



Welcome to the PAN e-newsletter Olive Shisana, CEO, HSRC

In South Africa, as in other parts of Africa and the globe, the demand for policy-relevant evidence is increasing. In order for an appropriate response to existing and evolving socio and economic challenges, timely, accurate and relevant research is required to enable policy makers to take forward a social justice agenda.

In recognition of this and in order to foster a culture of evidence-based policy making (EBPM), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) developed the Policy Action Network (PAN), a network aimed at establishing an African-wide community of practice

of stakeholders and role-players in various thematic areas who support EBPM.

This e-newsletter from PAN is the first of a series of newsletters and is designed to stimulate interest in the broader community in EBPM. It contains a range of resources including case studies, feature articles on how evidence has informed policy, events and 'how-to' information on getting research into policy, and most importantly getting policy into action. As you engage with decision making processes and engender collective action we hope this e-newsletter will be of use.



Olive Shisana, CEO, HSRC

Case Study: Research, Advocacy and Change: policy reform around Outcomes Based Education (OBE)

A constant stream of evidence-based research, ongoing advocacy and an increasing receptiveness to policy reform are posed as some of the key contributing factors behind the shift away from Outcomes Based Education (OBE) to the new Curriculum. Dr Linda Chisolm, Special Advisor to the Minister of Basic Education, was interviewed by PAN and noted that the roles assumed by different actors all had a bearing on

the demand for and uptake of evidence-based research on the impact of OBE.

Growing streams of research

The role played by research in shaping attitudes towards outcomes based education and Curriculum 2005 dates back to its implementation in 1997. From the outset, Johnathan Jansen's paper on 'Why OBE will fail?' threw light on shortcomings of the approach

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This newsletter aims to inform policy-makers, researchers and development practitioners in South Africa of emerging developments, results and good practice in the application of evidence-based policy-making. It is supported by the HSRC, and the Programme for Support to Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD), a partnership between the Presidency and the EU.

➔ For more information go to www.pan.org.za.

➔ For contributions contact vfichardt@hsrc.ac.za.



School-children wave from a school bus. The post-election government has highlighted education as a major priority. Research, advocacy and greater receptiveness to change are likely to have played a role in policy reform around Outcomes Based Education (OBE). **Source:** Human Sciences Research Council

from a technical perspective, and underscored the political impetus behind the change to the new curriculum, popularly known as Curriculum 2005. This paper sparked a debate among universities and technikons, within provincial education departments, among NGOs, at workshops and conferences and seminars. Added to this, was the 1999 Report of the President's Education Initiative which asserted that Outcomes-based Education was not working.

By 2000, the Minister of Education at the time, Kader Asmal, called for a review of Curriculum 2005 proposing changes to the curriculum as outlined in the research. More evidence generated from the Ministerial Review Committee (2000) found that implementing the curriculum had been held back by a host of challenges including excessive use of jargonised language, a flawed curriculum design, inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers, lack of emphasis

“Continued research contributed to the critical mass of evidence reinforcing the message that OBE was not working...”

on textbooks, inadequate district support, and too-short implementation time-frames. Several internal and external evaluations were also held in the period leading up to the ministerial review. However, neither the trade unions, nor the ANC were receptive to these changes at this juncture, citing ‘a reversal of the legacy of the first post-apartheid Minister of Education and a return to the past’ amongst other reasons. Eventually, however, with Asmal's backing, the curriculum was revised to a more hybrid version of the OBE, which was still classified within the OBE framework but without all of the characteristic features.

Once findings from the initial research filtered into the public do-

main, many of the issues were picked up and further elaborated on in subsequent research. For instance, TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) Studies also highlighted the low maths and literacy outcomes of South African students, further indicating the need to address the implementation of the curriculum. In addition, continued research by universities and science councils contributed to the critical mass of evidence reinforcing the message that OBE was not working.

Shortly before the elections in 2009, Naledi Pandor then Minister of Education commissioned a second report to examine implementation of the curriculum. This time around, the teacher unions were more receptive to change. By the time Angie Motshekga took over as Minister of Education, she was also persuaded of the need for a move away from outcomes-based education.

