

# PROGRAMME FOR LAND AND AGRARIAN STUDIES



“Celebrating ten years of research, training and policy engagement on land and agrarian reform, livelihoods, community-based natural resource management, and poverty”

A ten year review report 1995–2005



School of  
Government



# INTRODUCTION

All of our work has had a strong applied dimension, and PLAAS researchers have often engaged in policy debates



The Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. Over the last ten years we have undertaken research on land and agrarian reform, the changing composition of livelihoods and poverty dynamics in both rural and urban contexts, rural governance, community-based natural resource management, fisheries management, and linkages between land and water rights. All of our work has had a strong applied dimension, and PLAAS researchers have often engaged in policy debates and argued strongly in favour of particular objectives and ways to achieve them.

Recurring themes within PLAAS research are patterns of poverty and inequality, the character and distribution of property rights, and contested power relations, all of which are central to the task of socio-economic transformation after apartheid. These are complex aspects of social reality, and understanding their structure and the underlying causal processes at work is extremely challenging. We have striven to balance our concern for policy relevance and our commitment to social change with a strong emphasis on rigorous and theoretically well-informed scholarship.

We have also developed a post-graduate teaching programme in land and agrarian studies, the only one of its kind in the region, and delivered a wide range of short training courses for government officials and NGO workers.

In celebrating our 10th anniversary this year, we will be reflecting on whether or not we manage to live up to our mission, and asking what key questions and issues we should address in the decade to come.

## PLAAS: A BRIEF HISTORY

PLAAS is a constituent unit of the University of the Western Cape's School of Government, and was initiated in 1995 with a core grant from the Ford Foundation. This was renewed biannually until 2003. Ben Cousins was seconded from the Department of Anthropology and Sociology to establish a programme to train black applied social scientists in the land and agrarian reform sector, and to engage in policy-relevant research. Soon after its establishment, PLAAS began to provide short courses to government and NGO staff, in collaboration with the Land Tenure Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at Wits University. PLAAS researchers were soon contracted by the post-apartheid government to provide advice and support to a variety of policy processes, notably in relation to land restitution, tenure reform and agricultural policy. Since then PLAAS has seen steady growth and currently employs a staff of 22, of whom 15 are researchers, six with doctorates.



The core grant from the Ford Foundation will be phased out from October 2005, but in 2004 PLAAS received from the Foundation a sum of \$500 000 towards an endowment fund. Increasing the size of this endowment is the main focus of our current efforts to secure long-term sustainability. From 2003 the university has supported the salary of the PLAAS Director, and, from 2004, a senior lectureship post at PLAAS. All other positions are funded through grants from donors or partners.

## FUNDING, DONORS AND PARTNERS

Most income has been in the form of grants from international organisations

Income to PLAAS from grants, training fees, consultancies, and publications sales between July 1995 and December 2004 amounted to R42 million (see Figure 1). Since 1999 income has averaged around R6 million per annum.

Most income has been in the form of grants from international organisations. Key donors have been the Ford Foundation, Liberty Life Foundation, the International Development Research Centre of Canada, the Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation, the Foundation for Human Rights (with funds from the European Union), the Norwegian government, and the Department for International Development of the United

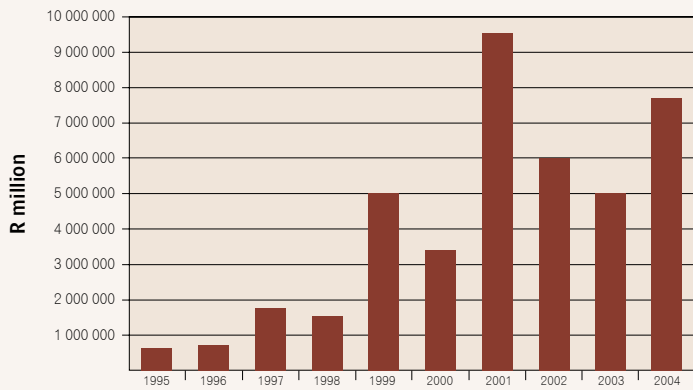


Figure 1: PLAAS income: 1995–2004

Kingdom. Smaller grants have been received from the European Union, the Land Bank, the Human Sciences Research Council, the German Development Agency (GTZ), the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (Directorate of Marine and Coastal Management), and the World Fish Centre of Denmark.

