

SOUTHERN AFRICA Horizon Scan

Issue 51, November 2013

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POVERTY, DEVELOPMENT AND DONOR ISSUES

South Africa's wealthy among most giving in world

Rich South Africans donated R8 billion (US\$800 million) in cash, R5.1bn (US\$510 million) in goods and services and 7.9-million hours of their time to charity last year, cementing South Africa's place as the "third or fourth" most-giving nation.

This is according to [Nedbank Private Wealth's second Giving Report](#), released on during November. The report estimates that 91% of South Africa's nearly 300,000 wealthy individuals gave because they "care for a cause", "want to make a difference" and "want to give back to my community".

Religious beliefs and family traditions ranked fourth and fifth as reasons to give. South Africa's wealthy gave from the heart, said Nedbank Private Wealth philanthropy specialist Noxolo Hlongwane.

Nedbank defines "high net worth" as those earning more than R1.5m (US\$150 000) a year or having investable assets (minus private residence) of at least R5m (US\$500 000).

The global economic crisis had knocked South Africa's giving, cutting the percentage of those ready to dip into their pockets from 2010's 94% to 91%. Ms Hlongwane said it was "quite funny" that 70% of these donors did not measure the success of their giving.

Nedbank surveyed 401 people, all randomly selected and not all clients. The survey showed the inclination to give was less a factor of demographics than access to resources. Net worth was the best indicator of giving status, and of the amount given.

Source:

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2013/11/01/sas-wealthy-among-most-giving-in-world>

How do you balance business and philanthropy?

An interesting (shortened) op-ed below by Michael Green, author of [Philanthrocapitalism](#) and Executive Director of the [Social Progress Imperative](#), which is a Washington DC-based non-profit that produces the Social Progress Index. His opinions were published on the World Economic Forum blog.

As the UN works on a post-2015 development framework – the Sustainable Development Goals – there is a growing realization that governments cannot identify and address the world's most pressing development issues alone. A big question

persists: how can government's best involve businesses and philanthropists in the fight against poverty?

Business plays a crucial role in tackling development challenges. Harvard Business School Professor Michael E. Porter calls this revolution in business thinking "shared value". One of his case studies is the food giant Nestlé, which has worked hard to bring social and economic benefits to small farmers in its supply chain and is now shaping its future as a "nutrition" business. Obesity, for example, is a strategic risk to the food industry and one that businesses like Nestlé have the tools to tackle, not through philanthropy, but by changing what they sell and how they sell it.

Yet the question remains of how an alliance of governments, business and philanthropy could work together. Many aid organizations are sceptical of the motives of business and suspicious of philanthropy because, well, private actors just don't play by the same rules as multilateral organizations like the UN.

But the world needs that scepticism to change. William Eggers and Paul Macmillan call it "the Solution Revolution" and it has radical implications for global governance. The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for example, has given private donors and businesses seats on the board alongside governments. It's exactly this kind of "grand alliance" that we need to see more often.

It's self-fulfilling to an extent: if philanthropic organizations and businesses can see that their money has a tangible impact, further support and engagement are more likely. And it can be expected that they will be more likely to pursue single-issue campaigns that create solutions to specific problems – regardless of whether these campaigns fall within the UN's Sustainable Development Goals or not.

This is where a new global measure of national performance – the [Social Progress Index](#) – is trying to make a difference in this changing environment. It attempts to measure the host of dimensions that make a good society and highlight issues that, although urgent, are not on the agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals. These include obesity, gender equity and minority rights: the kind of issues that philanthropic involvement and businesses can help to address.

The world is changing. The development sector has to realize that the way it is funded will have to change too and that, while traditional top-down government-led solutions will form part of the "input mix",

the private sector has an increasingly important role to play.

Source: <http://forumblog.org/2013/11/how-do-you-balance-business-and-philanthropy/>

According to the Social Progress Imperative "[n]umerous studies have found a high correlation between economic growth and a wide variety of social indicators, yet there is growing awareness that economic measures alone do not fully capture social progress". Its mission, therefore, is to "advance global human wellbeing, by combining national social performance and capacity indicators with solutions-oriented outreach to sector leaders, and grassroots champions, who together can effect large-scale change. Social progress is defined as the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential". See here <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/data/spi> for the Social Progress Index in which Southern African countries fare badly as per usual.

