

WORKING Paper 13

More to life than economics and
livelihoods: the politics of social
protection and social development in
post apartheid South Africa

March 2009

by Josette Cole
MANDLOVU Development Institute

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Contents

Acronyms	5
Acronyms (cont.)	6
Introduction	7
Methodology.....	9
Structure	10
Literature review.....	10
Poverty.....	10
Social protection.....	12
Social assistance.....	15
Social development	17
Social exclusion, social capital, and social cohesion	20
The ‘developmental state’	22
Social policies and anti-poverty interventions: 1994 to 2009	23
Laying the foundation: social policy in the first five years (1994 to 1999)	23
Basic services	24
Asset building	25
Social assistance	26
Beyond policy to implementation: 1999 to 2004	27
The cluster system.....	27
(Expanded) Public Works Program (PWP)	29
Re-visiting and fine-tuning the development paradigm: 2004 to 2009.....	31
South Africa and the ‘developmental state’’: emerging debates.....	31
The Development Paradigm: the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)	33
ASIGISA – a “catalytic” macro interventions.....	37
Poverty reduction and the role of the Department of Social Development (DSD)	39
The Department of Social Development (DSD).....	39
Institutional history	40
The DSD in a post apartheid context.....	43
DSD and social protection.....	44
DSD and social (welfare) services.....	46

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Towards a more effective service delivery and social development orientation: the ISDM.....	47
(Integrated Service Delivery Model)	47
Social Policy, Social Protection and Social Development: the DSD in the	Western Cape
Western Cape Provincial Government Policy and Development Frameworks.....	48
DSD in the Western Cape: frameworks, policy, and practice post 2004.....	50
Developmental frameworks	50
Strategic shifts	51
Change and continuity: findings and reflections on the DSD from the field	52
Background to the national study	52
Poverty and DSD services across all nodes: synthesis of national findings	53
Overall findings: the urban nodes	54
Findings from DSD research undertaken in Khayelitsha	59
The research site: context and profile	59
The DSD plays a vital role through its social service provision.....	60
Overarching strategic shifts impacting on the work of the DSD in the area	61
Institutional capacity to manage and implement strategic shifts.....	62
An ambiguous image and role with respect to welfare functions	63
The limits of the DSD and social (community) development, social cohesion and social capital.....	63
Connections and strategic partnerships	65
Conclusions.....	66
Conclusions, challenges, and opportunities	68
Understanding poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon requiring multi-faceted responses from the public and private sphere continues to elude us in South Africa	69
The current development paradigm and all that flows from it has re-enforced a global tendency inside South Africa, especially government, that views and values measurable economic inputs and outcomes as superior to social or cultural ones.	70
South Africa has incrementally become a welfare state as the result of an expanded social grant system and range of other social protection interventions on offer	71
Social development remains an elusive and poorly understood concept in South Africa	72
There is no clear link or interplay between social reality, social policy and, social protection in South Africa	73
A department like DSD is unable to fulfill its role and position in relation to challenges posed by social protection, social services and, social development.	74
The current debate on the 'developmental state' in South Africa needs to be contextualized	75

More to life than economics and livelihoods

References

78

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Acronyms

AGISA	Accelerated and Shared Initiative in South Africa
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CBD	Central Business District
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CSG	Child Support Grant
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Program
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FEDSAW	Federation of South African Women
GEAR	Growth, Employment, and Redistribution
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISDM	Integrated Service Delivery Model
ISRDP	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Program
MIP	Municipal Infrastructure Program
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDA	National Development Agency
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPO	Non-profit Organization
NYDF	National Youth Development Forum
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Acronyms (cont.)

PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
PRP	Poverty Relief Fund
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
SACP	South African Communist Party
SASSA	South African Social Assistance Agency
TB	Tuberculosis
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UN	United Nations
URP	Urban Renewal Program
UYF	Umsobomvu Youth Fund

Introduction

In the past fifteen years the South African government has consistently tried to address chronic and structural poverty, using a variety of policy and programmatic interventions with uneven success. But, as the latest Presidential review (2008) confirms, out of all attempts thus far, it appears that the social grant system, now reaching more than 12 million South African citizens, has made the greatest impact on income poverty reduction.

While this achievement needs to be applauded as a measurable indicator of our government's political commitment to reduce poverty, it also signals other realities. Firstly, that despite the state's intentions of becoming more 'developmental', South Africa appears to have evolved into a "quasi-welfare" state, with millions of its citizens dependent on social grants and a social wage for survival; and, secondly, that this tells us that something may be fundamentally wrong with the overall way in which we have approached improving the quality of life for all South African citizens, including the poor.¹

Writing this paper, considered a work in progress, was motivated by a number of factors. Firstly, a deeply felt intellectual need to locate the process and outcomes of a community-based pilot project that was undertaken by the MANDLOVU Development Initiative/Institute between 2001 and 2006, given the name MAYENZEKE (Let's Make it Happen) e New Crossroads, in a disadvantaged community located in the in the South East

¹ The report describes an impressive list of (quantifiable) achievements and outcomes across different sectors and levels of government, describing the quantum of housing subsidies delivered, health clinics that have been built, land claims resolved, basic services installed, and the increasing number of social grant beneficiaries

More to life than economics and livelihoods

sector of the City of Cape Town in a broader context. The pilot, based on an assumption that a new way of thinking and working was required in our transition, conceptualized and pioneered what became an iterative socially orientated and holistic approach to community-based work, integrating elements of memory (history), healing (reconciliation), and cultural celebration (past and present) into project design and practice. Despite many attempts, the initiative received very little public sector attention or support.²

Secondly, the paper provides an opportunity to revisit and theorize empirical data and insights gained from my own direct participation in a national study, commissioned by the Department of Social Development (DSD), that assessed the department's role, performance, and outcomes in relation to its poverty relief/sustainable livelihoods projects and service delivery in the 21 urban and rural nodes that form part of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Program (ISRDP) and Urban Renewal Program (URP). Mandlovu's work on the Cape Flats, as well as a wider exposure to the important but largely invisible role the DSD plays across the country to address poverty and social distress, including the central role it plays in mitigating the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic through programs like Community Home-based Care, raises two central questions which the paper tries to address.

Firstly, some of the deeper reasons why the "social" (deemed 'softer') side of post apartheid development has been on the back burner in our country, subordinated to economic concerns at every level including our development

² While details on the process, outcomes and lessons of the pilot are outside the scope of this paper, they remain a critical influence on and continue to shape my own thinking. The pilot was well documented (written, oral, visual forms). The MANDLOVU Development Trust is currently exploring ways to write the pilot up as a case study that begins to give substance to notions like 'social capital', 'social exclusion' and 'social cohesion', as well as expand its reach beyond New Crossroads and existing partners. .

More to life than economics and livelihoods

discourse, in a country whose citizens still bear the scars of the systemic impact of the apartheid (also colonial) years, and where social upheaval, social dislocation and, social discontent continue to haunt and undermine our society. And, secondly, to get a closer and deeper understanding of the DSD, structurally and practically located at the centre of current anti-poverty initiatives, with a potentially huge role to play, along with the Department of Arts and Culture, in addressing poverty, social development and, social cohesion in our country. In addressing these and linked questions the paper argues that while choice of intervention and targeting of resources are critical in reducing the multi-dimensional causes of poverty in South Africa, one needs to look at the limits of existing developmental visions and public institutional capacity to understand why we have not done as much as we could to improve the quality of life of South African citizens.

Methodology

The paper draws on empirical data and insights gained from direct experience and participation in the design, facilitation, and implementation of a mix of social, economic, cultural, and action-research interventions in New Crossroads and related settlements on the Cape Flats; and, direct participation in a national action-research and learning study with a specific focus on Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha in the Cape Metro. It includes a relatively extensive desk top review of current poverty, social protection, and social development literature and reports, including more recent evaluative studies and reviews undertaken by the Office of the Presidency and, other government departments. The focus and timing of the paper meant that information and insights from contemporary debates on the pros and cons of an expanding social grant system, sparked by the President's State of the

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Nation Speech and Budget Speech, made writing the paper a lot more challenging than anticipated.

Structure

The paper was difficult to structure, perhaps because it tries to cover too much. However, for the purposes of its initial presentation it is divided into five sections: an introductory section that includes a review of critical concepts currently underpinning social policy and anti-poverty debates globally and in South Africa; a second section exploring key social policy trends and anti-poverty initiatives over the past fifteen years, paying special attention to the post 2004 period; section three focuses on the institutional history and multi-dimensional anti-poverty role the DSD plays; the fourth section goes deeper into the DSD looking at it from a Western Cape perspective, with a special focus on developmental challenges facing the DSD at district office level in Khayelitsha. The final section (five) presents concluding remarks, challenges, and offers some potential points of intervention for further discussion and debate.

