and beneficiaries, as well as a host of other interested parties. It was important for us that non-profit organisations, who are the agents of the change that the philanthropists are seeking, be able to ascertain through the content of the survey, useful information that may help to guide their future strategies. The findings, for example, cover how donors identify the organisations they support and what donors expect in return, which interestingly for the large part is nothing.” “We are hoping that the findings will generate some interesting debates on philanthropy in South Africa.

Information and discourse is crucial to its growth and development. In a country with one of the highest Gini co-efficients in the world, private philanthropy plays a hugely important role in addressing the divide between rich and poor,” she says.

Source: http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/social_development/giving_is_a_way_of_life_for_wealthy_south_africans.html

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<th>Some interesting findings of the survey include:</th>
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<td>- 19% of respondents were motivated to give by religious beliefs.</td>
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<td>- Those whose source of wealth is investment success tend to give more.</td>
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<td>- The desire to ‘make a difference’, to ‘give back’ and ‘caring about a cause’ are the key drivers for giving.</td>
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<td>- Only 26% of the respondents have both a strategy and budget for giving.</td>
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<td>- Males were found to give higher amounts than females. To some extent this is due to males earning greater amounts than females</td>
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Thousands of students from six continents gather for US$ 1-million poverty challenge

The Hult Global Case Challenge (Hult GCC) recently announced the regional finalists of its annual US$1-million student competition. Worldwide, over 3 500 students applied to compete this year, almost three times as many as last year. Selected participants hail from over 130 different countries and represent 300 different higher education institutions, including some of the best global business schools. Harvard, Wharton, Columbia, Chicago, Stanford, MIT, London Business School, INSEAD, Hong Kong UST, CEIBS and the Indian School of Business are all represented.

In its third year, the Hult GCC has become one of the world’s top platforms for social change. College and university students globally recognize it as the largest case competition and non-profit organizations consider it to be a major crowdsourcing platform for social good. The 2012 Hult GCC challenges student teams to come up with new, sustainable business models that aim to tackle poverty. In particular, students will focus on devising solutions for the education, energy and housing sectors. The Hult GCC counts on its partner, the Clinton Global Initiative and its non-profits - One Laptop per Child, SolarAid and Habitat for Humanity to provide the subject matter expertise in framing the challenge.

1 The actual survey was conducted in late 2010, the report was released in late 2011, and publicity around its findings only started appearing in early 2012.
Former New York Governor Mario Cuomo; Michael Treschow, Chairman of Unilever; and Mohammad Yunus, Nobel Prize Winner and founder of Grameen Bank will participate in the selection of the winning teams. Ahmad Ashkar, Hult GCC founder said, “We must combat poverty and all other social issues through new and innovative approaches. The Hult GCC gives attendees the opportunity to come up with an idea and then actually put a framework around the concepts so that they can materialize into market pilots.”


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A superb idea / initiative that can be (easily) replicated (on perhaps smaller scale) in emerging countries where business schools are proliferating, increasingly competitive and keen to contribute or at least demonstrate societal relevance. Such initiatives need not apply to B-schools only as illustrated by Stellenbosch University’s Hope Project which is billed as “creating sustainable solutions to some of South Africa’s and Africa’s most pressing challenges.” The Project is rooted in its three core functions – teaching and learning, research and community interaction – and showcases academic initiatives that serve human need.

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Calls mount for South Africa’s National Lotteries Board to be overhauled

A thorough review of the workings of [South Africa’s] the National Lotteries Board (NLB) looks increasingly likely as the government and the board face growing pressure to address the incompetence and high-handed manner in which the board distributes billions of rand in public funds to civil society organisations (CSOs).

Last week, as media coverage of the NLB’s ineptitude spread, board chief executive Vevek Ram resigned and the [opposition] Democratic Alliance joined calls for lifestyle audits of board members and a forensic audit of all grants made in the past three years. The latest developments follow a year in which an alliance of four prominent CSOs called for a complete overhaul of the way the NLB manages and distributes lottery funds and the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) issued a damning judgment against the board. Evidence from a variety of CSOs, an in-depth analysis of the NLB’s workings and the court judgment paint a picture of a hopelessly inept organisation that appears ill-equipped to perform the ambitious functions required of it by law.