It is perhaps interesting to approach this blog post's argument through an African lens taking into consideration the views of Jo Ford, a senior analyst at [Oxford Analytica](#). He brings [the politics of the private sector's role in development](#) into the argument ultimately stating that: "...the decision to engage business, and then the process of doing so, is full of policy minefields and trade-offs and problems; but these are not that different from the problems and dilemmas encountered in dealing with governments and other familiar development actors. The challenges of our century are too big and inter-connected to be left to public policymaking alone, quite apart from the reality of the huge de facto development impact (for better or worse) that business activity has. One needs as many 'wins' as one can reasonably find. Public and aid policy in Africa should embrace embracing the private sector, and figure it out as we go".

See also his blog post [The private sector's role in poverty-reduction, development and peace](#) for background.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Employers need to give unemployed youth a fair go

An edited op-ed by Andrew Donaldson who is a deputy director-general at the South African Treasury.

The story of South Africa's past and present failures, and the seeds of its future conflicts, are contained in a single declarative sentence on page 13 of the latest [Quarterly Labour Force Survey](#) (QLFS).

"Approximately 3.3-million of the 10.4-million youth aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training in the third quarter of 2013."

The unemployment crisis — for how else can you describe 6.8-million people [in total] with no real hope of fending for themselves — is evidence of a "co-ordination failure" with interconnected market and policy and administrative factors at play.

This "co-ordination failure" manifests in three ways:

- Young people are leaving school without adequate numeracy and literacy skills;
- Employers are shutting out high-potential youngsters because the school-leaving certificate is no longer an indicator of either ability or potential; and
- The economy is creating far too few new jobs.

However, as bleak as the situation is, and as intractable as the problems appear, the solution is staring us in the face.

It doesn't require a complete overhaul of the legislative framework, as often called for by business, nor does it require that business be bludgeoned into submission by increasingly onerous penalties, as called for by some in government and labour.

It takes money, of which there is plenty; political will to implement policies, which is in short supply, and corporate willingness to act in the interests of positive social change — the lack of which often makes politicians look positively proactive.

Nicola Galombik, executive director at Yellowwoods, the investment holding company that founded [Harambee](#) — a youth employment accelerator supported by the government's Jobs Fund, which prepares first-time workers for jobs in the formal sector — says that the key is to create a virtuous cycle of employers seeing value in employing young work seekers.

She says while the government needs to implement its many youth

unemployment initiatives more effectively, the private sector also needs to step up its commitment and change its employment practices to absorb and support young people.

In partnership with the state's R9 billion (US\$900 million) Jobs Fund, Harambee plans to have, by the end of the year, placed 4 500 18- to 24-year-olds from poor or indigent backgrounds in formal sector employment in six economic sectors. By the end of next year, this number will stand at 10 000.

Harambee has to date focused on financial services, hospitality, retail and call centres, but will be shifting some of its focus to getting people ready for artisanal and other technical training, as these skills are going to be in great demand when the government's infrastructure programme gathers momentum.

Ms Galombik says Harambee's success was driven by employers realising that business success and sustainability are linked to growing the talent pool and improving retention and progression.

This means that employers must change the way they recruit and manage people to support young first-time workers rather than seeing youth unemployment as a problem to be dealt with through corporate social investment (CSI) programmes.

Ms Galombik acknowledges the numeracy and conversational English of young people leaving school falls short of levels required by even entry-level jobs, but says this is not the biggest problem the youngsters face in finding employment. "The biggest barrier is socioeconomic," she says.

"Young people from poor communities do not have the social networks needed to get their first jobs, they do not have the financial resources to pay for transport or internet cafes in order to look for work, and they have incredibly limited and poor information about what will be required of them when they do land a position," she says.

"Nor do they know what jobs will suit them or where they will be most likely to succeed." Vocational training is also essential. Success does not only depend on having the right skills and a lack of behavioural readiness for work — being on time, being able to manage themselves and relationships with managers, co-workers and customers, and fitting into workplace culture — is often a bigger barrier.

This is borne out by Harambee's experience of assessing more than 40 000 young people for its programme. The organisation found that the correlation

between numeracy scores and learning potential was very weak.

More than 60% of those assessed had the learning potential required for entry-level jobs and yet more than half of these candidates had failed numeracy tests for entry-level positions.

This is a real problem for candidates: out of the 35 employers that Harambee places people in, 34 use numeracy tests as part of the selection process. A core part of Harambee's programme is boosting the numeric proficiency of candidates to acceptable levels where required. This is done through a short, intensive bridging programme.