Training courses have also brought in funds. These have been commissioned by a range of clients, including the Department of Land Affairs, Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development, the National Land Committee of South Africa, the Environment and Development Agency, Women on Farms, and the Southern African office of the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

Significant funds have also been sourced through collaborative partnerships with other research institutions



Significant funds have also been sourced through collaborative partnerships with other research institutions. Longstanding international partners include the Environment Group at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, the Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM) and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre of the University of Manchester, the College of Fisheries Science at the University of Tromsø, the Centre for Environment and Development Studies (Noragric) at the Norwegian University of the Life Sciences, the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo, and the Institute for Fisheries Management & Coastal Community Development (IFM) of Denmark.

A close and long established relationship continues with the Natural Resources Group of the Centre for Development Co-operation Services (CDCS) at the Vrije Universiteit in the Netherlands. Dr Stephen Turner of CDCS was seconded to PLAAS for four years (1997-2001) and continues to collaborate with PLAAS in a variety of ways.

Other important collaborations have occurred with the Land Tenure Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Overseas Development Institute of London, the International Institute for Environment and Development in London, the University of Bergen and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (both of Norway), the University of Cork in Ireland, the University of Köln in Germany, the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) of Kenya, Community Conservation and Development Initiatives (CCDI) in Nigeria, and the Social Research Centre at the American University of Cairo, Egypt. A partnership has recently been established with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

Within the region, a longstanding and close working relationship is maintained with the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) at the University of Zimbabwe, principally through joint management of a regional networking and research programme in community based natural resource management. Other regional partners include the regional office of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in Zimbabwe and its office in Mozambique.

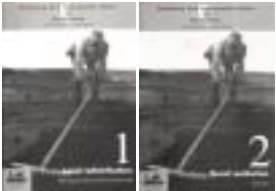
Closer to home, PLAAS and the School of Public Health at UWC have developed a close partnership in relation to poverty research. PLAAS has often worked closely with the National Land Committee and its affiliates (for example, Nkuzi Development Association, the Association for Rural Advancement, the Surplus People Project and the Border Rural Committee) and other NGOs such as the Centre for Rural Legal Studies, the Legal Resources Centre, the Legal Entity Assessment Project and the Trust for Community Outreach and Education. A close collaborative relationship to provide short course training has been maintained since 1996 with Rick de Satgé of Developmental Services.

An excellent long-term research partnership with Prof Timm Hoffman, formerly at the National Botanical Institute and currently Director of the Leslie Hill Institute of Plant Conservation, has been maintained since 1995, centred on multi-disciplinary research in the Leliefontein Communal Area of Namaqualand. A PLAAS Research Associate, Dr Rick Rohde, has led the socio-economic aspects of this research for PLAAS.

Collaborative research and teaching have been undertaken with lawyers from the Legal Resources Centre, and individual scholars from the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Rhodes and Witwatersrand, and also with researchers from the Integrated Rural and Regional Development programme of the Human Sciences Research Council.

# STAFFING

A range of staff development activities are undertaken at PLAAS



Research projects undertaken by PLAAS seek to draw policy lessons from in-depth case studies informed by relevant conceptual frameworks



Seven months after PLAAS was initiated in 1995, its staff comprised the Director, an Administrator, and two Researchers (Andries du Toit and Thembela Kepe). By 1999 the staff complement had risen to 16, and by July 2005 it was 22 (fifteen research and seven support staff). At present the majority of PLAAS staff (76%) are black, and 64% of researchers are black. In terms of gender, 52% of staff are women, but only 36% of researchers are women.

The following researchers have been employed at PLAAS since 1995:

Fadeela Ally-Schmidt, Prof Ben Cousins (Director), Dr Andries du Toit, Dr Cobus de Swardt, William Ellis, Ruth Hall, Dr Mafaniso Hara, Dr Moenieba Isaacs, Dr Peter Jacobs, Dr Thembela Kepe (Deputy Director), Karin Kleinbooi, Dr Edward Lahiff, Dr Frank Matose, Najma Mohamed, Kgopotšo Mokgope, David Neves, Phinda Ndabula, Dr Lungisile Ntsebeza, Zolile Ntshona, Hayley Rodkin, Munyaradzi Saruchera, Barbara Tapela, Dr Stephen Turner, Lungiswa Tsolekile and Webster Whande.