In a judgment issued by the SCA last September, Judge Azhar Cachalia referred to the NLB’s failure to distribute R6-billion (US$760-million) in 2009 that it was required to distribute in terms of its mandate. He noted: “The rigid and inconsistent application of the guidelines at least partly explains why this has happened. Equally distressing is that the board does not appear to understand its mandate properly.”

A research report on the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund and the National Development Agency, undertaken by Funding Practice Alliance, gives extensive details supporting the position taken by the SCA. The report notes the NLB’s grant has been riddled with ineffective and sometimes confusing lines of communication and accountability between the NLB, the minister of trade and industry and the three distribution agencies that do most of the administrative work. “The consequence has been that nobody associated with National Lottery grant-making has been held accountable for the NLB’s inability to disburse funds effectively and efficiently to CSOs.”

The report refers to interviews with CSOs, which indicate that it sometimes takes more than 12 months for applications to the NLB to be processed. “Those organisations that have been awarded grants have had to wait a further six to 12 months for the money to be disbursed. The impact of this inefficiency has been catastrophic, with some CSOs having to retrench staff or close.” In many cases hundreds or even thousands of vulnerable individuals depend on such CSOs.

Pressure for the government to implement significant changes is heightened by the growing perception that, while applications for funds to assist the most vulnerable individuals depend on such CSOs, the conseq...
ECONOMIC ISSUES

'African agriculture should be positioned as the main driver of change on the continent'

So said former South African president Thabo Mbeki recently at the AGCD Africa Summit in Berlin, Germany. In his speech, Mbeki cited from a 2000 World Bank book titled, Can Africa claim the 21st Century?: "Though Africa’s agriculture has responded to limited reforms, it remains backward and undercapitalised, the result of centuries of extractive policies. Recapitalising the sector will require;

- maintaining and improving price incentives (including by encouraging competitive input markets),
- channelling more public spending and foreign aid to rural communities (including for local infrastructure), and
- tapping into the savings potential of farmers.

These changes are also needed to create incentives to reverse severe environmental degradation. Public-private partnerships can make a contribution, including in agricultural research and extension, where a regional approach would also help. And wider access to OECD markets for agricultural products would make a big difference. Mbeki also highlighted the importance of agri-processing in developing the agriculture sector.


Mbeki failed to mention what a difference farmer-friendly political and economic policy in African countries would make, i.e. guaranteed access to land with security of tenure and easier access to consumer markets.

On an interesting, related note the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) has promoted the integrated agriculture research for development (IAR4D) approach based on an innovation systems framework. This brings together multiple actors along a commodity value chain to address challenges and identify opportunities to generate innovation. The approach creates a network of stakeholders or partners who are able to consider the technical, economic, social, institutional, and policy constraints in an environment. The network facilitates research and learning that not only generates new knowledge, products or technologies, but also ensures the use of research products.

The IAR4D approach is being tested at three pilot research sites across Sub-Saharan Africa: in Eastern and Central Africa around Lake Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda); Southern Africa (Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe) and West Africa (Niger and Nigeria). This has involved the establishment of 36 stakeholder innovation platforms thus: creating functional linkages between farmers, the private sector, and service organizations; integrating productivity, natural resource management, markets and policy; establishing effective mechanisms for organizing and learning processes for farmers; and ensuring action research oriented toward problem-solving and impact. There are strong indications that IAR4D is an effective concept, applicable across a broad spectrum of agricultural systems.

This review (opens pdf) examines the experiences of 21 case studies covering a wide range of African farming systems over broad geographic and historical landscapes. Each case study was reviewed by accessing and analysing existing data sources, published material and grey literature. It also involved important consultation with stakeholders in each country.

Unintended consequences of the Dodd-Frank’s conflict minerals provision

Hidden within the 2 300+ page Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (large pdf) are two sections aimed squarely at Africa. Section 1504 requires companies listed on US stock markets to disclose payments to foreign governments. This has been widely hailed, including by Centre for Global Development (CGD), as an important step for encouraging transparency and a sensible complement to efforts like EITI. Section 1502 is another story. That provision requires publicly traded companies to report to the SEC whether they source conflict minerals from one specific country: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The premise is that mining income must fuel violence in DRC so why not just cut off that money and thus end the killings.