Mr Donaldson says that he is pleased with the success of the Jobs Fund so far, even though, he says, the initiative had got off to a slow start. The fund was set up to co-finance projects and initiatives aimed at sustainable job creation and overcoming the transition between school and work.

Unlike the expanded public works programme, which supports temporary public sector jobs, the Jobs Fund partners with the private sector and nongovernment organisations has four focus areas: namely enterprise development, infrastructure investment, support for work seekers, and institutional capacity building.

This melding of the capacities of the private and public sectors, as evidenced by the Jobs Fund and projects like Harambee, is surely the path to the social compact and collective action needed to deal with the powder keg of having millions of young people living in abject conditions of poverty and deprivation.

As Ms Galombik says: "We can debate the right laws, the wrong laws, whether there are too many or too few laws, their execution, but what we know is that to tackle youth unemployment as a nation we need a very deliberate effort from government and the private sector to each do their bit well."

Source:

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/labour/2013/11/25/news-analysis-employers-need-to-give-army-of-unemployed-youth-a-fair-go>

Policy challenges around the spaza sector

The February 2013 edition of the Southern Africa Scan newsletter featured an in-depth investigation into the spaza sector (informal retail outlets located in informal areas) in South Africa. Even though this research was conducted in South Africa, it is relevant for the whole region because spaza shops are ubiquitous in every town and city in all Southern African countries. They serve as a source of income for countless poor people,

women in particular, and also provide easy access to much needed consumer goods and groceries. This (shortened) article follows from that research, which examined the contrasting business models in the spaza shop sector, and compared foreign-run businesses with South African businesses. The article below argues for a two-pronged policy that would formalise larger shops whilst permitting and encouraging informal micro and survivalist businesses.

Since about 2005, there has been fierce competition between South African spaza operators and businesses that are run by immigrants. New research has sought to understand the nature of this competition and the impact of the seeming dominance of foreign businesses over their South African counterparts. Whilst the decline of South African spaza shops has long been predicted because they appear to be uncompetitive, the precise nature of this uncompetitiveness has been poorly understood. Such knowledge would touch on possible government efforts, including legislation and support programmes, to bolster South African spaza (and other) entrepreneurship.

Spaza shops are small grocery shops or convenience stores. (The name *spaza* derives from township slang meaning an imitation of a real shop.) For decades spaza shops have played an important role as retailers of household grocery items in township communities. They are also important incubators of entrepreneurship, providing the business foundations for generations of South African families whilst bringing additional income to households. These small shops trade items that are regularly in demand by the locals and that can be easily acquired from wholesalers or distributors. The core items are: bread, milk, grain staples, cool-drinks, soap, cigarettes and alcohol.

The majority of spaza shops are unregistered, informal businesses and mostly do not adhere to the municipal rules for conducting business in residential areas. In the past, research on the spaza market has focused on two sets of issues: first, the entrepreneurial characteristics (or deficiencies) of spaza operators; secondly, the impact of external factors on these businesses, in particular competition from supermarkets.

The actual size and composition of the South African spaza market is poorly understood. Data from StatsSA's Labour Force Survey (2007) indicate that spaza shops account for 6.6% of self-employment, whilst 9.2% of home-based self-employed persons operate spazas. In terms of current

labour force estimates, this means that approximately 145 000 persons rely on spaza shops. An industry trade source, spazanews.co.za, claims that the spaza sector comprises more than 100 000 enterprises with a collective annual turnover of R7 billion (US\$700 million).

A micro-enterprise survey conducted by the [Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation](http://SustainableLivelihoodsFoundation.org) in eight urban sites over the period 2010-2013 identified 1 130 spaza shops amongst a combined population of approximately 325 000 (98 000 households), i.e. approximately one spaza shop for every 86 households. Detailed interviews were conducted with 950 shopkeepers. Almost 50% (470) were operated by foreign entrepreneurs and their employees. This finding confirms various academic studies and press reports that foreign business owners have established a strong foothold in the spaza sector.

Foreign, [in particularly Somali] shop keepers are more successful than South Africans because of the strength of their social networks, which provides them with access to labour and capital and enables collective purchasing and market domination.

The South African shopkeepers, in contrast, typically operate within a weak social network that often is limited to members of the immediate family who provide labour but little else.