Literature review

Poverty

There is a consensus in the literature that poverty is an overall state of being in which individuals or, households show significant deficits that deprive them from enjoying a positive state of well being and, that “widespread chronic poverty occurs in a world that has the knowledge and resources to eradicate it”³. An accepted definition of chronic poverty focuses on how people experience poverty for lengthy periods of time or, throughout their

³ CPRC, 2008, Chronic Poverty Report 2008-09

More to life than economics and livelihoods

entire lives, while structural poverty focuses on what causes and potentially perpetuates or drives poverty in a given society. [my emphasis].⁴

The poverty literature and debate appears to fall into two broad schools of thought: the dominant one, aligned with the hegemonic global paradigm, defines and measures poverty as “the inability of an individual or family to command sufficient resources to satisfy basic needs”, while a more socially orientated perspective looks at issues like social participation, social capital, social inclusion, and social cohesion, defining poverty as a process of “exclusion from cooperative activity” or, a state in which “those in poverty are not able to participate in the social life of a community to an acceptable level”.⁵

Irrespective of which side of the debate one falls, poverty is increasingly understood and viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon linked to a range of social, economic, and political constraints, including access to: basic services, knowledge and information, weak social networks and, limited economic opportunities. This view of poverty assumes that relevant responses (social policy and anti-poverty interventions) must be multi-dimensional in design and implementation. However, as the literature warns, developing appropriate multi-dimensional responses is challenging since it requires relatively high levels of conceptual understanding, skill, and, in transitional contexts like South Africa, a selection of interventions that align closely with citizen aspiration and need.⁶ A crucial element in the

⁴ A significant finding is that “vulnerability is not just a dimension of poverty, but can also be a cause of poverty and poverty persistence”. In other words fear of pending vulnerability to poverty can precipitate what are termed as “dysfunctional strategies”. An overview of how poor and richer households respond to vulnerability highlights the important buffer role family and community networks play in this regard.

⁵ Social Protection and Poverty Reduction, page 7

⁶ As Du Toit (2005) reminds us, because it appears to be much easier to both build consensus and produce quantifiable results with respect to issues like income, employment, nutrition, health,

More to life than economics and livelihoods

debate revolves around understanding what drives or fuels poverty in a given society.

The recent CPRC Report (2008) identifies five global poverty traps: insecurity in relation to environments and assets; limited citizenship (lack of political voice or representation); spatial disadvantage; social discrimination; and, poor work opportunities. The report, while reminding us that responses to chronic poverty need to be context specific, argues that there is now clear evidence that five policies (responses) seem to have the potential to spearhead national and international efforts, and that applying a mix of these policies has the potential to directly reduce chronic poverty and, “create and maintain a just social compact [to] underpin long-term efforts to eradicate chronic poverty”.⁷ Of crucial importance to our South African context and arguments put forward in this paper is their conclusion that while policy choices are important, what seems to be even more critical is how resources get allocated and, quality of implementation, both of which depend upon the political processes underpinning public policy and management [my emphasis].⁸

Social protection

Over the past decade social protection, broadly defined as “public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivationdeemed socially unacceptable in a given polity or society”, has developed into a key

education, shelter and, access to information and, more difficult to get consensus on more abstract issues like security, social inclusion and, social cohesion, setting poverty lines for the more social aspects of poverty remains a challenge

⁷ The five responses are: social protection, especially increased social assistance; access to public services for the hard to reach – especially reproductive health and post primary education; individual and collective asset building – psychological, physical, and social; anti-discrimination and gender empowerment policies, leading to stronger social compacts; and, strategic urbanization and migration.

⁸ IBID

More to life than economics and livelihoods

policy framework to address poverty and vulnerability in both developing countries, where it appears to have a strong focus on poverty reduction and the provision of support to the poorest, and in developed countries, where the emphasis is focused on issues like income maintenance and protecting the living standards for workers.⁹

Up until recently negative perceptions of social protection transfers dominated and influenced national and international anti-poverty agendas and strategies. According to a recent CPRC report (2007) perceptions tended to be based on misconceptions or “key myths” about social protection which, it argues, need to be “demolished” and debated. A positive position or take on social protection argues that social protection is affordable, even in poor countries, and sustainable in the medium term although, it argues, short term “predictable donor resources” may be needed in many countries. The positive view argues that social protection both alleviates and enables poor people to escape poverty because transfers are invested in productive activities, human development and improving nutrition. The authors of the report argue that very little evidence exists to indicate that social transfers “promote dependency in poor countries” and, that the critical issue is whether or, how social protection gets targeted depends on the nature of poverty and specific social and political circumstances of a given society.¹⁰

⁹ The policy framework emerged in the 1990s when social protection underwent a transformation in the context of countries struggling from the impact of economic crises, structural adjustment and globalization and where public assistance programs and other forms of safety nets available at the time were proving to be inadequate to deal with the rapid rise in poverty and vulnerability. While a number of NGOs became involved in delivering poverty reduction programs few reached the scale required to have a significant impact on poverty. NGOs did have the necessary capacity to make an impact as institutions autonomous from public agencies. Assessments of responses concluded that addressing poverty and vulnerability required “stronger, coordinated, and permanent institutional structures” with “a capacity to respond to crises when these occurred.”

¹⁰ CPRC Policy Brief, 2007, Tackling obstacles to social protection for chronically poor people

More to life than economics and livelihoods

The social protection policy framework appears to consist of three core elements: social insurance, social assistance and, labour market regulation, with social insurance providing protection against contingencies like maternity or old age or, work-related protection such as unemployment or sick benefits; and, social assistance covering support for those deemed to be living in poverty. The generally accepted distinction made between social assistance and social insurance being, that while social assistance is financed through public taxes, social insurance is usually covered by contributions from workers and employers.

There are different approaches to social protection based on slight definitional variations emanating from agencies like the ILO (International Labour Organization), World Bank, and United Nations¹¹. Barrientos (2007) points us to an emerging and growing literature on conceptual frameworks now underpinning the policy framework which, he argues, begin to look at conceptual linkages between social protection and social theory, and between social protection and ethics. This leads him to argue that the policy framework cannot be effective unless grounded “on knowledge about the factors and processes producing and reproducing poverty and vulnerability

¹¹ Barrientos (2007) looks at some different perspectives on the policy framework which, according to him, has been evolving since the international community recognized social protection as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.¹¹ The International Labour Organization (ILO) views social protection as deriving from human rights, defining it as an “entitlement to benefits that society provides to individuals and households – through public and collective measures – to protect [the poor or vulnerable groups in society] against low or declining living standards arising out of a number of basic risks and needs”¹¹ The World Bank’s position, articulated in a Social Protection Strategy Paper, is described by Barrientos as one that moves beyond traditional definitions. It describes social protection as “a social risk management framework” that is more focused on the economic side of the issue, adding macroeconomic stability and financial market development to typical social protection programs. According to the World Bank definition, “social risk management consists of public interventions aimed at assisting individuals, households and communities in better managing income risks”. The World Bank position emphasizes minimizing risk to social hazards as an essential part of growth and development. The United Nations (UN), on the other hand, defines social protection as “a set of public and private policies and programs undertaken to offset the absence of or substantial reduction of income from work; to provide assistance to families with children, as well as provide people with basic health care and housing”. In the UN approach the role of social protection encompasses securing basic needs as a precondition for human and economic development.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

and, factors and processes which facilitate or hinder social transformation.¹² And, as importantly, that linking social protection to ethical questions about what is considered to be fair or, equitable in a given society, informs its program design, beneficiary selection, and program conditions.¹³

Social assistance

Social assistance is understood in the literature as a component of social protection. It is viewed as having the potentially strongest focus on poverty reduction, and has been “where change, innovation and expansion have concentrated in the last decade and a half”. An emerging argument, confirmed by evidence-based research, sees social protection, especially social assistance, playing a crucial role to play in reducing chronic poverty since it protects poor people from shocks and reduces extreme vulnerability. The thrust of recent thinking is that the knowledge base now exists to guide the design of social protection policies, with the major challenge now facing governments being how to build on existing knowledge and experience through more systematic monitoring and evaluation. Two emerging lessons are given special attention in the literature, both with special relevance to our own experience: that the household rather than the individual needs to be targeted; and, that income transfers when combined with other forms of support (child health services, nutritional packages, basic education, skills training and, asset transfer) have greater potential impact on multi-dimensional poverty and inter-generational processes.¹⁴

Barrientos argues that there is growing evidence of a significant extension of social assistance programs in developing countries over the past decade

¹² IBID, p13

¹³ IBID

¹⁴ To be added

More to life than economics and livelihoods

and a half, largely in the form of pure income transfers (non contributory pensions or child based transfers); conditional transfers based on work (public works programs); income transfers combined with services; or, integrated social assistance schemes; and, that because transfers support entire households, the number living in poverty reached by these transfers is considerably higher.¹⁵

He also puts forward a particularly useful typology for classifying social assistance programs: pure income transfer programs, including transfers targeting poor households and categorical transfers such as children or family allowances or social pensions; income transfer programs conditional on the supply of labour, requiring beneficiaries to supply labour for specific periods of time and tied to the improvement of infrastructure or, community services; income transfer programs conditional on human capital investment, targeted transfer schemes also referred to as conditional cash transfers focusing largely on health and nutrition that aim to break the persistence of poverty across generations; and, integrated poverty reduction programs which combine a range of interventions focused on the most vulnerable.¹⁶

In line with the dominant view that poverty is multidimensional, Barrientos argues that it is impossible for a single social protection instrument [like social assistance] to achieve “the many-fold objectives of protecting household consumption, promoting asset accumulation, strengthening productive capacity and inclusion, and reducing poverty, vulnerability and inequality”. The critical challenge becomes how to move progressively toward integrated social protection programs for the poor and poorest in society which, confirmed by South African experience, “place much greater

¹⁵ Barrientos, IBID, p14

¹⁶ IBID, p20

More to life than economics and livelihoods

demand on resources and capacity...as they involve the coordination of different agencies or, consolidation of pre-existing programs".¹⁷

Social development

In the post apartheid South African context, where "economic" concerns and outcomes have consistently "trumped" and subordinated the "social" agenda, conceptual clarity is essential for anyone tasked with carrying out social development or, mandated to discern social outcomes, such as slippery concepts like a more socially cohesive post apartheid society.