Not so fast. For starters, industry is claiming (probably rightly, but hard to know for sure) that it’s impossible to implement as written. More compelling is the range of local NGOs, Congolese writers, and pundits who believe that 1502 may be well intended but is going about it all wrong.

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Nicknamed “Obama’s Law” by the Congolese, section 1502 has created a de
**facto** ban on Congolese mineral exports, put anywhere from tens of thousands up to 2 million Congolese miners out of work in the eastern Congo, and, despite ending most of the trade in Congolese conflict minerals, done little to improve the security situation or the daily lives of most Congolese... I trace the development of section 1502 with respect to the pursuit of a conflict minerals-based strategy by U.S. advocates, examine the effects of the legislation, and recommend new courses of action to move forward in a way that both promotes accountability and transparency and allows Congolese artisanal miners to earn a living. The full paper is available here. EU, OECD and others considering similar legislative efforts, could take note. Source: [http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2012/01/what%e2%80%99s-wrong-with-dodd-frank%e2%80%99s-conflict-minerals-provision.php](http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2012/01/what%e2%80%99s-wrong-with-dodd-frank%e2%80%99s-conflict-minerals-provision.php)

For good background information on the extractive industries and issues surrounding them in Southern Africa see [Southern Africa Resource Watch](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-01-29/intra-africa-trade-may-double-on-fewer-barriers-world-bank-says.html)

***Intra-Africa trade may double on fewer barriers***

Africa could double intra-regional trade by easing non-tariff barriers including customs procedures and poor transport infrastructure, helping boost economic growth, the World Bank said. African leaders meet at the African Union’s headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital, recently to discuss ways to boost trade within the continent, which accounts for 12% of the total. That compares with 35% in Latin America, almost 50% in Asia and about 70% in Europe, Obiageli Ezekwesili, vice president for Africa at the World Bank, said in an interview ahead of the summit.

A doubling in that rate would add 2% to Africa’s gross domestic product, while helping offset the impact of slowing economic growth in countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), she said. Increased intra-African trade is “an area of potential growth and as the global economy deteriorates it is important that Africa discovers Africa,” Ezekwesili said. “The push at this summit has got to be a call to action.” Trade is hampered by “cumbersome” import and export procedures, “difficult” cross-border processes, the lack of transportation networks, regulatory and trade-settlement issues, she said. The constraints can have an impact on companies like Shoprite Holdings Ltd., South Africa’s biggest retailer, which because of import requirements sent trucks to Zambia with as many as 1 600 documents each, according to World Bank research.

Africa plans to introduce a Continental Free Trade Agreement by 2017, while boosting intra-African trade to 25% – 30% within the next decade, according to the African Union. “The idea should be free trade within the continent to boost the free-flow of goods, services and people,” Ezekwesili said. “Because as that happens, productivity is enhanced, competitiveness is improved. It increases growth and reduces poverty.”


Yet more evidence and realisation of the huge economic potential that could be unlocked if African countries were to open their markets to one another. However, as has been highlighted in previous editions of the Southern Africa Scan, in the regional organisations, such as the AU which has been branded an ‘old boys club’, it is all form and no substance. On top of which the AU is now in ‘political limbo’ see here [http://mg.co.za/article/2012-01-31-analysts-doubt-dlaminizumas-chances-for-au-chair](http://mg.co.za/article/2012-01-31-analysts-doubt-dlaminizumas-chances-for-au-chair)

after a failed leadership bid by South Africa’s Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. After three rounds of voting, Dlamini-Zuma remained in a deadlock with the incumbent chair, Jean Ping, who hails from Gabon. The vote will now be delayed until the next AU summit in June and deputy AU Commission chair Erastus Mwencha will serve as chairperson in the interim. According to Thomas Wheeler, research associate at the South African Institute for International Affairs, rather than uniting Africa, the incident at the AU has widened some of the divisions that exist between African countries, particularly those between the Anglophone and Francophone countries. It also showed up the conflicting interests of the West African states and growing economies like Nigeria and Kenya. ”Africa is fractured in so many ways,” he said.