The Somali entrepreneurial business model [in the sub-area of Delft] is primarily based on price competition based on collective procurement and large distribution networks. The network also enables shopkeepers to obtain important spaza products that cannot be obtained through wholesale stores but which are available on the black market, notably contraband cigarettes.

The contrasting models are manifest in businesses of very different sizes. Most Somali-run 'small' businesses appear to be big enough to be considered formal firms – while the South African shops are typically survivalist micro-enterprises. Unable to compete with the foreign-owned shops on price or scale, South African spaza shops have either closed, or have continued to trade but have had to diversify to alternative activities, such as the sale of alcohol or takeaway food or the establishment of arcade/game shops.

South Africa undoubtedly needs to foster entrepreneurship. This includes permitting legal immigrants to establish businesses (including spaza shops). Furthermore, the opportunity for poor township residents to procure cheaper foods from competitive outlets is a real benefit.

However, while we have focused on one geographical area, our research suggests that the general spaza sector is changing at such a rapid rate that it may have a significant and lasting negative impact on entrepreneurship and self-employment in the informal economy, at least in the home-based trade sector. However, the continued operation of the smaller spaza shops is important not only to address unemployment and poverty, but also to provide an entrepreneurial learning experience and the transfer of business skills to younger generations – an important benefit that needs to be nurtured.

An appropriate policy intervention would be to regulate the retail grocery trade in the townships – not to create regulatory barriers, but to ensure that businesses that are large and independent enough to formalise are indeed formalised. Parallel to this, opportunities could remain for smaller and/or more survivalist businesses to operate informally. Given advantages such as their spatial location (which secures niche markets in areas of a township) or reduced overheads due to being able to work at home, they could sustain a modest competitive advantage in serving local market niches.

The task facing policymakers thus is not to exclude the new generation of savvy entrepreneurs in the spaza sector. Rather, it is to ensure that businesses which grow beyond a certain size – those large enough to start negotiating price discounts and merchandising services from producers, to employ staff and to accumulate business assets – start to comply with the requirements of formalisation, whether they are run by foreigners or South Africans. For these shops it might mean having to relocate to the high street in compliance with municipal by-laws, registering staff, paying minimum wages and providing employee benefits, submitting VAT and income tax returns, and so forth (and with the owner residing off-premises, i.e. not within the shop itself).

Such a two-pronged policy that would formalise larger shops whilst permitting and encouraging informal micro and survivalist businesses would encourage successful entrepreneurship whilst providing a space for rekindling and nurturing informal micro or survivalist spaza shops.

Source: <http://www.econ3x3.org/article/why-are-foreign-run-spaza-shops-more-successful-rapidly-changing-spaza-sector-south-africa>

POLITICAL ISSUES

SACU's day of reckoning has arrived

The Southern Africa Scan newsletter has reported on regional integration, trade agreements and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in particular, on an on-going basis for the past four years. The edited article below is a significant early sign of fundamental change in this area. The 'so what' aspect of it is that Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (BLNS) are all completely financially dependent upon the SACU transfers, and if they were to stop, there would be an economic catastrophe in Swaziland and Lesotho (which are 60-70% dependent for revenues from SACU) and just a serious financial disaster in Namibia and Botswana, which are somewhat less dependent (30-40%). In Botswana, SACU has over the last few years become more important to the revenue of the country than diamonds, the country's main export.

As Professor Roman Grynberg of the [Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis](#) states: "As it stands at the moment, without real reform, the SACU revenue sharing formula is the single and most immediate impediment to the integration of southern Africa. The SADC free trade area can never deepen into a Customs Union and SACU can never widen to include countries like Mozambique under the current formula. It is in the long term interests of the BLNS to lead a real and radical reform of SACU, rather than to try to negotiate minor revision of the formula and wait until Pretoria, or worse still, the IMF, give the 'coup de grace' to this very profitable apartheid era formula and finally end the dysfunctional relationship it has created between the BLNS and South Africa". See here

<http://www.trademarksa.org/news/SACU-deadman-walking#.UpnkVae8FX8.twitter> for his full commentary; and expect the (extravagant) lifestyle and spending habits of the Swazi king to change.

South Africa has requested an urgent meeting with members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) for as early as February next year in what could be a make-or-break conference for the struggling union.

In July this year, a clearly frustrated Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies told Parliament that there had been little progress on a 2011 agreement intended to advance the region's development integration, and it was stifling its real economic development.