Actors

At the heart of the policy shift are the positions assumed by the key players, namely, researchers, trade unions, the press as well as the ANC in driving the demand for and generating evidence about the impact of OBE. For instance, both the press and the ANC played a big role in getting research in to the public domain – through consistent and regular press coverage on education in the country. Linked to this, is the stance assumed by key opponents of OBE, who pro-actively called for reforms to OBE. Mamphela Ramphele, former UCT Vice Chancellor, called for a death certificate to be issued to OBE after the 2008 Matric results were published. Graeme Bloch, DBSA's Education Specialist, was also instrumental in steering the ‘Education Roadmap’ Process with a focus on improving accountability and social

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mobilisation in the Education Sector. They both played a strong media and advocacy role in calling for reforms to the OBE.

Processes within the unions, namely, SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union), NAPTOSA (National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa) and Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie (SAOU) also contributed to shifting the tide around OBE. They were involved in implementing Curriculum 2005 and were party to the revisions of Curriculum 2005. For instance, SADTU commissioned a study on the impact of OBE on teachers which showed that it increased their workload. Furthermore, the ELRC (Education Labour Relations Council) also commissioned a study highlighting difficulties in implementing the OBE system. Similarly, the Unions were exposed to research on OBE from outside the country and were also able to draw on the experiences of their workers.

By 2009, there was far more research and advocacy and an even greater

receptiveness to change both by unions and by the ANC which was key in catalysing policy reform for the OBE system.

Linking research agenda to policy

Criticisms made at the very start of implementing OBE, were embodied in the Report to the Ministerial Review Committee (2000) and this served to show that the curriculum had been compromised. Add to this, a constant stream of steady research, on-going advocacy coupled with a ruling Minister (Angie Motshekga) and party more open to acting on evidence, were key to catalysing the policy shift away from OBE.

For research to be relevant to policy it needs to have a clear research agenda, which is directly linked to a policy issue. As research findings emerge, a well-thought out and

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planned advocacy strategy will greatly increase the likelihood of its uptake and dissemination into other fora. Research can happen but there needs to be a research agenda.

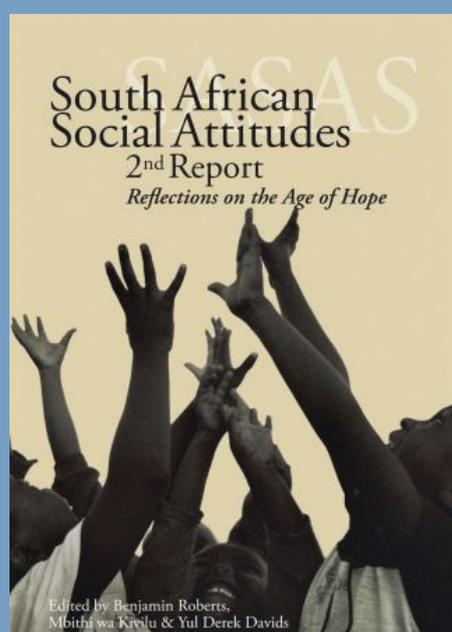
This article was based on an interview with Linda Chisholm and it aimed to explore some of the processes through which research informed the decision to change from OBE to the new Schooling Curriculum. The main argument being that different role-players assumed different roles and that the shift was as a result of a combination of factors, namely research, advocacy and a greater receptiveness to the message.

by Rahel S. Otieno

About Dr. Linda Chisholm:

Dr Linda Chisholm is currently seconded from her position as Director in ESSD (Education Science and Skills Development) to the Ministry of Education where she is a special advisor to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga. She holds an MA from the University of London, and a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. [Read more...](#)

Applying Research to Policy



South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS): monitoring the social fabric of South African Society

Over the last fifteen years, a multitude of national and sub-national studies have provided rich information about the characteristics of South African society. However, much less is known about how South Africans feel about their world and themselves. In response, the HSRC has been conducting the nationally representative South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) on an annual basis since 2003. Designed as

a time series, SASAS is increasingly providing a unique, long-term account of the speed and direction of change in underlying public values and the social fabric of modern South Africa. It focuses on variations in culture and social structure within the country and aspires to be an instrument for identifying and interpreting long-term shifts in social circumstances and values, rather than simply monitoring short-term changes.