A brief survey of the literature indicates that no clear conceptual framework currently exists to capture what is meant by the term "social development".

In a thought provoking article, Cleveland and Jacobs (1999) argue that a theory of development needs to build the kind of knowledge and expertise that society needs to more "consciously and effectively utilize its development potential" and, that globally the hegemonic development paradigm remains an econometric one that views technology, money, industrialization, and political will as equal to 'development', focusing on achieving quantifiable results such as: higher life expectancy, higher incomes, lower infant mortality rates, increased access to education etc. Other linked paradigms view development as the creation of enabling conditions (peace, democracy, social freedoms, laws, access to markets, infrastructure provision, education, and technology), giving less attention to underlying social processes such as: how society works or, how it formulates,

¹⁷ IBID, p21. He also outlines a number of challenges needing to be considered and combined to achieve high impact integrated anti-poverty program interventions: the costs of selection, choice and quality of program design, strengthening solidarity, supporting shared values of social justice, finding new sources of revenue mobilization, strengthening existing revenue sources and, of critical importance, capacity limitations, including the capacity to study, measure and analyze poverty and vulnerability, design and implement appropriate policies, and deliver and evaluate social protection programs.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

adopts, initiates, and organizes itself. This perspective sees development as influenced and shaped by a range of variables - political, social, economic, cultural, technical, and environmental factors - all of which are dependent upon unquantifiable factors like beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and values.¹⁸

In their article social development is defined as “the power of organizational human energy and activities to achieve greater results” or, put another way, as a process that increases and unleashes the utilization of human potential. They argue that in the absence of a robust theory to underpin or guide social development policies and interventions, these tend to become an exercise of “trial and error”, leading them to argue that a theory to underpin the concept would give it more focus and coherence.¹⁹

This understanding of development leads Cleveland and Jacobs to argue that it is in fact the focus or emphasis that is wrong, meaning that the focus up to now has tended to be on developmental instruments (laws, policies, institutions, and values) instead of on the creators of the instruments (people), who are driven or motivated by the quest for something greater or

¹⁸ See Jacobs and Cleveland, pages 1-4. The article looks at a perceived absence of social development theory, the authors make the important observation that development, because it is a process and not a program and is an activity of the society as a whole, can only be stimulated, directed, or assisted by government policies, laws and special programs - it cannot be compelled or carried out by administrative or external agencies on behalf of the population. They argue that development strategy should aim to release people’s initiative, not to substitute for it and since resources are the creation of the human mind that it becomes a resource when human beings recognize a productive or more productive use for it. As importantly, they argue that the potential productivity of any resource is, as a consequence, is unlimited

In the article they define a theory as the systematic organization of knowledge, offering one the power to elevate and accelerate the expansion or development of human capabilities in any field which, in turn, leads to fresh discoveries or, increased capacity for greater results. The theory is based on two core aspects: learning derived from discovery; and, application, leading to social organization. In other words, what is needed is a unifying (integrated) theory of knowledge (and relevant interventions) across different disciplines

¹⁹ In the article they define a theory as the systematic organization of knowledge, offering one the power to elevate and accelerate the expansion or development of human capabilities in any field which, in turn, leads to fresh discoveries or, increased capacity for greater results. The theory is based on two core aspects: learning derived from discovery; and, application, leading to social organization. In other words, what is needed is a unifying (integrated) theory of knowledge (and relevant interventions) across different disciplines

More to life than economics and livelihoods

better than what currently exists.²⁰ This leads the authors to argue for a theory that places human beings and their development at the centre (people-centred), and views all other aspects of development from the perspective of and in relation to human motivation and action. Within this development paradigm the key challenge becomes how best to tap into the society's development potential, necessitating an integrated perspective and practice as opposed to one separated into sectors and silos.

In this paradigm, where the objective is to unify and integrate, synthesizing minds are needed to fully comprehend the intricacies of designing and applying interventions aimed at human (social) development,²¹ leading them to argue a social development framework requires: focusing on underlying processes rather than surface activities and results; viewing development as a creative process: acknowledging that social development is driven by its own motive power (motivation) in pursuit of its own goals; and, understanding that the aspiration of the collective is expressed through the initiative of pioneering individuals as the determinant and driving force for a society's own development (my emphasis).²²

One of their central arguments is that development proceeds rapidly in areas where society becomes aware of opportunities and challenges and has the

²⁰ IBID page 4

²¹ IBID page 5

²² In other words, social development is determined by human beings and not by external forces or conditions, although the latter can substantively influence the process. Human development is determined by human responses based on choices made by people and, human development involves awareness, aspirations, attitudes and values. More importantly, they argue, one cannot underestimate the critical role played by pioneering and conscious individuals: visionary intellectuals, political leaders, entrepreneurs, and spiritual leaders. Cleveland and Jacobs argue that the development of society can only occur in fields where collective will is sufficiently strong and is seeking expression that in order to be effective, needs to focus on identifying areas where the social will is mature and provides the means for the awakened social energy to express itself. And, that only those initiatives that are in concordance with a subconscious urge gain momentum and multiply.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

will to respond to them. In a nutshell, social development cannot be driven from above, it requires the involvement of a given society's citizens (social agency), led by that specific society's visionaries and, social entrepreneurs (pioneers), supported by public sector policies.

Social exclusion, social capital, and social cohesion

In the last five years concepts like social exclusion, social capital, and social cohesion have received greater focus and attention in South Africa, especially in government's 'social cluster' where the DSD has taken a lead, along with the Department of Arts and Culture. The term social cohesion is said to originate with the French sociologist Emile Durkheim who used it to describe 'interdependent connections that hold together the various elements that constitute society'. While what is meant by social cohesion is often contested, there is a growing consensus that social cohesion can be deemed present in a given society "to the extent that societies are coherent, united, functional, and provide an environment in which its citizens can flourish [my emphasis]." Another view describes it simply as "a term used by those who sense an absence of some sort".

Social cohesion is now being used as a framework and agenda for examining and promoting the quality and sustainability of societies, as well as a platform from which to evaluate government policies. In South Africa it is increasingly viewed as a useful prism through which to gain insight into how the country functions at the level of various institutions such as the family, household, community, state, and economy. Social exclusion, on the other hand, is viewed as 'not only the material deprivation of the poor, but also

More to life than economics and livelihoods

their inability to fully exercise their social, cultural, and political rights as citizens [my emphasis]²³

A recent HSRC study, commissioned by the Department of Arts and Culture, argues that social cohesion raises the value proposition that is implied by the term social capital. A crucial issue is what value gets placed on participating in social networks, based on trust, to enable people to work together to achieve common goals and enable individuals and groups to survive and overcome social, economic, and cultural challenges. The study argues that looking at social cohesion makes us look at values embodied in the South African Constitution, directing our efforts and institutions towards social justice, social inclusion and, social capital.

The study concludes that one needs to study social cohesion as multi-dimensional in nature and, that existing research needs to be coordinated to provide a conceptual framework for analyzing social cohesion in a way that “assists government to evaluate its policies and impact, and assists civil society in deciding what the priorities should be for effective representation of the various interests that make up the broad constituency”.²⁴ In line with arguments outlined in this paper, the study identifies the critical challenge facing government as being the absence of a conceptual framework for [designing], understanding, monitoring and evaluating social practices, programs, and activities that build social cohesion and attain social justice.²⁵

²³ HSRC (2007)

²⁴ The notion of social capital has developed in parallel as a concept with social cohesion with social capital often used as an indicator of social cohesion, with high stores of social capital deemed to be a feature of cohesive communities and societies. Social capital refers to social connections and attendant levels of trust. Existing social capital research suggests that beneficial networks in poor communities are often absent or not as strong as in developed communities. The extent and impact of these networks may assist with bonding and bridging capital but still makes linking capital difficult. Opportunities therefore exist for the support of emerging organizations to give effect to bridging the gaps.

²⁵ IBID

More to life than economics and livelihoods

The 'developmental state'

The notion of a developmental state appears to have a relatively long history dating back to the protectionist measures adopted by Germany and other developed countries, including the USA, to promote infant industries capable of competing with the supremacy of the British manufacturing industry. According to available literature the original use of the term was "superseded by the notion of the East Asian newly industrialised countries (NICs) as developmental states, with Japan in the historical and intellectual lead".