South Africa's payments to SACU currently amount to R48.3-billion annually

(US\$4.3 billion) — a substantial amount, considering the budget deficit is presently R146.9-billion (US\$14.6 billion) an estimated 4.5% of gross domestic product.

In the past, South Africa has had some room to reposition itself, but as Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan has pointed out, the South African fiscus has come under a lot of pressure as a result of factors such as the global slowdown, reduction in demand from countries such as China for commodities, and reduced demand from trade partners such as the European Union.

South Africa, which according to research data, last year contributed 1.26% of its GDP, or about 98% of the pool of customs and excise duties that are shared between union countries including Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia, wants a percentage of this money to be set aside for regional and industrial development.

The four countries receive 55% of the proceeds, and are greatly dependent on this money, which makes up between 25% and 60% of their budget revenue. South Africa has very little direct benefit, except when it comes to exporting to these countries. It receives few imports.

Efforts to change the revenue-sharing arrangement so that money can be set aside for regional development would result in less money going into the coffers of these countries.

It would also mean that a portion of the revenue that South Africa's SACU partners now receive with no strings attached would in future include restrictions on how it is spent.

A source close to the department said adjustments to the revenue-sharing arrangement and the promotion of regional and industrial development were issues on which the South African government was not willing to budge.

So seriously is South Africa viewing the lack of progress on the 2011 agreement, a document prepared for Cabinet discussion includes pulling out of SACU as one of its options, a source told the *Mail & Guardian*.

This could not be confirmed by the government, but two senior sources said South Africa was very aware of the dependence of its neighbours on income from the customs union, in particular Swaziland and Lesotho, and the impact its collapse could have on these economies.

Professor Jannie Rossouw of the University of South Africa's department of economics believes a new revenue-sharing arrangement is essential for the long-term sustainability of SACU countries.

He also said that South Africa's contribution as it presently stands should be

recognised as development aid and treated as such by the international community.

Between 2002 and 2013, total transfers amounted to 0.92% of South Africa's GDP, which exceeds the international benchmark of 0.7% set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, he said in his research.

"It is noteworthy that South Africa transfers nearly all customs collections to SACU countries. Total collection since 2002 amounted to about R249 billion (US\$24.9 billion), while transfers to SACU were about R242-billion (US\$ 24.2 billion)," Rossouw said. The South African Revenue Service (Sars) recognises that inclusion of trade with SACU would have a substantial impact on South Africa's official trade balance.

South Africa's total trade deficit for 2012 was R116.9-billion (US\$11.6 billion) and, according to Sars, had trade with the union been included, it would have been much reduced to R34.6-billion (US\$3.4 billion).

The South African government is trying diplomacy as its first option. A senior government source said issues around SACU made up a large part of talks last week between Botswana and South Africa on the establishment of co-operative agreements on trade, transport and border co-operation.

Source: <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-11-29-00-SACUs-day-of-reckoning-has-arrived>

A new platform for social justice and accountability

On 28 November a new platform for social justice and accountability was initiated in South Africa. Called Awethu it is described by the interim steering committee as a "meeting of [more than 40] civil society organisations" planning to "deepen democracy in South Africa, to make politicians, of whatever political persuasion, accountable to ordinary South Africans, to ultimately open a space for South Africans to have a say in the way the country is led".

For details see here <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-11-29-people-have-the-power-awethu/> and here <http://www.cls.uct.ac.za/news/?id=77&t=int>

Given South Africa's history of civic organisation and mobilisation during the 'struggle' years, this development is one to watch.

SOCIAL ISSUES

New study again proves worth of social grants in South Africa

South Africa's "bloated welfare state" tends to attract a great deal of disapproval from the chattering classes. Part of what drives this is the number of urban myths in circulation about the abuse of the social grant system: that teenagers [fall pregnant](#) in order to access child support grants, for instance; or Sky News' egregious claim that South African women deliberately drink alcohol during pregnancy in order to subsequently claim a disability grant for the child.

When the Daily Maverick [debunked](#) that one, we quoted African Centre for Migration & Society researcher Marlise Richter: "Research has consistently found a correlation between social grants and positive childhood development."