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Through SASAS, the country has become a formal member of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). By being a member of this programme, SASAS has been able to add an international perspective to the national study of South African attitudes. This allows them to continually question whether South African society is exceptional by identifying commonalities and differences in values with other nations. To date, topics have included national identity, citizenship, work orientation, the role of government, leisure time and sports, religion and social inequalities.

Re-launching the survey series

On 7th September 2010, a public seminar was held to celebrate several important new developments in relation to the survey series. The event marked the launch of the SASAS website (www.hsrc.ac.za/sasas) and the placing of the first four rounds of data (2003-2006) in the public domain.

The portal will also serve as a platform where academics, scholars and other stakeholders get a range of SASAS

“SASAS is increasingly providing a unique, long-term account of the speed and direction of change in underlying public values of modern South Africa”

related information. It also celebrated the release of the new publication entitled South African Social Attitudes – The 2nd Report: Reflections on the Age of Hope, which was edited by Benjamin Roberts, Mbithi wa Kivilu and Yul Derek Davids and published by the HSRC Press.

At the seminar, Sir Roger Jowell reflected on the value of national and cross-national attitudinal data. Sir Jowell is the Director of the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys at City University (London), where he heads the European Social Survey. Having assisted in designing SASAS, he also serves as a special advisor to the project team. Ben Roberts, the coordinator of the SASAS series, provided an overview of the political,

socio-economic and societal values of our citizens and how they have been changing over the course of the last decade.

Hard copies of the book are available at leading booksellers, while the full eBook can be freely downloaded from the [HSRC Press website](http://www.hsrc.ac.za) in PDF format.

The data collected in this study can assist policy makers in:

- Monitoring evolving social, economic and political values among South Africans
- Anticipating or predicting responses to inform decision and policy-making processes
- Informing academic and political debate, and so, allowing users to measure and interpret changes over time in people's values
- Providing evidence on the speed and direction of change in underlying public values over time

The South African Child Gauge

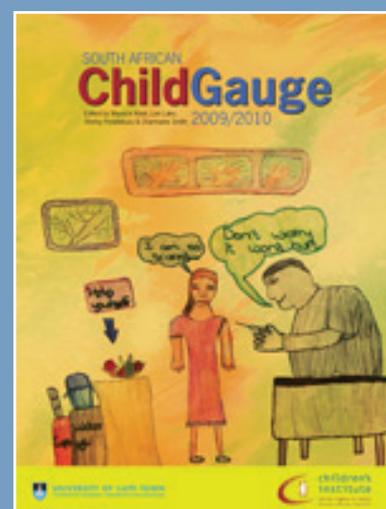
The South African Child Gauge is the only publication that gives an annual snap-shot of the status of children in the country.

Published by [the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town](http://www.childrensinstitute.org), the Gauge provides reliable and accessible child-centred information - essential for informing the design and targeting of policies, programmes and interventions, and tracking progress towards the realisation of children's rights. It's focus is on the theme of 'Healthy chil-

dren: from survival to optimal development' and it presents:

- a series of essays on South Africa's progress in realizing children's rights to health, an update on recent legislative developments affecting child health;
- a data section on key indicators on children's socio-economic rights
- as well as a pull-out poster with data on various child health and related indicators

[Download your free copy...](#)



Policy Brief

No sign of a dependency culture in South Africa

Authors: Michael Noble and Phakama Ntshongwana

Publisher: HSRC

Source: <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Document-2716.phtml>

This briefing is based on the HSRC's 2006 Social Attitudes Survey and aims to explore the existence of a so-called 'dependency' culture among the unemployed and social grants recipients. It is based on a collaboration between The Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). It seeks to inform the policy context

around social security in South Africa. By providing the evidence to show that poor people demonstrate a greater attachment to the labour market than the non-poor, it challenges the notion that the provision of social grants will rear a 'dependency culture' among the unemployed and recipients of social grants. It suggests that both groups of people are interested in and are motivated to find work.