A SACP Central Committee discussion paper (2005) argues that more recent usage can be traced to attempts by US Asian studies academic, Chalmers Johnson, attempting to generalize about the nature and form of industrializing states in Asia, especially Japan and Korea. For Johnston a critical feature of a developmental state was its ability to "mobilize the nation around economic development within a capitalist system" and, view the market as a "preferable option to central planning". Johnson argues that the developmental strategy calls for "absolute prioritization of industrialization by the developmental state" versus "showcase modernity" and, that a developmental state is characterized by its ability to demonstrate a "consistent pattern of exuberant consumption, heavily skewed in favour of urban elite groups at the expense of the rural and lower middle income majorities...."²⁶ Another feature, highly relevant to our South African experience, is the state's ability to lead indicative planning as a mechanism for mobilizing society around a common medium term objective, such as accelerating growth, or restructuring of the economy.²⁷

²⁶ SACP, 2005, A Developmental State for South Africa: Discussion Paper for the 2005 Central Committee

²⁷ According to the 2005 paper, the developmental state approach falls into two different types, the economic and the political schools. The economic school argues that the market does not work well

Social policies and anti-poverty interventions: 1994 to 2009

While by no means exhaustive, this section of the paper looks at some key trends and developments that characterize the past three terms of post apartheid government, including the changing nature of the South African state.

Laying the foundation: social policy in the first five years (1994 to 1999)

In many ways the first five years (1994 to 1999) can be characterized as a period of high aspiration and general euphoria, interspersed with frenzied intellectual activity related to the finalization of the South African Constitution and formulation of a wide range of policies and laws, and institutional mechanisms that flowed out of its adoption in 1996. The period saw the rise and fall of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) and its Office (1996), marking a shift not necessarily away from RDP principles but, towards a developmental path characterized by a domestic social adjustment program (GEAR), incremental fiscal conservatism and,

in promoting industrialisation; it is appropriate to intervene to get prices wrong and to distort market incentives to build up industries selectively that can become both internationally competitive and the basis for subsequently broader industrial development. South Korea's commitment to its steel industry, against the advice and support of the World Bank on what was its comparative advantage, is an illustration with its provision of the basis for construction, car and shipbuilding industries. In other words, the economic school explains the developmental states, especially the east Asian NICs, in terms of judicious and significant state intervention to promote industrialisation against the logic of leaving everything to the market.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

increasing central control and monitoring by the President's Office and National Treasury. The period was essentially about building the policy, legislative, and institutional foundation for social and economic programs to follow and, under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, coming to terms with the apartheid past (reconciliation).²⁸ Between 1996 and 1999 a plethora of strategic frameworks, policies, and laws were passed addressing access to basic services; asset building; social assistance; and, the overall reduction of poverty.

Basic services

Improved quality and access to basic services was underpinned by a *Water Supply and Sanitation Policy* (1994) that prioritized tackling service delivery backlogs for an estimated 12 million people who did not as yet have access to adequate potable water, with an additional 21 million people estimated to be without basic sanitation.²⁹ In the education sector, a commitment to extend access and improve the quality of education in post apartheid South Africa began with a White Paper on Education and Training (1997), based on the premise that both education and training are essential elements of

²⁸ The period covers the establishment of the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) office in the Office of the Presidency in 1994 and subsequent demise in 1996, and the adoption of one of the most progressive Constitution in the world, including a state of art Bill of Rights that enshrined social and economic rights into its ambit. The closing of the RDP Office and adoption of the new South African Constitution unfolded in the context of critical strategic decisions being taken that would move the country towards a developmental path that prioritized economic growth over redistribution in the short to medium term, relying on sector-specific policies and legislation to address social inequalities. The shift, the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, was prompted by a growing realization that South Africa's stagnant economy could not create the kind of wealth the country needed to deliver services to the vast majority of poor citizens in the context of a rapidly globalizing economy. One of the spin-offs from GEAR was that it began to focus attention on some of the South African economy's fault-lines, including the fact that the majority of the country's workers were either not inadequately skilled or, did not have the kinds of skills needed to keep South African competitive in a modernizing and globally economy.

²⁹ The South African government made remarkable progress in the extension of basic services, such as water, electricity, and sanitation to its citizens post 1994, ensuring that the delivery of basic services became de-linked from an ability to pay. In addition to the 6000 litres of free water it made available in 2001, 50kwh of electricity was introduced as well to poor households.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

human resource development and closely related.³⁰ The health sector, confronted from the outset by a growing HIV and AIDS pandemic that would stretch this department beyond its limits, preoccupied itself from the beginning of the transition with institutional transformation, underpinned by a White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa (1997).³¹ An essential element of the policy was the Integrated Nutrition Program, coordinated by the Department of Health, with uneven results.³²

Asset building

In any society improved access to assets provides economic and social stability and, as importantly, provides the foundation for income generation. The latest Review identifies access to land and housing as the government's two lead interventions to address what it calls "asset poverty alleviation". Both interventions, despite years of pre-transition debate and discussion, took a long time to take off in the first five years of transition, largely due to inappropriate or, highly ambitious policies, overly elaborate institutional

³⁰ The White Paper sought to establish a single national education system that would be managed through provincial sub-systems. It also articulated a commitment to the provision of free and compulsory general education. To this end, it played a role in efforts aimed at reducing poverty and inequality. While still uneven with respect to access, affordability, and quality, significant strides were made. The introduction of FET institutions (1998) provided the possibility of a credible educational alternative, incrementally playing a role in vocational skills development for school leavers and adult. According to the Presidential Review, FET college enrolments increased by 34% between 1998 and 2002 (from 302 550 in 1998 to 406 143 in 2002), with the fastest growth from part-time enrolment.

³¹ Republic of South Africa, (1997). White Paper for the Transformation of the Health System in South Africa. Pretoria: Government Printers. The White Paper had a mix of objectives: unifying a fragmented health service at all levels; promoting equity, accessibility, and the utilization of health services; extending availability and ensuring appropriate health services; developing health promotion activities; developing human resources available to the health sector; fostering community participation across the health sector; improving health sector planning; and, improved monitoring of health status and services.

³² Despite uneven results the program is viewed as a major intervention to protect and improve the health of the most vulnerable in South Africa, targeting pregnant and lactating women at risk, children from birth to 60 months, the elderly, primary school children from poor households and people suffering from chronic diseases, experienced implementation problems, largely in relation to the feeding of primary school children and challenges related to the quality and safety of food, consistency and coverage, and certain malpractices such as the misappropriation of funds.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

arrangements and, a seemingly inability on the part of government to recruit the capacity it required to deliver at scale. As a consequence government consistently struggled to meet housing or land reform targets it set for itself.³³ Very little thought was given to what kinds of educational and capacity building inputs were needed to turn the formerly “homeless” into new “home-owners” or, the formerly “landless” into emerging farmers. An even larger question might be whether or, not options on offer resonated with aspiration.³⁴

Social assistance

Access to social security is constitutionally enshrined in Section 28 of the South African Constitution. The foundations for South Africa’s current social assistance system, dealt with in more detail elsewhere in the paper, derive from a White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) that spelt out a new paradigm and strategic focus for social welfare in South Africa, adopting a multi-sectoral and integrated approach that tasked the state to invest in people, through capacity building, to incrementally move them out of poverty. One of the major reforms emanating from this period was the introduction of the Child Support Grant, based on recommendations from the Lund Committee, now the most far reaching instrument for addressing poverty in South Africa.

³³ In 1994 the government set a target of transferring 30% of white-owned agricultural land through the various land reform programs (restitution, redistribution and tenure reform) by 2014, which would amount to 24,9 million hectares. By 2008, a total of 4,8 million hectares had been transferred indicating a need to upscale the overall program. Another important structural feature of our economy on which dualism rests, is the highly unequal distribution of assets among the population. While accelerated land reform is mentioned, there is little focus on this or broader questions related to redistribution of assets.

³⁴

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Beyond policy to implementation: 1999 to 2004

By the time Thabo Mbeki took over the Presidential reigns in 1999, the limits of social policy to address poverty and social inequality were already evident. As a consequence the Mbeki-led government focused a lot more attention on institutional transformation as a prerequisite for delivery during his first term of office, especially in relation to local government. From day one the new Mbeki administration explored a mix of interventions aimed at speeding up delivery, and pushing back “the frontiers of poverty”. This section looks at four of these interventions: the cluster system in government, the ISRDP and URP programs which aimed to improve synergy, cooperation, and integration between the three spheres of government; and, a public works program (PWP) established as a mechanism for building basic skills and redistributing economic resources (public sector temporary job opportunities in the first instance) to more vulnerable South African citizens.

The cluster system

By the late 1990s, amidst growing disillusionment and disappointment, it was obvious to the incoming Mbeki government that a lot more synergy and integration was needed between government departments and, across the three tiers of government, to speed up and implement a more effective service delivery, as well as meet quantifiable targets set by each government department. This was the motivation behind the “cluster system”, designed as an internal governmental mechanism to decrease duplication and fragmentation, and pave the way towards a more coordinated approach by collapsing various sectors under one thematic thrust. For instance, education, health, housing, and social development fell under what was called the “social cluster”, derived from the focus and nature of their work. The

More to life than economics and livelihoods

intervention was based on the principle of horizontal and vertical integration to establish complementary programs and approaches. The cluster system, as we know, did not really work, largely because no single department within a cluster was given more authority than the other, meaning that decisions taken in principle at meetings could not be re-enforced.³⁵

ISRDP and URP³⁶

Another set of interventions aimed at improving institutional coordination across government and get services down to the ground, especially to areas deemed vulnerable and poor, was the introduction of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Program (ISRDP) and Urban Renewal Program (URP). Conceptualized in 2000 and implemented as pilots across 21 urban and rural “poverty nodes” across nine provinces from 2001 onwards, the intervention was intended as a concerted effort to improve opportunities and well being for the rural and urban poor. Both programs, which were framed within a ten year (2010) timeframe and deemed by its architects to be “idealistic in vision”, were viewed as being more practically focused mechanisms for improved implementation. One of the central aims was to focus government expenditure in the three spheres of government to

³⁵ This clear weakness is currently under review as political parties look to restructuring government and the “way of doing business” in the next phase of our transition.