**Cash-strapped Swazi university fails to open**

It never rains but it pours for the cash-strapped University of Swaziland as it has once again postponed opening for the second semester owing to shortage of funds. The government of Swaziland, which is grappling with a financial crisis, has failed yet again to give the university enough money to run the institution. The university was scheduled to open on 24 January next Tuesday but Registrar Sipho Vilakati has confirmed that...
Africa's defining political shift has been toward "arbitrary" rather than "true" democracy

A total of 27 countries across Africa held presidential, legislative and local election in 2011, putting the region's democratic credentials firmly to the test. Optimism is high after a decade of strong economic growth, with democracy advocates lauding reforms on the continent, as well as the uprisings in North Africa. Stephen Chan, dean of Law and Social Sciences at the School of Oriental and African Studies, remains sceptical. He claims that Africa's defining political shift has been toward "arbitrary" rather than "true" democracy.

"Many countries are going through the protocol of holding an election, knowing that they are necessary these days in order to give legitimacy to a government, but the actual conduct of elections is not legitimate in itself," Mr Chan argues. He likens this "process of democracy without a democratic intent" to Russia: "a model that many African jurisdictions have had a good look at."

Credible democratic governance in countries such as Ghana and Zambia – which saw a peaceful handover of power in its September polls – remain the minority. Yet the growth of imperfect or as Mr Chan puts it, "crypto" democracy, constitutes an important progression, he says.

"The only way you can have even a crypto form of democracy is if you ascribe some space to an opposition, to opposition newspapers and modes of expression. Even [this]... is a huge improvement on what went before. You might have governments that pretend to be democratic but are still some form of dictatorship, but it is impossible to have totalitarian dictatorships in most of Africa today."

The ultimate and necessary removal of arbitrary conduct from government will require "some form of representation and accountability, some form of overarching constitutional provision, and the separation and protection of the judiciary", he says. And with constitutional frameworks in place, "countries should be persuaded, allowed, encouraged to experiment with the best democratic model for their conditions".

Still troublesome is the role of foreign actors in the democratic process, Mr Chan suggests, pointing to questions that have recently been raised about Western involvement. "In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, there are still all kinds of unanswered questions about the roles of foreign powers in the transition of one government that did not want to surrender power, to another," he argues. "To what extent was this the will of the people and to what extent was this some kind of, for good intentions, imperial adventure? There's a strong feeling in the West African region that it was a mixture of both."

The announcement of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as Nobel Peace laureate days before Liberia's recent presidential election was similarly problematic. "Could this be read by her rivals, by others in the region, as a rather clumsy attempt to give Western blessing to a president who the West thought was desirable?" Mr Chan questions.

The West is not alone here. Even in Zambia, where the role of China and its investment into the country's vast copper industry have become a contentious issue in recent years, there were rumours that the campaign of outgoing president Rupiah Banda had benefited from Chinese funding.

"We have to be careful not to send the wrong signals," Mr Chan argues. "If democracy really is an act of will by the people, no matter how problematically it is able to be expressed, we have to be pristine in ensuring that we are not seen to be involved in trying to influence the will of the people," says Mr Chan.


### POLITICAL ISSUES

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**Mozambique’s ‘Mr Guebusiness’**

The Mail and Guardian Centre for Investigative Journalism, www.amabhungane.co.za is a non-profit initiative to develop investigative journalism in the public interest. It produced this story about the Mozambican president, an extract of which is provided below.

The tentacles of Mozambican President Armando Emilio Guebuza’s huge family business empire make Zuma Incorporated look like a spaza-shop operation. [an informal convenience shop business in South Africa, usually run from home]. Guebuza has wide-ranging Mozambican interests in the banking, telecommunications, fisheries, transport, mining and property sectors, among others. Critics complain that, as president, he makes critical decisions about economic matters that have a direct bearing on his business activities.

Already a wealthy businessperson when he became president in 2005, Guebuza has steadily expanded his interests, drawing in more and more members of his family. His children Valentina, Armando, Ndambi, Norah and Mussumbuluko, nephews Miguel and Daude, brother-in-law and former defence minister Tobias Dai, Dai’s cousin José Eduardo Dai and sister-in-law Maria da Luz Guebuza now share in the spoils.