It also provides the evidence to show that:

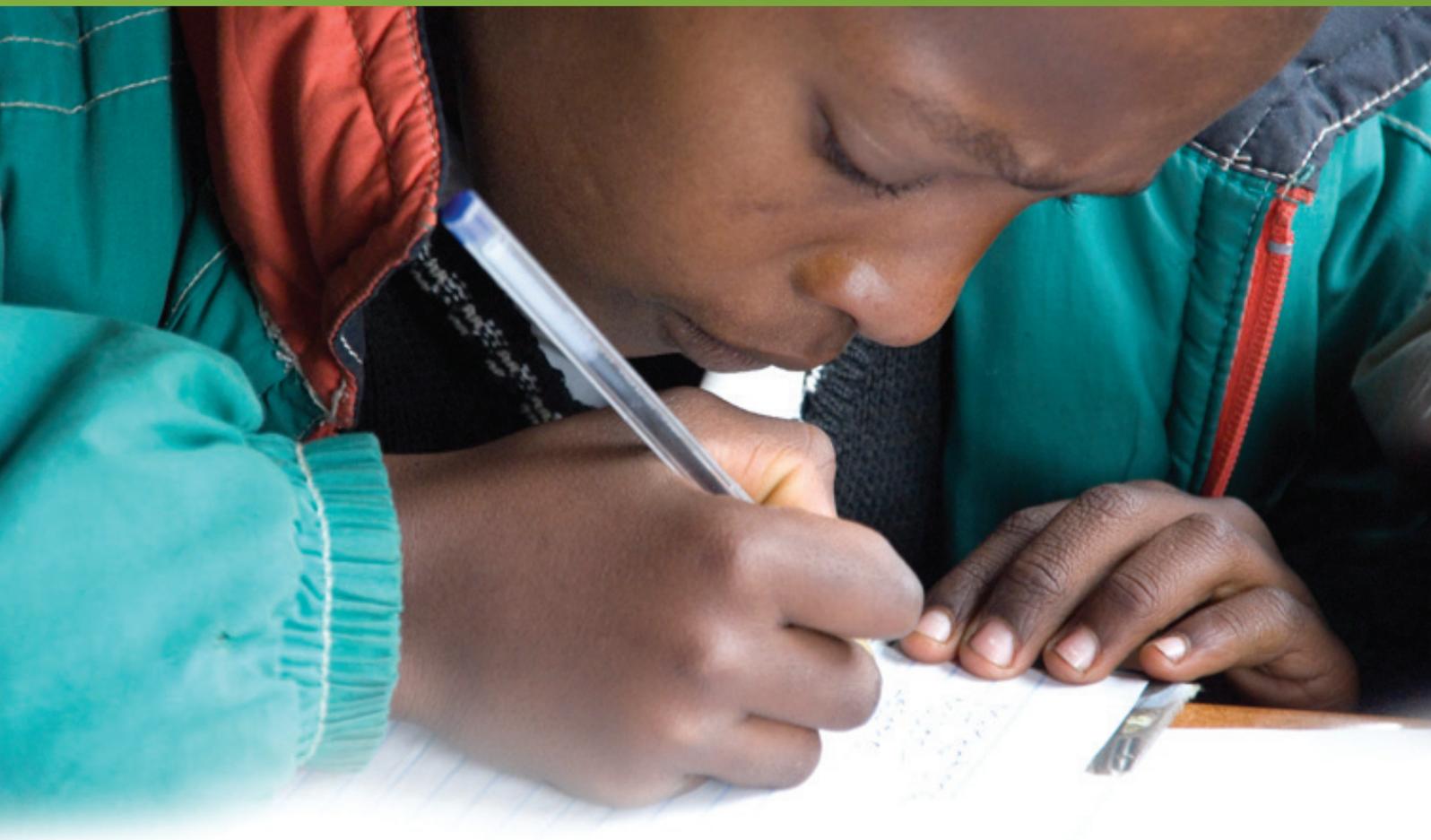
- among the poor, having a job is perceived to be better than claiming grants