³⁶ The ISRDS founding document spells out in some detail the legal and policy framework for rural development in South Africa, based on what it describes as “key lessons from the 1994 to 2000 period that shaped and influenced the design” of the ISRDP and URP interventions. This included the fact that: public investment programmes had been beset by co-ordination and communication problems, with frequent complaints of poor associations to community priorities; the relationship between national and provincial line function departments and Districts Councils in the implementation of programmes was not always coherent and focused; channels of funding for each sphere of government ‘rained’ on communities randomly with weak responsiveness to community priorities; the institutional framework to respond to these issues had been evolving over the period and was now perceived to be a more coherent, ordered structure to support the principles of the [programs]. The strategy was based on the assumption that the Presidency would provide strong strategic leadership and co-ordination, with each of the line departments expected to make ‘critical contributions towards achieving synergy and higher effectiveness in their own programs, assisted by the strengthened integrative mechanism at the local (municipal) provincial and national spheres.’

More to life than economics and livelihoods

more effectively and efficiently respond to needs and opportunities and, in the process, capacitate local government.³⁷

Evidence to date indicates that this somewhat overly elaborate and expensive macro-program intervention produced uneven results across the country, with the majority of funds allocated spent on large infrastructural projects, such as Central Business Districts (CBD) in Mitchell's Plain and Khayeltisha. The general consensus is that the both the ISRDP and URP fell far short of building or, strengthening co-operative governance or, leveraging resources for community-based projects, with limited direct benefits to the poor.

(Expanded) Public Works Program (PWP)

PWPs should be viewed as complementary to social grants and not as an alternative to social grants.³⁸

A National Public Works Program, in the making since the late 1990s, had two strategic thrusts: a Community-based Public Works Program (CBPWP) "intended to provide rapid and visible relief for the poor and build the capacities of communities for development which, with a budget of R350 million per annum, created "130 000 work opportunities between 1998 and

³⁷ The strategy was not predicated on additional funding from government but "improving the efficiency of the application of public funds...to create appropriate outputs in the places where they are most needed. The structures and procedures of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework [would] provide the mechanism for realising national and provincial budget structures to meet [program] objectives [with] additional fundingderived from the structure of delivery relationships that [would] be established" Sources identified included the private sector, public-private partnerships, organs of state and, the donor community. The importance of local government in achieving developmental outcomes was a central part of the intervention.

³⁸ Philips, S (2004), The Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP)

More to life than economics and livelihoods

2004”:³⁹ and, secondly, to reorient mainstream expenditure towards labour-intensive techniques, something which, according to Philips, was never realized.⁴⁰ The genesis for what is now known as the Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) goes back to the 2002 ANC policy conference which resolved that the use of labour intensive construction methods be expanded to alleviate unemployment, and meet infrastructural backlogs in poor areas.⁴¹

Sean Philips (2004) argues that one needs to make a fundamental distinction between EPWP as a poverty relief or, social protection instrument, and that the EPWP was originally conceptualized as a cross-cutting government program that dealt with the changing needs of labour markets, “necessitated by structural changes in the economy”, and “draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work”. He argues that the EPWP was designed as a broad framework to embrace a broad range of existing programs and, as a consequence, was challenged on how it could develop and promote existing best practices and expand their application more widely.⁴²

³⁹ According to Philips, Chief Operations Officer of the National Department of Public Works, funds were originally allocated to CBOs and then, following the local government elections, allocated to municipalities to carry out projects. Projects included: basic infrastructure such as roads to income generating projects like communal agricultural ventures. Funding to the CBPWP stopped in 2004.

⁴⁰ National government also initiated a range of other so-called “environmental PWPS” such as the Working for Water Program and Land Care and Coastal Care programs, considered by the 2008 presidential review to be a lot more successful.

⁴¹ The EPWP aimed to equip participants with a basic level of training and work experience so as to enhance their ability to earn a living in future. In his State of the Nation address in February 2003, President Thabo Mbeki publicly announced the expanded initiative, “an expanded public works program [to ensure] that we draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work, and that these workers gain skills whilst they work and thus take an important step to get out of the pool of those who are marginalized.”

⁴² A number of sectors were identified as having the potential to create employment opportunities: on public infrastructure; public environmental improvement programs; more socially orientated programs like home-based care workers and early childhood development workers; and, economic or income-generating projects and programs (learnerships, incubation programs)

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Re-visiting and fine-tuning the development paradigm: 2004 to 2009

The results of government's first longitudinal review of its performance (2003) noted the limitations of anti-poverty interventions on offer, as well as ongoing challenges it faced regarding institutional capacity. This prompted government to sharpen its developmental paradigm and embrace what it called critical interventions, some of which were deemed "catalytic" in intention, to push forward its growth and development agenda, against the backdrop of the notion of a "developmental state".

South Africa and the 'developmental state': emerging debates

Whether South African can be described or, characterized as a developmental state is a subject of ongoing debate and discussion within the ANC and its Alliance partners, with the SACP debating the issue for a number of years. In this debate the ANC has consistently argued that the developmental state needs to be contextualized, a position echoed in the recent Presidential Review. One of the emerging elements of the debate is the view that it may be more useful to interrogate the 'developmental capacities' of the state, rather than grapple with the form and substance of an entirely new form of state.⁴³ While there may not as yet be consensus on the changing nature of the post apartheid state, there is some agreement that the South Africa state has incrementally and unashamedly become more interventionist, especially with respect to fiscal and financial regulations and, that it visibly stepped up its efforts to address poverty during Mbeki's second term of office.

⁴³ There is broad consensus that one could characterize a state as 'developmental' if it possesses a developmental program around which it is can mobilize society at large, and has the capacity to intervene in order to restructure the economy, including through public investment.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

The rationale for the shift in government thinking can be traced to the findings of the Ten Year Review (2003) which identified a number of achievements: a significant improvement and de-racialisation of social services; a dramatic impact in the delivery of pensions and social grants; improvements in education and community understanding of opportunities opened up by learning; notable advances in the delivery of services such as electricity, water, sanitation and housing; and, that housing and land reform had made some impact on asset poverty and women's rights. It also listed a number of challenges: that implementation of policy was constrained by the behaviour of officials and recipients; that significant numbers of eligible social grant candidates were either still unregistered or poorly serviced; that the level of municipal debt and illegal connections suggested poor state capacity and lack of citizen understanding of obligations; that enhanced health service spending and reorientation existed but had not as yet been translated into visible outcomes; and, that micro-credit for productive purposes and access to finance were still major impediments.⁴⁴ The situation called for bold interventions.

⁴⁴ Towards a Fifteen Year Review, p17

More to life than economics and livelihoods

The Development Paradigm: the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)⁴⁵

The ANC went into the 2004 elections with an election Manifesto that committed the ruling party to “halve poverty in South Africa by 2014”. Vision 2014, articulated in the Manifesto, reaffirmed the guiding principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and committed government to “build a society that is truly united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic”, based on... a single and integrated economy that benefits all”. The ANC went into the 2004 elections with an election Manifesto that committed the ruling party to “halve poverty in South Africa by 2014”.⁴⁶ Vision 2014, articulated in the Manifesto, reaffirmed the guiding principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and committed government to “build a society that is truly united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic”, based on... a single and integrated economy that benefits all”.

The MTSF, the strategic framework for realizing Vision 2014, depicts a state grappling with the critical dilemma of finding the right balance between economic and social programs. A careful reading of the MTSF document indicates the strategic choice government made at the time between the two horns of the dilemma: everything would be subordinated to the

⁴⁵ The MTSF’s developmental path’s logic was based on four main areas of intervention: growing the economy; decisive state intervention to promote the involvement of the marginalized in economic activity, including sustainable livelihoods; viewing welfare grants as “a necessary but temporary intervention that should diminish in relation to economic success; and, the overall performance of the state. It viewed the campaign against crime and international relations as strategies for promoting economic growth and social cohesion as key outcomes of the five-year period.⁴⁵ Seven strategic priority areas were identified to address perceived economic and social fault-lines in South African society, using what it called “economic and fiscal policy trade-offs” to grow the economy and incrementally improve the quality of life for South African citizens, especially those deemed poor and vulnerable. It was assumed that the ability of South Africa to deliver a better life for all, and in particular, halve poverty and unemployment rested on its ability to raise the growth rate.