Known in Mozambique as “Mr Guebusiness”, he has also entered into lucrative partnerships with Indian, Chinese, Dutch and Bermuda-registered companies. His most important South African connection is an interest in Trans African Concessions, the company that operates the crucial N4 toll route between Pretoria and Maputo.

The family member with the widest range of business interests is Guebuza’s youngest daughter, 31-year-old Valentina, who already has several directorships under her belt and a growing list of companies linked to her name. In 2001 Valentina became a shareholder in the family’s holding company, Focus 21 Management and Development Limited, with her brothers Armando and Mussumbuluko. In 2007 she took a giant step when she became a shareholder in Beira Grain Terminal, which operates the bulk grain terminal in the Mozambican port.

Valentina is also joint owner of Imogrupo, which has interests in real estate, engineering, construction, hospitality and tourism. She has an interest in Maputo’s Tunduro Botanical Gardens, which are being rehabilitated with municipal funds. Valentina is chief executive of Chinese-owned TV company StarTimes, which has a joint undertaking with the Guebuza-owned Focus 21 to digitise public broadcasting. There was no public tender for the contract.

Guebuza’s oldest son, Armando, has a degree in architecture from a South African university. His name appears among the directors of seven registered companies in Mozambique. With South African and Angolan partners, he registered a company last year called Billion Group Moçambique, which has interests in mining, energy, construction and public works. It appears to be part of the Bongani Investment Holdings empire -- a Christian business network that has close links with South African President Jacob Zuma.

Guebuza’s oldest daughter, Norah, has also entered the field after her father again amended company rules in 2005 to allow her to become a Focus 21 director. She joined forces with Zimbabwean and Mozambican partners to launch the firm MBT Construções Lda, specialising in construction and public works, at the beginning of last year. Guebuza’s nephew, Miguel, launched his business career in 1993 by partnering Guebuza in a furniture and import-export company, Venturin. Miguel is a director in the construction consulting company Englob-Consultores Lda, in which one of his partners is Tendai Mavhunga, Guebuza’s son-in-law.

The dangers inherent in President Armando Emilio Guebuza holding the reins of government while presiding over a private business empire were thrown into harsh relief by a public-transport contract of the Mozambican government.

In July last year the weekly newspaper *Canal de Moçambique* reported that the Mozambican government had bought 150 gas-powered buses through a state investment corporation, the Transport and Communications Development Fund, for the use of the Maputo municipality. The trouble is that the buses were manufactured by the Indian group Tata and supplied by its local subsidiary, Tata Mozambique, in which Guebuza has a 25% stake.

According to fund executive director Luis Mula, the transaction was worth R161.4 million (US$ 20.6-million) *Canal de Moçambique* reported that the contract did not go out to international tender, which is a requirement of Mozambique’s procurement law.

Free online open-source science and maths textbooks

After spending six years on the Free High School Science Texts (FHSST) project, Dr Mark Horner has finally made available to all South African learners free online Maths textbooks based on the new FET (Further Education and Training) curriculum. The FHSST initiative is driven by volunteer contributions and is funded by the Shuttleworth Foundation, which supports 'exceptional people to change the world'. The FHSST project develops and disseminates free and open source textbooks for use in the teaching of Maths and Science. Over 100 voluntary contributors worked towards producing the initial format of the Maths and Science textbooks.

FHSST plans to conduct classroom testing and trials in order to gain valuable input from teachers and learners regarding aspects of the books to ensure that the content is pitched at the correct level and fulfils all syllabus requirements. The books are written with the aim of being simple; the important basic concepts are clearly explained and will therefore also be easily understood and enjoyed by many second-language English speakers.

This initiative by FHSST in partnership with the Shuttleworth Foundation is a considerable contribution to education in Southern Africa. As a continuously evolving online maths and science resource it may eventually produce, with the help of interested educators, some of the most effective textbooks available in the classroom. The fact that it is freely available to all makes these subjects much more accessible to all Southern African learners. See also the link to Siyavula – another Mark Horner initiative – in this Scan’s Technology Issues section under ‘Cape Town Science Hack Day themed around science for development’.