- work is valued for its social integration role and helps to overcome feelings of isolation
- the Child Support Grant does not discourage people from seeking work

Hence, it finds no evidence to suggest that social grants generate a culture of dependency. Ultimately, the most important factor in reducing people's chances of finding employment are the structural conditions of the labour market, as opposed to a reluctance to finding work and choosing, instead, to rely on state support.

Systematic Reviews: what are they?

What are systematic reviews?	Systematic reviews are an approach for rigorous and unbiased appraisal of existing research to draw out findings.
What do systematic reviews involve?	The first step is mapping all the evidence on a question. This requires a systematic approach to finding both published and grey literature. These studies are then reviewed for their quality. The results are drawn together to produce an overall picture of the evidence.
Where have systematic reviews been used?	They have been used extensively in the medical field by the Cochrane Collaboration – which provides a leading resource for systematic reviews in health care. Read more..... The Campbell Collaboration has created a similar collaboration for social science. Find out more... The UK Government has used systematic reviews widely for policy making. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has commissioned a range of systematic reviews on topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'What is the evidence of the relationship between education, skills and growth in low income countries?' and • 'Under what circumstances do the provision of services by the private and not for profit sectors improve the health of the poorest?' Read more...
How long do they take?	These reviews can take 6-24 months, often involving several researchers which makes them resource intensive and very thorough. In a future edition we will highlight a less rigorous but quicker version called Rapid Evidence Assessments (and training is being run in those from 3-5 November 2010, This training is being organised by the PSPPD)
Who would use systematic reviews?	Government Departments addressing critical developmental questions where they want rigorous evidence to develop an appropriate policy, approach or methodology.
Further resources on Systematic Reviews	The University of the Free State supported by the PSPPD recently organized a training programme in systematic reviews by the Campbell Collaboration. The report is available on the PAN website .
Who can I contact about systematic reviews?	For further details about systematic reviews contact Professor Frikkie Booysen at booyenf.EKW@ufs.ac.za , or Julia Littell at jlittell@brynmawr.edu .



Spotlight on the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)

This Department was established after the 2009 elections and became effective in April 2010 with the appointment of the new Director General, Dr Sean Phillips. The Department is spearheading several elements related to evidence-based policy making as follows:

- A strategic approach where government focuses on 12 outcomes that will drive the change agenda. This approach aims to ensure that there is progress on the critical areas of South Africa's development
- The use of evidence to advance these outcomes, which includes developing a clear theory of change and developing a hierarchy of indicators and targets
- Strengthening the Government's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system so that evidence is be-

ing generated about what works, where change is needed, learning from that change and problem-solving to address the challenges

The role of knowledge management

The Department sees knowledge management and research as a key component, to help develop evidence of what should be done, and to learn from experience in South Africa and from elsewhere. For instance, a number of 'Outcome Facilitators' have been appointed to: (i) support coordinating Ministries in developing the delivery agreements that will plan how to achieve outcomes; (ii) support monitoring and evaluating progress, and problem-solving.

Furthermore, a large section of this department will be devoted to data management, to support the monitoring and evaluation system.

Challenges

One of the challenges is to ensure that a clear theory of change underlies how the outcomes are to be realised. This will be addressed during the first iteration, with improvements being made to the delivery agreements each year. Another challenge is effectively tying this process to the budget cycle so that the outcomes are directly linked to the budget. In order to address this, from 2011 the revision of the delivery agreements will be linked to the budget cycle. Lastly, this process has to ensure that there is evidence to back the targets, and that the targets and indicators are well formulated. This will be a dynamic process – with improvements being made over time.