⁴⁶ The Manifesto identified a number of critical inputs to enhance capacity: cooperation amongst economic partners; stronger partnerships across all sectors; improving the system of monitoring and evaluation; focusing on economic development in areas of economic potential; recruiting and providing skills to law enforcement agencies

More to life than economics and livelihoods

imperative of growing the economy through what it called 'catalytic interventions' (increased private investment and public sector investment) Its overarching economic strategy was to increase "the rate of investment by increasing the fixed capital formation (GFCF) rate from 16% to 25% over the next decade" and, facilitate economic activity in what it termed the second economy, "by encouraging economic activity in communities marginal to the first economy through the acquisition of skills and facilitation of sustainable livelihoods".⁴⁷

The MTSF, the strategic framework for realizing Vision 2014, depicts a state grappling with the critical dilemma of finding the right balance between economic and social programs. A careful reading of the MTSF document indicates the strategic choice government made at the time between the two horns of the dilemma: everything would be subordinated to the imperative of growing the economy through what it called 'catalytic interventions' (increased private investment and public sector investment)⁴⁸ Its overarching economic strategy was to increase "the rate of investment by increasing the fixed capital formation (GFCF) rate from 16% to 25% over the next decade" and, facilitate economic activity in what it termed the second economy, "by encouraging economic activity in communities marginal to the

⁴⁷ The Manifesto identified seven key objectives for 2014: reducing poverty and unemployment by half; providing skills needed by the economy; ensuring that all South Africans exercise their rights and enjoy full dignity; becoming a compassionate and effective government service that can deliver; achieving a better national health profile and massively reducing preventable causes of death; significantly reducing the number of serious crimes and cases awaiting trial; and, strategically positioning South Africa as an effective force in global relations. Core target areas identified by the Manifesto were: growing the economy; sustainable livelihoods; access to services; comprehensive social security; crime and corruption; constitutional rights and governance; and Africa and the world

⁴⁸ The MTSF rationale for economic and fiscal policy 'trade-offs' was related to 'lots of pressure on the fiscus, especially because of social transfer spending'. Government was faced with making choices in terms of short to medium term equity and medium to longer term growth, for example, the quantum [needed for poverty alleviation, especially social transfers, versus investment in economic growth through business support and social infrastructure investment]

More to life than economics and livelihoods

first economy through the acquisition of skills and facilitation of sustainable livelihoods".⁴⁹

In line with this the MTSF targeted the development of small and micro-enterprises by reducing the regulatory infrastructure for businesses with less than 50 employees by redefining small business ventures; planned for the direct facilitation of job creation, skills development and work experience by including relevant skills development to the EPWP; proposed the launch of a massive campaign on learnerships with dedicated champions, aimed to reach 500 000 learnerships within five years; proposed the re-capitalization of FET institutions; aimed to promote labour intensive sectors, setting a target of 100 000 jobs across the country; and, planned for the restructuring of the allocation of the students assistance scheme for tertiary education skewed in the direction of scarce skills shortage. On the social side, the strategic priority was articulated as "preserving and developing human resources for and through economic growth [my emphasis]⁵⁰

The MTSF gave welfare support dedicated attention, arguing for a shift in existing balances through: increasing access to social grants and, establishment of a new agency (SASSA) to manage social grants and, rationalization of the disability grant. The strategy was anticipated to lead

⁴⁹ Interventions in the second economy that built on existing government thrusts included: the expanded public works program, consisting of a re-launched or, expanding labour intensive projects to provide skills development for employment and self employment; the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) for local government and other budgets in social services to ensure dedicated resources for labour intensive programs for road building; environmental projects; water and sanitation and other social and economic services; ensuring permanent capacity for the maintenance of infrastructure on a sustainable basis; promoting community service in health, welfare and other areas; and, launching a massive program for Early Childhood Development as a deliberate human resource investment

⁵⁰ Targets were also set in relation to land reform and agricultural support programs: e.g. completing the_restitution_program within_three years, together with intensive agricultural_support, with resources allocated_for interventions where failures are registered; an immediate launch of the the agricultural credit scheme and assessment of the Communal Land Act and expansion of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program (CASAP) to improve the effectiveness of the land restitution and reform program

More to life than economics and livelihoods

to the eventual tapering off of the grant system “with more resources allocated to economic and social services – infrastructure, EPWP, education, housing, health etc.⁵¹

Institutional challenges included: improving the capacity of local government to provide services for economic growth and development; ensuring consistent provision of information on opportunities – economic and otherwise, offered by democracy to the broad public; and, developing a new culture in the operation of government, informed by the concept of the People’s Contract.⁵² The MTSF document openly acknowledges in its conclusion that the overall success of the strategy rested on the state’s internal (developmental) capacity. In its way forward for 2004-2009 the document made the point that “an active and decisive state” was required “to speed up economic growth and development” and that “success in this regard would result in material benefits for citizens and an improvement in social cohesion”.⁵³ The MTSF was a blueprint for a “trickle-down” approach to post apartheid development.

⁵¹ The document argued that for the state to play its role as a facilitator of economic growth by putting certain fundamentals had to be in place, such as improved capacity in the public service for growth and development. The focus for the five year period was identified as: improving the capacity of the state to implement its programs and, provide the necessary services and ensure requisite monitoring of the implementation process.

⁵² Combating crime, was prioritized “to facilitate economic growth” through interventions related to: a safe and efficient transport; improved efficiency in the justice system; profiling and interventions in contact crime areas; minimization of illicit trade and drug dealing; and, building the capacity of the intelligence services, alongside improved international relations, once again, for growth and development, in the SADC region and continent as a whole and, the marketing of South Africa

⁵³ IBID, page 19

More to life than economics and livelihoods

ASIGISA – a “catalytic” macro interventions

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to go into this in any depth, it is important to note that the MTSF laid the foundation for a number of what were called “catalytic interventions” aimed at “growing the economy in a way that benefited all”. One of these was the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASIGISA), announced in 2005 and implemented from 2006 onwards.⁵⁴

ASIGISA was viewed by government as a strategy that could take it a step further in defining the kind of programs required to substantially reduce unemployment and poverty, proposing to do this within a framework for economic intervention aimed at achieving broadly defined targets, such as 6% growth. Whether described as a set of programs or a policy package, ASIGISA placed a clear set of choices on the state’s agenda that were based on assumptions about South Africa's stage of development at the time. From its outset ASIGISA was viewed as a strategy that could impact or, drive South Africa's future development trajectory⁵⁵.

By stimulating demand throughout the economy and, directly creating jobs in certain sectors such as construction, ASIGISA aimed to have an immediate economy-wide effect on the levels of growth. But, as the Fifteen Year Review confirms, the take-up by local municipalities of the MIG is now viewed as “disappointing”, reflected in ongoing roll-overs and under-

⁵⁴ The rationale for the strategy goes back to the ANC's National General Council in June 2005, where the commission on Theory of Development reported that: *the central challenge our movement faces in the Second Decade of Freedom is to defeat poverty and substantially reduce the level of unemployment. This means that the ANC and government must produce a coherent development strategy. Elements of this would involve identifying where we need to move to and what strategic leaps we need to get there.*

⁵⁵ The core of the ASIGISA strategy was infrastructure investment which aimed to: significantly reduce significant infrastructural backlogs constraining economic growth such as energy investments and inadequate transport infrastructure (ports, rail and roads); reduce the 'cost of doing business' especially for our core export industries, such as unprocessed and semi-processed resources, which account for the bulk of export revenue and which require easy and reliable access to efficient ports located at some distance from the resource rich interior; increasing the quality of the stock of social capital available, especially to poorer communities, through municipal infrastructure development.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

expenditure on government's capital budgets. ASIGISA not only raised the problem of the state's capacity to spend in general, but the capacity of local government in particular, where the bulk of social investments aimed at improving the capital stock available to poor and marginalized communities are executed. While uneven in results, some analysts argue that ASIGISA's greater contribution lies in the fact that it gave more substance to concepts like the 'developmental state' and "second economy", with the latter focusing attention on structural inequality, disadvantage and, ongoing marginalization in South African society.⁵⁶ Critics of ASIGISA argue that its 'second economy' interventions appear as an 'add-on' to its investment and growth program and that instead of regarding gross inequalities as the central problem that developmental interventions should solve, it emphasizes growing the 'first economy' to generate resources to trickle down into the 'second economy'.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ ASIGISA's 'shared' component focused on assisting those in the 'second economy' with the capital, human resources and, other assets deemed necessary to participate effectively in the first economy, an approach highly critiqued for its tendency to obscure structural faults which sustain South Africa's dualistic economic structure and, divert attention from initiatives that aim to 'restructure the economy as a whole'

⁵⁷ A number of other so-called 'second economy programs' that built on work already in progress in some areas were launched or reconfigured during this period: the EPWP, the National Youth Service Program (NYS), expanded SMEE support, land reform, and the Integrated Food Security Program. The EPWP, viewed as a flagship public employment program to create work opportunities with on-the-job training to improve participants' chances of sustainable employment, reached its target of 1 million work opportunities by 2008, well before the target of 2009. Although significant EPWP opportunities were created through interventions like ECD and Home Community-based Care, the overall conclusion of the recent Presidential Review is that implementation of the EPWP has tended to be slow, with the exception of the environmental sector which delivered to full capacity. Progress with regard to the National Youth Service program was retarded by its reliance on departments to identify and create youth service opportunities from within existing budgets and, the lack of clear policy around stipends affected take-up. Central to government's approach to inclusive economic development was support for the development of small business and enterprise in the informal economy. Extensive small business support measures were created and consolidated but, according to the Review, the SMEE sector remained small compared to other developing countries. This led the Review to conclude that more needed to be done to improve market access for marginalized producers and, address structural constraints limiting growth and competitiveness in the sector

Poverty reduction and the role of the Department of Social Development (DSD)

Between 1994 and 2008 numerous policies and anti-poverty interventions described and analyzed above were introduced to make a critical impact on poverty and unemployment. But, it was an incrementally expanding social grant system that became the most effective response in government's "social" arsenal to reduce income poverty. By 2007 the grant system was reaching over 12 million beneficiaries, with the most important grant being the Child Support Grant (CSG) which reached 7,8 million beneficiaries in 2007 compared to 34 000 in 1999.⁵⁸ This section looks at the role of the DSD as a key institution in addressing poverty reduction in South Africa.