Dissecting service delivery protests

Since 2005, there has been on average more than 8 000 service delivery protests (a.k.a. “gatherings act”) incidents per year, according to the South African Police Service (SAPS). Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi has been warning of a “ring of fire” for a while now. He argues that the increasingly violent public protests around Johannesburg are the start of a youth uprising à la the Arab Spring. “Thousands of South Africans feel marginalised and ignored, living in slum shacks, collecting water from taps in the street, even having to use bucket toilets,” Vavi said in June 2011. “This has led to a growing number of service delivery protests, to demand houses, running water, tarred roads, schools, clinics and all the other basic necessities for civilised life.”

Vavi is particularly concerned about the consequences of unemployment, officially at 25%, not including the underemployed and those who have given up looking for work. He wants bold intervention to address the lack of jobs, for the economy to be restructured and for the government to improve transparency. Without the right strategy, "very soon, we will find ourselves in the same situation as Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen".

In Business Day Moletsi Mbeki went as far as to divine the arrival of South Africa’s “Tunisia Day” – "when the masses rise against the powers that be". According to the political analyst, in 2020 China will complete its minerals-intensive industrialisation phase and the stream of revenue the ANC government uses to finance social grants will dry up. "The ANC inherited a flawed, complex society it barely understood; its tinkering with it are turning it into an explosive cocktail. The ANC leaders are like a group of children playing with a hand grenade. One day one of them will figure out how to pull out the pin and everyone will be killed."

Mbeki touches on the undercurrents of unrest, particularly the failure to improve material conditions for all since 1994. Since the election of the ANC, life expectancy has fallen from 65 to 53 years. For the first time in the country’s history, South Africa became a net importer of food in 2007. About 600 000 farm workers have lost their jobs and 2.4-million commercial farmers left the industry between 1997 and 2007 while concurrently farm subsidies were eliminated. And finally, a flood of foreigners has entered the country leading to tension between the local poor and migrants.

But the causes of a service delivery protest are often local and are so divergent it's difficult to lump them in together. In a 2010 study, Peter Alexander from the University of Johannesburg tried to define "service delivery protest". "It appears that what we are attempting to grapple with is locally-organised protests that place
demands on people who hold or benefit from political power.” But a list of the varied forms protests take makes any overarching label look like a method of simplifying frequent riots.

Once we remove the local players from the narrative, however, there are a number of themes that, with a little imagination, could be channelled towards a mass demonstration. Alexander notes that the most common causes of protest are a lack of housing and basic services and the abuse of local administration. Since President Zuma’s inauguration in May 2009, there has been a spike in action, ironically due to his increased legitimacy and higher expectations of the new government. The protests revolve around youth, unemployment and inequality, and often ask fundamental questions about citizenship.

Such factors offer potential for violent protests to be organised across communities. While grievances are often local, the buck stops at the top. If youth want to send a direct message to the president, they have the resources to organise. The power of social networking was on display in the Arab Spring and London riots; will it be tested in South Africa?

If protests erupt, the degree of violence will largely be determined by the police response. Brigadier Schutte from Gauteng’s Crime Combating Unit has called for increased training and equipment to deal with protests, because, with 80% of township youth unemployed, we’ll see revolutionary protests within three years, he says.

But the current police response shows worrying trends. The Independent Complaints Directorate recorded five cases of alleged brutality from public order policing in 2006. In 2009 it recorded 59 cases. The majority of cases were assault with intent to do bodily harm, attempted murder and murder. In 2011 the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation released eight case studies of community protest. With an eerie echo of apartheid it stated, “the arrival of police from outside the local precinct signalled a shift to violent repertoires usually in response to police violence”.

In September 2011, Phillip de Wet from iMaverick noted five lessons learnt from protests in Themb’elihle. “The unifying factor in Themb’elihle is frustration, and the root cause of that frustration is the sense that nobody is listening; memorandums of grievances go unanswered, politicians only arrive once the tires are burning.” With the channels of communication closed, police become the first response. If they’re heavy handed, things get ugly.

So how can we avoid solving our problems through widespread protest that might cause turmoil and fatalities? “If we want to develop SA instead of shuffling pre-existing wealth, we have to create new entrepreneurs, and we need to support existing entrepreneurs to diversify into new economic sectors,” wrote Mbeki. His proposed shift from supporting black economic empowerment to young upstarts might provide hope to the disenfranchised, but it’s not a cure-all. The problem is that service delivery protests are a confronting reaction to unemployment, poor living standards and bad governance – issues without easy answers.