A number of researchers have also been employed on short-term contracts or as consultants: Dr Michael Aliber, Aninka Claassens, Jeanette Clarke, Xakathile Dabula, Tsakane Khosa, Irma Maharaj and Dr Rick Rohde. Babalwa Bata, Thandi Lewin, Fazel Moosa, Sibongile Mtini, Zuko Ndamane, Tumi Taaibosch and Vuyani Zondani were employed as Research Assistants.

Administrative staff employed in this period have included: Gretna Andipatin, Ursula Arends, Rowena Christian, Natasha Emmett, Lulekwa Gqiba, Tobias Helm, Robertha Isaacs, Bealah Jacobs, Nazlie Jamie, Diana Josephus, Edgar Joshua, Dumani Kentane, Priscilla-Anne Lewis, Vivian Magerman, Ithra Najaar, Jenny Plandt, Allan Roman and Nobomvu Toleni.

A range of staff development activities are undertaken at PLAAS. The major thrust to date has been 'on the job' training, hiring researchers for specific research projects that create opportunities for post-graduate study, mainly in the form of dissertation-based degrees. The following staff members have completed higher degrees while working at PLAAS:

- Moenieba Isaacs (PhD, Fisheries Management, UWC, 2004)
- Thembela Kepe (PhD, Development Studies, UWC, 2002)
- Lungisile Ntsebeza (PhD, Sociology, Rhodes, 2003)
- Zolile Ntshona (MPhil, Development Studies, UWC, 2002)
- Webster Whande (MPhil, Land and Agrarian Studies, UWC, 2004)

PLAAS researchers currently registered for higher degrees at UWC are Barbara Tapela (PhD), Webster Whande (PhD), Karin Kleinbooi (MPhil), and Ursula Arends (MA). Ruth Hall is registered for a DPhil at Oxford.

Other forms of staff development have included two Summer Schools on Research Skills for Land and Agrarian Studies, sending staff on short courses organised by other institutions, in-house staff or PhD seminars, and visits to international research centres at universities abroad (Norway, UK, USA, Zimbabwe).

# RESEARCH AND NETWORKING PROJECTS

Research projects undertaken by PLAAS are usually two to three years in duration, are field-based rather than desk-top studies, and seek to draw policy lessons from in-depth case studies informed by relevant conceptual frameworks. Projects aim to understand social, economic, political, institutional and environmental dynamics, and complex interactions between them, at both the local and wider levels. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed, with particular emphasis on the former. (A list of projects undertaken since 1995 can be found on the poster side of this report.)

# POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Critical scholarship needs to be self-critical; both vigour and rigour are required for informed public debate



Dissemination of research findings to those who can make effective use of them is vitally important for an applied research unit



The university's mission statement commits it to 'responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition', and to 'helping build an equitable and dynamic society'. Is this kind of public engagement at odds with the traditional emphasis at universities on teaching, learning and research undertaken within a spirit of scientific enquiry? In our view it is not, but we do recognise the tension between the two stances. We are committed to rigorous, independent and open-minded research, to debate and potential disagreement amongst ourselves, and to admitting the possibility of error or mistaken judgement in both research and policy advocacy. Critical scholarship needs to be self-critical; both vigour and rigour are required for informed public debate.

PLAAS researchers have engaged with policy processes since 1995, in a variety of different ways. They have worked closely with various government departments, as advisors at national, provincial and local level, as consultants in the design or facilitation of programmes or projects, as reviewers or evaluators, and as facilitators of policy workshops. Researchers have often been asked to present their views to the various portfolio committees of Parliament.

PLAAS researchers have also provided critiques of different policies, published articles and academic papers, participated in public debates, and made presentations at policy workshops and conferences. In recent years staff members have been active within a number of emerging civil society alliances in the land and agrarian reform sector, and have sought to contribute to deepening the understanding of key policy issues by members of NGOs and community-based organisations. PLAAS researchers have been active in the following policy debates: land restitution, land redistribution, land tenure reform, land reform and environmental concerns, the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative, agricultural policy, minimum wages for farm workers, community-based natural resource management, communal rangeland management, forestry policy, traditional leaders and local government reform, subsistence and artisanal fisheries policy, co-management of marine and coastal resources, poverty reduction, food security and ethical trade in the wine and fruit industries.