The new study, published in renowned journal *The Lancet Public Health*, shows now that there is also a correlation between social grants and reduced instances of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents: particularly the taking on of a 'sugar daddy' who swaps food, money or school fees for sex. The study, led by the University of Oxford's Dr Lucie Cluver, interviewed South African adolescents between 10 and 18 years old, living in both urban and rural districts, between 2009 and 2012.

The reason for targeting young people in the study is because they are at the heart of sub-Saharan Africa's HIV landscape. Of the 1.8 million new HIV infections in 2011, the report records, 41% were in people aged between 15 and 24 – and the prevalence rate was three times higher in girls than in boys.

Social grants available for children in South Africa are twofold: the child support grant (R280 (US\$28) per month in 2012) is available to the primary caregivers of children who earn below a certain amount per month. The take-up of this grant is far more extensive than the second form, the foster child grant (R770 (US\$77) per month), which is available to the primary caregivers of children legally in their care.

Of the four districts chosen for the study, two were rural and two were urban, within Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. All had an antenatal HIV prevalence of more than 30%, based on the national HIV testing of pregnant women.

All in all, 3,401 adolescents were interviewed over 2009-2010 and then again over 2011-2012, and asked questions about risky sexual behaviour. Types of risky sexual behaviour included transactional sex (having

sex in exchange for food, shelter, transport or money); "age-disparate sex" (having a sexual partner more than 5 years older than the adolescent); unprotected sex (not always using condoms); having two or more partners in the past year; and sex while drunk or after using drugs.

The results showed that there were correlations between types of risky sexual behaviour engaged in. In other words, participants who had age-disparate sex were more likely to have transactional sex than those who didn't. Participants who had transactional sex were more likely to have had sex while drunk or after taking drugs than those who didn't have transactional sex. Participants who had age-disparate sex were also more likely to have had multiple sexual partners. "All risky behaviours increased with age, for both girls and boys", the study notes.

The researchers found that receiving a social grant resulted in a reduction in certain types of risky sexual behaviour. In households not receiving any child grants, for instance, 5.5% of girls had had transactional sex in the past year, as compared with 2.5% of girls in households which *did* receive a grant. When researchers returned a year or more later, those figures stood at 6.2% and 2.7% respectively. In households which hadn't received any child grants, 4.3% of girls had begun an age-disparate sexual relationship in the past year. In houses which were given such a grant, that figure dropped to just 1.2%.

Dr Cluver explained the significance of the findings to the Daily Maverick in simpler terms. "The most striking finding is that our social grants are reducing HIV risk behaviour for teenage girls," Cluver said. "Girls who get a child support grant or foster child grant are half less likely to have transactional sex (in exchange for food, school fees or money) and two thirds less likely to have a boyfriend who is 5 or more years older than them. These are major HIV-infection risks, and parts of the reason why our Minister of Health says that 'sugar daddies' are one of the greatest risks to girls today."

Such 'sugar daddies' are more likely to be HIV-positive, Cluver notes, and young girls are less likely to be able to negotiate condom use with them. "This is part of the reason why we see up to five times the rates of HIV in teenage girls compared to teenage boys," Cluver said, citing a Human Sciences Resource Council report from 2012.

It's important to note that social grants are not a comprehensive magic bullet here. The study found that receiving a grant did not significantly affect the likelihood of

participants to have had unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, or sex while drunk or after taking drugs. "So [social grants] don't stop teenagers from doing stupid teenage stuff," Cluver summed up. The study also found that most of the significant effects of social grants on sexual behaviour are limited to female adolescents. For boys, access to grants were associated with a slightly reduced incidence of multiple partners, but not sustainably so. There were "no other significant effects" for the sexual behaviour of boys.

"[Social grants] do reduce this one key risk - getting this small amount of monthly money for the whole household means that girls don't have to choose their sexual partners through economic need," Cluver said.

It's also significant that the study identified no *adverse* effects of cash transfers for adolescents (whereas in Malawi, for instance, there were short-term increases in risky sex for men given cash transfers in a trial). The study reports: "Given the strong evidence of nutritional, educational, and other benefits of child-focused cash transfers, it is encouraging to identify no harmful effects on risky sexual behaviours in this sample".

For Cluver, one of the most striking findings of the study was the debunking of the popular understanding of the relationship between young girls and sugar daddies.

"When you read in the newspapers about sugar daddies, it's often talked about like it's a lifestyle choice that girls make: they want luxuries or cellphones or nice clothes," Cluver said. "But these findings really tell us something different. That if we give a small amount of regular money for survival, girls will choose *not* to have a sugar daddy. If we really want to reduce HIV incidence for our teenage girls, we can't just tell them not to take risks. We have to make it possible for them to do so."