Violent service delivery protests usually have a distinct local flavour but the big issues all come back to national government. If there’s no perceived improvement it might only be a matter of time until protestors shift their focus, organise and bring the fight to a town near you. Not so impossible indeed.

Source: http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-01-23-ring-of-fire-not-so-crazy-a-picture

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

New acid mine water treatment invented

A new technology that could potentially limit the impact of acid mine water has been invented in South Africa. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has developed a new process to reclaim high-quality precipitated calcium carbonate (PCC) from calcium-rich industrial solid waste. High-quality calcium carbonate is useful for various specialised industrial applications such as gastric acid treatment, tablet filling in pharmaceuticals, plastics, paint, adhesives and in pulp and papermaking.

This technology may offer a solution to acid mine water in Gauteng. “We also foresee an increase in demand for calcium carbonate for treating acid mine drainage,” said biochemical engineer Dr Mlawule Mashego, who developed the technology with Jean Mulopo. The research group is focused on recycling technologies that would make extraction of effluent cost-effective. The method appears to be effective with streamed water, but is unlikely to be effective where groundwater is contaminated.

“Some utilities responsible for waste treatment and management are moving away from regulatory compliance toward increased economic incentives in the process of recognising the value of waste and wastewater as a resource.” Such an approach includes the recovery of energy, nutrients,
metals and other chemicals as part of the wastewater treatment process. We also look at further beneficiation of recovered by-products to enhance waste utilisation,” said Mashego. The CSIR has filed a patent for the technology which could also be exported to developing countries where issues of water contamination affect local populations.


New freshwater ecosystem atlas shows which rivers and wetlands to keep in a natural condition

The CSIR has also developed a new atlas that contains mapped river, wetland and estuary priorities for Southern Africa. The atlas is the result of a project that started three years ago to answer the question: How many and which rivers and wetlands do we have to maintain in a natural condition to sustain economic and social development, while still conserving our freshwater biodiversity? The project partners included the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Water Research Commission (WRC), the World Wide Fund for Nature - South Africa (WWF), the Department of Water Affairs and the Department of Environmental Affairs, the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) and the South African National Parks (SANParks).

Some of the key findings that emerged once the data had been collected and processed, include:
- Overall, tributaries are in a far better state than mainstem rivers and they offer excellent conservation opportunities. Only 35% of the length of South Africa’s mainstem rivers is in a good condition, compared to 57% of the tributaries.
- Some 57% of river ecosystems and 65% of wetland ecosystems are threatened. The high levels of threat result particularly from intense land pressures, especially around cities.
- By treating less than a quarter (22%) of the rivers as priority areas, South Africa will be able to conserve natural examples of its diverse freshwater ecosystems while contributing to sustainable development of water resources in the country.
- South Africa has only 62 free-flowing rivers, which constitute only 4% of our river length. Free-flowing rivers have become a very rare feature in the South African landscape and the few representative examples must be kept free-flowing.

The atlas is also available on DVD with a GIS viewer, and the project team has compiled an implementation manual to provide guidance on how the freshwater ecosystem priority areas should be implemented. For more detail see here http://ntww1.csir.co.za/plsql/ptl0002/PTL0002_PG157_MEDIA_REL?MEDIA_RELEASE_NO=7524595, whilst the atlas can be viewed here http://bgis.sanbi.org/nfepa/project.asp

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

Small companies get online for free

Technology group Google, cellphone company Vodacom and South Africa’s Department of Trade and Industry have joined forces in a project aimed at placing 10 000 small and medium businesses on the internet for free. The initiative, launched in January, provides a boost to the government’s efforts to reduce unemployment by encouraging entrepreneurs to start new businesses. The main partners are joined by advisory body the Human Resource Development Council in offering Woza Online, a website service that enables businesses to create websites for free. The websites are also hosted for free.

World Wide Worx MD Arthur Goldstuck, who was present at the website’s launch, said even though 65% of small and medium businesses in SA had websites, the 35% that did not amounted to hundreds of thousands of companies. “As much as 79% of those businesses with websites are profitable, while only 59% of those without, are profitable,” he said. Deputy Trade and Industry Minister Elizabeth Thabethe said the initiative recognised the importance of small businesses for SA’s economy. “As many as 2.8-million small and medium-sized enterprises contributed about 55% to SA’s gross domestic product last year. They also provide employment for young people and women.”