Examples include Andries du Toit's co-ordination of a Ministerial Review of the restitution programme in 1998, Ben Cousins' contributions to formulation of tenure reform policy between 1996 and 1999, Thembela Kepe's advice on implementation of the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative in 1997/98, and Lungisile Ntsebeza's submissions on policies on traditional leaders and local government. Stephen Turner led a team advising government on policies for integrating environmental issues into land reform in 1996/97, and a team that evaluated donor support for the land reform programme, in 1998.

Munyaradzi Saruchera and Ben Cousins helped draft the Lagos Declaration on Land and Resource Rights in Africa, which was presented at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. Between 2002 and 2003, PLAAS researchers and the National Land Committee facilitated a process of community consultation on the Communal Land Rights Bill, which culminated in community submissions during parliamentary hearings. Edward Lahiff, Ruth Hall and Peter Jacobs have contributed to the People's Budget since 2003. Andries du Toit and Cobus de Swardt assisted in the formulation of Western Cape provincial food security policies in 2003 and 2004.

The legal arena has been another important context for policy engagement. PLAAS was an *amicus curiae* in the Modderklip case initiated in 2003, and individual researchers have presented evidence in support of legal action by communities (e.g. on housing or fisheries management). PLAAS researchers have also presented their views in hearings called by the Human Rights Commission (e.g. on conditions on commercial farms), and in a popular tribunal on land policy organised by the Trust for Community Outreach and Education.

# PUBLICATIONS

Dissemination of research findings to those who can make effective use of them is vitally important for an applied research unit, and publications are a key output. PLAAS publishes books, conference proceedings, research reports, occasional papers, policy briefs, newsletters and information bulletins. Some are published in collaboration with partners such as the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, the Overseas Development Institute in London, Noragric at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre at the University of Manchester, and this helps to ensure a wide audience.



Between mid-1995 and mid-2005, PLAAS published a total of five books, 21 research reports, 49 occasional papers, 23 policy briefs and eight newsletters and information bulletins. A great deal of effort has gone into producing high-quality publications in terms of both their content and their design and layout. Demand for PLAAS publications is consistently high, and many have had to be reprinted. Income derived from sales helps to meet the costs of reprinting.

PLAAS researchers also publish widely in a range of other contexts. Since 1995 a total of 40 journal articles and 53 book chapters have appeared with PLAAS staff members as authors or co-authors. Researchers have also authored or co-authored 64 research reports, 21 occasional papers and 15 policy briefs, and 38 articles by them have appeared in popular magazines and newspapers.

In addition to their publications, PLAAS researchers are regularly asked for comment by a wide range of newspapers, magazines and radio and television programmes, both locally and abroad.

## CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

**PLAAS organises conferences, symposia, workshops and seminars to disseminate research findings**



PLAAS organises conferences, symposia, workshops and seminars to disseminate research findings and to create forums for discussion and debate of their wider significance and policy implications.

Notable occasions in the last ten years include the Land and Agrarian Reform Conference of July 1999, organised in collaboration with the National Land Committee, and attended by over 200 researchers, government officials and NGO staff members, and the international symposium on Contested Resources: Challenges to the Governance of Natural Resources in Southern Africa, held in October 2000, with over 100 participants. This was organised in collaboration with UWC's Centre for Southern African Studies, and drew researchers from across the region.

Other highlights include a symposium on African Perspectives: Land and Sustainable Development, organised by PLAAS, the National Land Committee, and the African Institute for Agrarian Studies during the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in August 2002, and an international workshop on Tenure Reform in Africa: Lessons for the Communal Land Rights Bill, held in July 2002. In October 2002, PLAAS and the Norwegian Fisheries College at the University of Tromsø, Norway, co-hosted an international symposium on Transformation of the South African Fishing Industry.

A workshop on Rangelands at Equilibrium and Non-equilibrium at the VII<sup>th</sup> International Rangelands Congress in Durban in July 2003 was organised in collaboration with the Leslie Hill Institute for Plant Conservation of UCT and the Botany Department at Rhodes University, and attracted a great deal of attention.