With this further evidence of the utility of social grants in hand, Cluver says it's essential to work harder to make sure that eligible children are accessing the grants. "Although a huge amount of work has been done on this, a Children's Institute report last year found that 30% of eligible children are not getting a grant, and these are likely to be the most vulnerable to HIV infection."

It's Cluver's belief that the grants should be scaled up, not down. "We already know from a UNICEF study last year that these grants improve education and child development," she says. "Now we know that they can also protect teenagers from HIV."

Source:

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-11-27-new-study-again-proves-worth-of-social-grants-in-south-africa/>

A solid-looking piece of research that confirms the importance of social protection measures and highlights the nuances of adolescent girls' sexual behaviour and choices which is directly linked to HIV prevalence.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Making the case for Southern Africa's dryland forests

On 22 and 23 October 2013 South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) [Governance of Africa's Resources Programme](#) and the [Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources \(FANR\) Directorate of the Southern African Development Community](#) (SADC) co-hosted a conference titled 'Best practice in the governance of Africa's dryland forests: Implications for Southern Africa'. The event aimed to galvanise support for the dryland forests of Southern Africa among the public and private sectors, civil society and development partners.

Close to half of the African continent is covered by drylands, spread over 15 countries of the Sahel, and 15 countries of East and Southern Africa. These ecosystems support over 60% of Africa's people with a wide range of environmental goods and services, many of which are derived from the region's dryland forests and woodlands.

The value of dryland forests stretches beyond the products they provide; beyond timber and even non-timber forest products (NTFPs). There is increasing global recognition of the multiple ecosystem services provided by forests. In addition to sequestering carbon, forests provide services related to the protection of watersheds and biodiversity.

If properly valued and sustainably managed, Africa's dryland forests have the potential to contribute to economic development, poverty reduction and food security. However, these ecosystems are exposed to a range of acute threats. Environmental challenges including encroaching desertification and climate change-related phenomena are further compounded by governance-related ones. Moreover, the contribution of forests and woodland resources to regional economies and livelihoods is not sufficiently recognised. This has led to the marginalisation of the forestry sector throughout the region.

These very real challenges threaten to obscure a repository of best practice examples that exist across the dryland forests of sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Southern Africa is well-placed to build on examples such as the Great Green Wall Initiative – a mosaic of sustainable land management practices across the Sahelian belt that has managed to galvanise the support of policymakers, civil society, farmers and implementation partners alike. Similarly, best practice examples exist in East and Southern Africa, though these have not yet attained the global prominence of those in the Sahel.

It is with this in mind that speakers at the joint SAIIA-SADC conference shared lessons and best practice examples in the governance of dryland forests from Southern Africa, the Sahel and East Africa.

The event was designed so as to add impetus to the SADC Forestry Strategy 2010-2020, with panel discussions based on priority themes identified in the Strategy, namely:

1. climate change mitigation and adaptation;
2. forests, water and biodiversity;
3. energy supply and poverty reduction;
4. the trade in forest products; and
5. transfrontier areas and participatory forest management.

See <http://www.saiia.org.za/events/making-the-case-for-southern-africas-dryland-forests> here for the conference resources including keynote speeches, papers and presentations.

Scenario planning yielding no different results than those of expert opinions

In a study recently published in [Ecology and Society](#), [[Stockholm Resilience Centre](#)] researchers Rebecka Malinga and Line Gordon, together with colleagues from Stockholm university and University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, have studied whether the use of planning scenario planning provides other insights in the selection of ecosystem services in changing landscapes.

Using an agricultural landscape in South Africa they compared different sets of ecosystem services selected by four different sources: stakeholders participating in scenario planning exercises, experts who were given access to the same scenarios, a third group of experts who had not read the scenarios but have in-depth knowledge of the study area, and a list of ecosystem services derived from literature.

The results showed that the list of ecosystem services selected by experts and

the scenario stakeholders were overall the same, indicating that knowledge of a study area gained through the scenario exercise is not very different from that of experts working actively in the area.

“Scenario development takes a lot of resources, and carrying out scenario planning solely for the purpose of identifying ecosystem services might be cost ineffective,” Rebecka Malinga warns.