The Department of Social Development (DSD)

While there are clear achievements on the social welfare front, this needs to be located within the context of a growing ambition on the part of the ANC-led government to become known as the African continent's first self

⁵⁸ The presidential review argues that the "rapid expansion in the expenditure levels of the poor" can be directly attributed to the social security system which, by 2005, was already "contributing up to 90% of the income of individuals in the first two deciles and more than 50% in the fifth decile". And, that studies confirm that social support is well targeted, with 62% of total grants allocated to the poorest 40% households and 82% to the poorest 60%. In addition, the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and Compensation Fund, for occupations injuries and diseases, have also played a role in alleviating poverty. According to the Review, the UIF paid out R11 billion to 2,2 million beneficiaries between 2004 and 2008, while the Compensation Fund paid out R7,4 billion in benefits

More to life than economics and livelihoods

sufficient and competitive 'developmental state'. This contradiction is captured, in microcosm, by a government department sitting squarely on the horns of this dilemma, the DSD.⁵⁹

Institutional history

The roots of the DSD go back to the late 1930s (1937) when a welfare department was established in response to recommendations arising out of the 1929 Carnegie Commission of Enquiry into poverty in South Africa.⁶⁰ Its long institutional history is characterized by a number of conceptual and operational shifts that began in the apartheid era (1950s), when it shifted from being a single Welfare Department to becoming (14) separate departments serving different race groups, all mandated by the same welfare legislation.⁶¹

In a thought provoking paper Hassim (2007) highlights the way in which various influential groups shaped "the language of social policy" over the

⁵⁹ The section assesses the DSD in relation to its overarching conceptual framework, its various interventions (social protection, social services and social development), and its institutional capacity to deliver on an essentially multi-dimensional mandate focused on poverty reduction and social development. The assessment draws on insights and empirical data gathered by the author as a participant in a two year DSD-funded national study (2006 to 2008) that assessed DSD's role in relation to poverty relief projects and service delivery across 21 URP and ISRDP "poverty nodes" across the country. The section constructs the elements of an argument and rationale for DSD to re-conceptualize, re-capacitate and, re-position itself play a more comprehensive, integrating, and strategic role in relation to structural and chronic poverty and, wider social development in South Africa.

⁶⁰ According to Hassim (2007) despite existing racial boundaries, some benefits (pensions and grants for the blind and disabled) were extended to African and Indian people, although differentiated on the basis of racist assumptions about the needs of different groups. She describes the inclusion of African and Indian people as a "startling" finding, given the denial of political and civil rights to those not classified white at the time.

⁶¹ State subsidies to private welfare agencies stipulated racially discriminatory salaries for social workers. In the apartheid era the main grant for child and welfare was the state maintenance vote that was awarded on the basis of a means test to various categories of women....on a racially differentiated basis...[and] administered under the racial and homeland-segregated welfare delivery system....[with] most African families not benefiting from the grant (only 2 per 1000 African children received the grant). By contrast, grants to Indians and coloureds increased dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s as the state embarked on a reform programme that would offer limited citizenship rights to these groups....48 per 1000 (coloured) and 40 per 1000 (Indian), quoted in Hassim, page 6

More to life than economics and livelihoods

next three decades. She looks at this in relation to the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) which argued that women should take on political demands within what she describes as a radical “motherist” framework⁶², and contrasts the latter with the discourse of the trade union movement in the 1970s which focused its demands on wages and political rights, with little attention on rights related to social protection or, social assistance.

In the mid 1980s, in line with government’s overall policy thrust towards privatization (land, housing) the principle of welfare privatization was adopted, which the then National Party described as “a partnership between the state, the private business sector, and voluntary religious and community associations”. Hassim makes the crucial observation that, in terms of its own apartheid agenda, government through the Department of Constitutional Planning Directorate of Social Planning, made strategic (integrated) connections between welfare needs and the political and military objectives of the government.”⁶³

In a pre-transition policy formulation period, while debates raged about the nature, shape and form of housing, land reform, local government and, a post apartheid economy, there seems to have been very little attention paid to what kind of role welfare would or could play in meeting basic needs or, redistributing resources. Hassim makes an additional point, given the focus of her paper, that discussions around gender and social policy were rare because “feminists were generally marginal to political and feminist

⁶² Hassim argues that “motherism” had a powerful impact on the language of social policy in South Africa that persists into present policy discourses. In the anti-apartheid movement, motherism was articulated as a radical and empowering discourse and a means through which women could gain recognition for their gendered responsibilities

⁶³ IBID page 9

More to life than economics and livelihoods

debates” and, “that discussions around economic policy tended to occur in isolation from social policy”. Perhaps the larger point needing to be made is that during the policy formulation period all sector-specific policy discussions took place in isolation from each other, something we have paid dearly for in a post apartheid era in need of conceptual and practical integration and synergy.

In a pre-transition policy formulation period, while debates raged about the nature, shape and form of housing, land reform, local government and, a post apartheid economy, there seems to have been very little attention paid to what kind of role welfare would or could play in meeting basic needs or, redistributing resources. Hassim makes an additional point, given the focus of her paper, that discussions around gender and social policy were rare because “feminists were generally marginal to political and feminist debates” and, “that discussions around economic policy tended to occur in isolation from social policy”. Perhaps the larger point needing to be made is that during the policy formulation period all sector-specific policy discussions took place in isolation from each other, something we have paid dearly for in a post apartheid era in need of conceptual and practical integration and synergy.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ IBID

More to life than economics and livelihoods

The DSD in a post apartheid context⁶⁵

From the beginning of our transition the DSD confronted huge institutional challenges, inheriting as it did 14 different departments administering unequal social services and resources inefficiently across the country. The department's transformation and interventions, as noted earlier, are guided by a policy based on principles of equity and non-discrimination, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) which spelt out a new paradigm for the department – developmental social welfare.⁶⁶

The next key intervention in the evolution of DSD came in 2000 when it changed its name to the Department of Social Development, and introduced a Ten Point Plan to address a number of priorities for the next five years: HIV and Aids, poverty, and a range of other social issues. The strategy included more gender-sensitive program interventions like the Poverty Relief and Victim Empowerment Programs implemented in 1996 and 1997 respectively.

One of the reforms and targets which DSD set and battled to achieve was its so-called 80:20 policy which committed DSD to allocate 80% of its resources to social security and 20% to other programs. The target has been difficult to meet in a context where the demand and need for expansion of the social

⁶⁵ At the national level DSD provides implementation support to nine provincial Departments of Social Development, and monitors and evaluates a number of what it calls 'social development' programs. National DSD is also responsible for policy and oversight in the critical areas of social assistance (means-tested cash transfers to vulnerable categories of South African citizens), and social welfare services (including probation and adoption services, child and family counseling and support services, and shelters). Overall responsibility for (Provincial) social policy and service delivery lies with the provinces, with day to day implementation of its three core functions (social protection, social services, and community/social development) taking place through a network of DSD District Offices (DO) located across the country

⁶⁶ The concept of developmental social welfare, first outlined in the RDP (1994), is defined in the White Paper as a welfare system "which facilitates the development of human capacity and self-reliance within a caring and enabling socio-economic environment, based on a notion of an "interdependence of economic and social development and, equitable allocation and distribution of resources". Hassim argues that the principles embedded in the White Paper were critical for upholding the beliefs of the RDP and government's goal of a better life for all which laid the foundation for the development of a uniform national social grant system Ibid, page 12

More to life than economics and livelihoods

security grant has been relentless. The steady growth of DSD's departmental budget, from R12.1 billion in 1992/93 to R48.6 billion in 2003/04, is a key indicator of the cost of this expansion to the national fiscus. with 90% of provincial government spending allocated to social grants and, less than 2% of the overall budget to Poverty Relief/Sustainable Livelihoods.⁶⁷ The next strategic shift took place after 2004 when in line with the imperatives of the MTSF, the department began to align and restructure itself to play a more comprehensive and developmental role in the social sector.