Smaller international events in the past ten years include five regional workshops on issues of community-based natural resource management, organised jointly with the Centre for Applied Social Sciences of the University of Zimbabwe, several continent-wide workshops as part of the collaborative Pan-African Programme on Land and Resource Rights, and a number of international workshops on co-management of fisheries.

A large number of national and provincial workshops have been organised by PLAAS researchers to discuss research findings on ethical trade in the fruit and wine industries, trends in the agricultural labour market, poverty and inequality, sustainable livelihoods, communal rangeland management, biodiversity conservation and land restitution, and land and agrarian reform policies.

A regular PLAAS seminar series includes presentations by PLAAS researchers as well as South African and international visitors; a total of 67 seminars, on a wide range of topics, have been held since 1995.



# TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

**PLAAS has established the first post-graduate programme in Land and Agrarian Studies in the country and in the region**



PLAAS has established the first post-graduate programme in Land and Agrarian Studies in the country and in the region. Teaching and supervision is currently undertaken for Post-Graduate Diploma, MPhil and PhD students. The programme aims to meet an identified demand in the land and agrarian reform sector in the Southern African region for post-graduate training in policy analysis skills, and to service a range of career options within these sectors (e.g. planners, policy makers, fieldworkers and researchers). Most students are in full-time employment, and teaching takes place in three intensive 'block-release' periods during the year.

The specific objective of the programme is to develop appropriate knowledge and skills that will enable policy makers, planners, managers, researchers and field workers in the sector to:

- conceptualise key policy issues of land and agrarian reform
- analyse problems of policy formulation and programme design
- plan effective programmes and projects
- undertake research on important questions of policy and practice.

Most MPhil students write mini-theses. The MPhil by full thesis and PhD degrees are generally pursued by those students who intend to work as researchers or academics.

The first PLAAS PhD student was registered in 1997. The Post-Graduate Diploma and MPhil course commenced in 2001 and numbers have risen steadily over the past four years, attracting students from Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Tanzania as well as South Africa. At present 85 students are registered, including seven PhD students, 31 MPhil and 47 Diploma students. Graduates to date number 22. Throughput of students is slower than anticipated, mainly due to the demanding nature of part-time study for those in full-time employment.

In 2003, PLAAS won the Group Award from UWC's Division for Lifelong Learning for its innovative approach to recognition of prior learning for entrants to the post-graduate programme.

In addition to undertaking teaching and supervision on Land and Agrarian Studies, PLAAS staff also teach on the Rural Development and Natural Resource Management modules offered by the School of Government and on the Development Studies programme at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. They give occasional lectures in the Rural Development module offered by the Institute of Social Development at UWC, and in different departments at the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch.



# SHORT COURSE TRAINING

**PLAAS has been an important provider of short course and in-service training to the land and agrarian reform sector**



PLAAS has been an important provider of short course and in-service training to the land and agrarian reform sector. Since 1996, PLAAS researchers, often in collaboration with Rick de Satgé of Developmental Services, have been commissioned to design and develop a range of short courses customised to meet the needs of different government departments (notably the Department of Land Affairs) and NGOs (amongst others the National Land Committee and its affiliates, and the Women on Farms Project). Some courses have been regional in scope, and have drawn participants from across southern Africa and have been offered in collaboration with the Land Tenure Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at Wits, and others with the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Zimbabwe.

Courses have included the following: Land Tenure and Policy in South Africa; Tenure Basics; Land Restitution Policy and Procedures; Land Use and Livelihoods; The Integration of Environmental Planning into Land Reform; Governance in Community-Based Natural Resource Management; Social Science Perspectives on Natural Resource Management.

A total of over 500 participants have attended these courses, and their evaluations of the training they have received have been overwhelmingly positive.

# MISSION

- **PLAAS engages in research, training, policy development and advocacy in relation to land and agrarian reform, rural governance and natural resource management.**
- **PLAAS is committed to social change that empowers the poor, builds democracy and enhances sustainable livelihoods. Gender equity is integral to these goals.**
- **PLAAS aims for rigour in its scholarship, excellence in its training, and effectiveness in its policy support and advocacy. It strives to play a critical yet constructive role in processes of social, economic and political transformation**



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