For information on key targets from the Minister's Performance Agreements and the Government's Programme of Action visit [their website...](#)

Announcements

Global Symposium: The First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR) - Science to Accelerate Universal Health Coverage. 16-19 November 2010, Montreux, Switzerland: Researchers, policy-makers, funders, and other stakeholders representing diverse constituencies will gather in Montreux, Switzerland to share evidence, identify significant knowledge gaps, and set a research agenda that reflects the needs of low and middle-income countries. [Read more...](#)

Call for proposals: AusAID-DFID-3ie call for systematic reviews: Grants for new evidence on what works for the poor: A call for proposals for systematic reviews to strengthen international capacity for pro-poor evidence-based policy making. Apply before: 9 am GMT, Monday, November 29, 2010. [Read more...](#)

Global forum on agriculture policies for agricultural development, poverty reduction and food security, 29 - 30 November 2010: Theme: 'Policies for Agricultural Development, Poverty Reduction and Food Security.' OECD Conference Centre, Paris, France. [Read more...](#)

Call for abstracts: HEPNet Conference 2010, National Responses to Communicable & Non-Communicable Diseases: Health Economics, Policy and Health Systems Considerations, 29th November to 1st December 2010, Abuja, Nigeria: Members are invited to present on topics related to how different health systems and policies respond to communicable and non-communicable diseases and related socio-economic considerations across different areas. [Read more...](#)

National Conference: 6th PHASA (Public Health Association of South Africa) 2010 Conference, 29th November to 1st December, 2010, East London, South Africa,

The theme for the 6th Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) [<http://www.phasa.org.za>] National Conference is 'Healthy environments, healthy people and public health advocacy' Registration for this conference is now open. [Read more about the conference...](#)

International Conference: The World Social Security Forum 2010, 29th November to 4th December 2010, Cape Town, South Africa. An opportunity to share knowledge, recognize good practices and discuss key challenges and innovative strategies for Dynamic Social Security. [Read more...](#)

National Conference: National conference on bringing evidence into public health policy, 10 - 11 December 2010: A national conference organised by the Institute of Public Health (IPH), Bengaluru, in collaboration with the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), Antwerp, Belgium, on bringing evidence into public health policy. [Read more...](#)

Toward universal health coverage in Africa: Second conference of the African Health Economics and Policy Association (AfHEA), 15 - 19 March 2011: The overall theme of this conference, Universal coverage, is understood to mean providing financial protection against health care costs for all, as well as ensuring access to quality health care for all when needed. [Read more...](#)

Resources

Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics.

Publisher: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)



This report seeks to explain why people are poor and why inequalities exist, as well as what can be done to rectify these injustices. Summarily, amongst a host of policy implications, it shows that:

- democracy needs not just free and fair elections, but also organized citizens, special types of state-citizen relations and pacts to deliver on distribution.

- where institutions tend to complement rather than substitute for one another – the cost of social policy and the burden of universal coverage are reduced when the chosen development strategy delivers high levels of employment.
- successful late-industrializing countries embraced more strategic forms of coordination, involving the state in multiple activities rather than merely the minimal market-enhancing roles of rule setting, regulation and stabilization. Such countries pursued policies and established institutions that not only allowed things to happen but also caused things to happen.

[Register to receive the report...](#)

The Evidence-based Policy in Development Network (ebpdn)

aims to establish a worldwide community of practice for think tanks, policy research institutes and similar organisations working in international development, to promote more evidence-based, pro-poor development policies. The ebpdn website (www.ebpdn.org) is designed to provide:

- knowledge on bridging research and policy;
- details of members of the network;
- a directory of training and advisory expertise;
- discussion forums;
- project areas;
- and a partnership brokering area.

[Visit their website](#)

This newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD), a partnership programme of the Presidency, Republic of SA and the European Union. The HSRC and PSPPD have attempted to make the information in this newsletter as accurate as possible and it is intended for personal and/or educational use only. It is provided in good faith without any express or implied warranty. The content of this newsletter can in no way be taken to reflect the views of these partners, including the HSRC.

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