The main objective for the study was to develop a set of qualitative scenarios in the Upper Thukela region in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where a future extended ecosystem services assessment is planned. The scenarios were developed as story lines of how the area would change until 2030. Three scenarios were developed.

In the first, called “Equal Environment”, the national government was devoted to sustaining the natural resource base of the country and invest substantially in the rural countryside. For commercial farmers, however, the situation had become more difficult due to higher costs and taxes.

In the second scenario, “Diverging climate”, the area had benefited from climate change, although many smallholder farmers struggled with low productivity due to few rural investments. In the third scenario, “Adaptive Collaboration”, the Upper Thukela region had suffered from extreme weather events but the government were unable to cover the losses. However, strong bonds between local farmers and NGOs create a new way of dealing with the hardships and collaboration in agricultural production turned out successful for many smallholder farmers.

Based on these scenarios, lists of ecosystem services considered to be most important for the region were selected by the scenario participants and the experts in addition to a list extracted from a literature review.

Although the scenarios failed to produce other insights than what the experts did, Malinga and her colleagues highlight several advantages with participatory scenario planning. Above all, it can help a community to push its development in the right direction.

Source:

<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/research/research-news/11-18-2013-theres-a-reason-why-they-are-called-experts.html>

A wonderfully affirming piece of research for those who believe in the benefits of participatory scenario planning despite the fact that it takes more time and resources than a “desk top” analysis. Some of the scenario planning benefits mentioned in this study include;

- *it is a useful tool to learn about some of the major fears and expectations about the future among people in the area.*
- *it explored key trends and uncertainties and identified major potential changes to people and to ecosystem services in the region over the next 20 years*
- *it improved the understanding of events and processes that may either challenge the project or provide opportunities for it,*
- *encouraged project participants to think about factors that might alter the expected development path, and to consider a number of interacting driving forces and how they are linked to ecosystem service generation through time, and*
- *by identifying opportunities and threats that might present themselves in the future, it helped a community push its development in a more desirable direction.*

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION ISSUES

Survey suggests MOOCs are failing to educate the poor

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) may not be reaching the poor, but instead be catering to the rich and well-educated in developing nations, research shows.

A global survey of almost 35,000 MOOC students engaged in courses of the online education service [Coursera](http://www.coursera.org) found that the majority were already well-educated and employed, and mostly males.

The survey's results, published [on 21 November] in a letter to *Nature*, suggests that MOOCs reinforce the advantages of the rich rather than educating those who most need access to free education.

According to the survey, conducted by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, United States, more than 80% of MOOC students already had a college degree and 44% had a postgraduate qualification.

"If you look into what some of the commentators say about what MOOCs could do, the goal is revolution in education access. They have said things like: 'Nothing has the power to unlock a billion more brains than the massive online courses'," Gayle Christensen, co-author of the survey, tells

SciDev.Net. "So we looked at the data to see if that is the case. At this point, MOOCs are giving more to those who already have a lot."

This disparity proved particularly stark in Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa, where almost 80% of MOOC students came from the wealthiest and most-educated six per cent of the population.

The letter in *Nature* says that better access to technology and improved basic education are needed worldwide before MOOCs can live up to their promise.

The survey also found that men make up about two-thirds of all MOOC students in countries outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a group of mostly rich nations.

Claire Davenport, director of commercial, operations and international development at [FutureLearn](http://www.futurelearn.com) a company owned by UK distance learning institute the Open University, and a MOOC provider says: "The whole point about MOOCs being free and not requiring previous experience or qualifications is about the democratisation of education and broadening access.

"Almost everything about these courses is actually about trying to make them accessible to as many people as possible," she says. "Obviously, in areas where there is no Internet access, then online learning is going to be more of a challenge. But an interesting thing about MOOCs is that it's very possible for people to share a computer," Davenport says.

Source:

<http://www.scidev.net/global/education/news/survey-suggests-moocs-are-failing-to-educate-the-poor.html>

A sobering article for those who think that massive open online courses and the role of technology in education are a silver-bullet for the wicked problems of educational backlog and youth unemployment in Africa. However, if Africa is to leapfrog into deindustrialised economies it is exactly this technology that will be required.

For an interesting article on deindustrialisation, that has begun to set in much sooner, and at far lower levels of per capita income in the developing world, see here <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/dani-rodrik-developing-economies--missing-manufacturing#iUjqZcKqoaLK7IEH.99>