Based on the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, South Africa is under-represented when it comes to small companies with average new business ownership at 2.5%, whilst the average for the 60 countries surveyed was 17%.

Source: http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.asp?x?id=163008

Cape Town Science Hack Day is themed around science for development

The Cape Town Science Hack Day - first of its kind in Africa - and an Open Knowledge meet-up bring together scientists, technologists, designers and educators who wish for science and its benefits to be within
the reach of the general population. In many parts of the developed world, computer geeks and scientists get together and innovate science using technology. This can lead to so-called ‘citizen science’ projects for example, where members of the public can help real research and learn about science at the same time. This thinking is now catching on in Cape Town, where academics and technologists concerned by this issue are coming together.

The Cape Town Science Hack Day is themed around science for development. "How can science and cutting-edge technology empower communities? Developing answers to that question is one of the motivations for the Hack Day”, says Kevin Govender, Director of the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development, partner organisation of the event. The Science Hack Day is taking place at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), a centre of postgraduate training and research based in Muizenberg. AIMS hosts scientific workshops on a regular basis and is a local hub of scientific activity with strong connections to scientific institutions nationally and internationally.

Not only scientists and computer geeks are going to attend; the Cape Town Design Network (CTDN) is also involved. "Science and technology are crucial to informing effective design. In return, designers convert science into everyday products and tools, some of which are then used by scientists for their research. This collaboration is natural for us”, says Michael Wolf of the Cape Town Design Network whose organisation was instrumental in winning Cape Town’s bid to become ICSID World Design Capital of 2014. "Good design helps scientists visualize and understand results emerging from very large sets of data such as those expected from the MeerKAT telescope or the Square Kilometre Array, which we hope to host in Africa” adds Carolina Ödman-Govender.

The Science Hack Day is preceded by an Open Knowledge meet-up hosted by Siyavula, an organization creating open education resources for technology-powered learning in South African schools. As science, programming, education and design come together this week, the community of good hackers for development hopes to grow its ranks.

Source: http://www.ctdn.co.za/

A Science Hack is a lovely, creative initiative that has spread to the African continent. It will be interesting to see whether more African countries can be incorporated - AIMS is after all a Pan-African organisation, and whether the development theme has traction. If so, then this may be something that could benefit from sponsorship and be leveraged for more impact.

Crowd sourcing for anti-corruption

A new anti-corruption watch body will “harness the power of the public” through social media for South Africans to report corruption. Corruption Watch, which was initiated by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and funded principally by donations from charitable organisations, went live last week with a Web site and SMS hotline, which will allow for ordinary citizens to anonymously report corrupt officials. Corruption Watch is an independent non-profit organisation that will be headed by the former director of the competition commission, David Lewis.

"By gathering, interpreting and acting on information from the public, the media and other sources, Corruption Watch will expose the corrupt and the misuse in particular of public money,” says Lewis. "We want to help move the national conversation about corruption from resignation to action.” While the Web site will be the primary portal for the initiative, Corruption Watch has also set up Facebook and Twitter accounts (it is also using the hashtag #CorruptionWatch).

"Through social media, people can share their stories about all manner of corruption, including, but not exclusive to, bribery, kickbacks and graft; influence peddling and patronage; corruption in the workplace where they’ve seen or been victims of favouritism, nepotism, ghost workers and illegitimate absenteeism,” says the organisation.

Corruption Watch says it will keep the personal details of any whistle-blowers confidential. “But the information collected will be aggregated, enabling Corruption Watch to analyse the data, spot patterns and draw a ‘heat map’ of when and where corruption is occurring.” Speaking at the launch of the initiative, Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi said: “Cosatu urges all its members and all South Africans to work closely with Corruption Watch to help to get rid of this fatal cancer within our society.” Lewis says the information from the crowd-sourcing initiative will offer a clear understanding of what is happening on the ground. “Strengthening the scale and voice of civil society will help South Africans defeat corruption.”

See here for more detail http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-01-27-launched-supported-crucial-corruption-watch