A perusal of the DSD website and annual reports highlight a wide range of conceptually de-linked functions, services and interventions that fall under the department's ambit, a large percentage of which are undertaken in partnership with other departments and role-players. In addition to overseeing the exponential growth and expansion of the social assistance system the departmental mandate has widened to include a growing responsibility for a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving the livelihoods of South Africans. The latter includes: the coordination of home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS; food relief programs; a focus on poverty-relief projects and programmes for vulnerable groups; and, overseeing the work of the National Development Agency (NDA).⁶⁸

DSD and social protection

The DSD has addressed and continues to address social protection through a number of what appear to be separate interventions: social grants, the

⁶⁷ The Role of the Department of Social Development , p6

⁶⁸ The scope and scale of DSD's work and outreach is startling. For DSD to do its work effectively, the department and staff have to keep themselves up to date on numerous policies and laws that have either been formulated by the Department or, cut across the work of other departments and ministries (Correctional Services, Safety and Security etc). In addition to new legislation there are policies and laws inherited from the apartheid era that remain on the statute books which DSD is mandated to implement and monitor. For the purposes of this paper, however, DSD is assessed in relation to its wider social protection and, social development roles

More to life than economics and livelihoods

EPWP, the Integrated Nutrition Program, the National Food Security Program (up to 2006) and, other interventions,⁶⁹ with social assistance, despite intentions to the contrary, remaining the department's most important social protection intervention.⁷⁰

The South African Social Assistance Agency (SASSA), one of the key strategic interventions identified by the MTSF, was established as a mechanism to fast-track and improve the overall social grant system, align DSD strategies with the state's overall developmental thrust and, by de-linking the department from administering the grant, reduce the public perception that the DSD only addressed social welfare and relief.⁷¹ This intervention, which came into effect during 2006, is viewed as a key milestone in the evolution of the department, and the social security system in particular. It not only created a more robust vehicle to address obstacles in registering and administering social grants across the country, but is viewed by DSD staff as giving a new impetus to the department's goal of becoming more strategic and developmental. In order to guide the process forward, the DSD introduced a new operational tool, the Integrated Service Delivery Model

⁶⁹ For example, through the EPWP care is extended to orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) through training and expanding the skills of targeted caregivers, and pre-primary schools through DSD funding to ECD structures

⁷⁰ Barrientos argues that social pensions in South Africa reflect "the successful adaptation of colonial forms of social protection, once focused on offering minimum income to whites and coloureds and [that] since 1994 [this has been] extended to the entire population, providing vital income redistribution to poorer black households against the background of the end of apartheid". The Child Support Grant (CSG) is considered to be an example of an extension of social assistance with a human development dimension.

⁷¹ The Social Assistance Agency (SASSA) Act (Act 9 of 2004) and the Social Assistance Act 2004 (Act 13 of 2004) created the overarching legal and operational framework for ensuring an improved social assistance service for the country in alignment with Section 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). The SASSA Act created uniform norms and standards across the country and set standards with respect to performance and Batho Pele in terms of "customer" service. As part of its strategic shift DSD launched Operation Isidima, a national campaign aimed at "restoring dignity to recipients of social grants through a number of interventions: reducing the application of processing of grants to 21 days; enhancing human resource capacity to a ratio of 1:1000; upgrading pay and service points at nodal levels; enhancing communication by uniform messaging; standardizing the disability application process; and, deploying dedicated fraud prevention/detection teams

More to life than economics and livelihoods

(ISDM), conceptualized in 2005 and phased in at provincial and district office levels between 2006 and 2007. This is discussed in more detail below.⁷²

DSD and social (welfare) services

Cutting the administration of grants from the core “business” of the department left it standing on two other legs, social (welfare) services, and community (social) development through its Implementation Support and Development Directorate. The DSD’s social (welfare) services division is where the majority of its work currently takes place. This is directly related to the fact that irrespective of commitment to move more deeply into more developmental work, a wide range of statutory laws mandate the DSD to play a central social services role (intervention, referral, and offering prevention programs to a range of social groups caught in the middle of socially dysfunctional relationships, families, and communities across the country). These services, reaching children, youth, people with disabilities, abused women, criminals on probation and, youth at risk,⁷³ are implemented through the provincial departments of social development and its vast network of service providers, most of whom are NGOs.⁷⁴ Because of its many statutory obligations the bulk of the department’s staff are social

⁷² The ISDM focuses DSD work into eight key program areas and, four levels of intervention: early prevention; statutory mandates; and, reintegration habilitation. The impact of the model on DSD’s service delivery, anti-poverty and, social development interventions is looked at in more detail in the next section of the paper.

⁷³ Substance abuse interventions is another key focus of DSD. The Ke Moja Project in the Western Cape, for example, is a prevention program that successfully targets youth, with a strong focus on public education and awareness raising on drugs, as well as mobilizing them to say no to substance abuse. With respect to youth development, DSD resources and monitors numerous interventions that are guided by the National Youth Development (NYD) Policy Framework, World Programme of Action on Youth, and the Ministerial Plan include: youth development services

⁷⁴ For example, DSD is mandated to implement the Probation Services Act (Act 116 of 1991) as amended which involves functions such as: early intervention (reception, assessment and referral) and restorative justice programs; prevention programs to crime victims; and, carrying out ongoing statutory obligations. DSD is also tasked with the provision and establishment of inter-sectoral programs and policies aimed at the support, protection and empowerment of victims of crime and violence, with a special focus on women and children

More to life than economics and livelihoods

workers, supported by a growing number of auxiliary social workers, covering social relief and social services functions.⁷⁵

Towards a more effective service delivery and social development orientation: the ISDM

(Integrated Service Delivery Model)

The second key intervention post 2004 was the introduction of the ISDM, identified as a new operational approach, aimed at moving the department towards becoming more strategic and effective department within a social welfare developmental paradigm. According to the DSD, the ISDM was intended to assist in implementing a comprehensive, efficient, and quality service by adopting a different approach to service delivery, as well as build the capacity of its staff to contribute towards building a more 'self reliant' society. The ISDM, which acknowledges the inter-dependence between the department's main programs social security, social services, and community development, identifies its key target groups as women, children, older persons and, people with disabilities, with a special focus on "the family".

The ISDM framework provides what the department calls four levels of internationally recognised intervention: awareness and prevention; early intervention; statutory/crisis intervention; and, re-integration. Linked to the strategy are eight 'integrated' programs in the areas of children and families; capacity building; disability; HIV and AIDS; older persons; substance abuse; sustainable livelihoods (poverty reduction); and, youth. This ten-year

⁷⁵ Because of this DSD continues to play a key role with respect to the re-numeration of social workers; retention strategy for social workers; capacity building for social service professionals in terms of its Capacity-building Program for Social Service Professionals; repositioning the developmental welfare sector via the ISDM (see below); funding of NGOs as partners for services rendered; and, costing models to improve efficiency and responsiveness to need. DSD is also responsible for or represented on a number of statutory bodies: the National Development Agency (NDA); Relief Boards in terms of the Fund Raising Act (Act 108 of 1978), providing relief to people in distress; and the Non-Profit Organisations (Act 71 of 1997) that creates an enabling environment for NGOs

More to life than economics and livelihoods

operational model, designed to be implemented in a number of phases began in April 2006, reaching full roll out in the provinces by the end of 2007. The next section of the paper explores and assesses how DSD fared in its quest to become more developmental, strategic, and effective in relation to poverty reduction and service delivery in the Western Cape.

Social Policy, Social Protection and Social Development: the DSD in the Western Cape

Western Cape Provincial Government Policy and Development Frameworks

The ANC victory in the Western Cape in 2004 offered the ANC-led government in the Province its first opportunity to play a leading role in governance in the Province since the advent of democracy in 1994. In line with this and the developmental path outlined in the MTSF, the Province quickly developed its own version for a growth and development strategy called iKapa

Elihlumayo – A Home For All – or, the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS).

The influence of the MTSF and national developmental agendas is evident in the thrust of the PGDS, designed as a “a strategy to help overcome the province’schallenges, such as poverty, unemployment and, a shortage of

More to life than economics and livelihoods

housing...[as well as aiming] to shift the developmental path of the Western Cape towards a future of shared growth and integrated development..."⁷⁶ From mid-2004 onwards, the PGDS (which set key targets in relation to growth; equity; environmental integrity; and, empowerment) became the Province's overarching policy framework, guiding policies and practice of all provincial government departments, including the policies and interventions of the DSD in the Province.⁷⁷

Following a period of extensive research and synthesis of available data, eleven key strategies and plans were formulated for the Province that were identified as key drivers for achieving the stated aims and objectives of the PGDS, with some highly relevant to the DSD.⁷⁸ These strategies were to be

⁷⁶ Western Cape Government, 2007, GDS Green Paper: Executive Summary, June 2007

⁷⁷ The PGDS, in line with national government vision, favours economic and infrastructural outcomes. Its eight broad aims for the Province being: broader economic participation; efficient infrastructure that connects people; effective public and non-motorized transport; livable communities; strong and creative communities; spatial integration; a culture of tolerance and mutual respect; and, effective government institutions

⁷⁸ The Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP) which looks at what infrastructure is needed where and how it can be built over time within existing budgets for buying public land for settlements, increasing bulk infrastructure etc; the Micro-economic Developmental Strategy (MEDS) which developed detailed reports on specific sectors in the province and what is required for economic development, empowerment, increased employment and skills needed; the Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF) which shows where growth in the province should take place and how and where urban and rural communities can access public transport etc.; a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) which aims to reduce poverty through a range of interventions such as: job creation; access to social grants, health and education benefits and, dedicated programs to address the vulnerability of poor people; a Human Capital Development Strategy (HCDS) which emphasises retaining scarce skills and promoting quality education to expand the skills base in the province, as well as promoting basic adult education and further education and training; a Social Capital Formation Strategy (SCFS) which examines migration patterns and how the demography of the province has been changing, as well as looking at how to improve social networks and build social cohesion within communities in ways that can address growing crime and violence; the Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements Strategy (SHSS) which sets out some key options for addressing the housing backlog, the upgrading of informal settlements and, making communities safer and more comfortable; a Scarce Skills Strategy (SSS) which focuses on the development of skills and improved participation, especially by young people, in the growing sectors of the economy; an Integrated Law Reform Project (ILRP); this aims to bring together the different laws that inform planning, to make it simpler to develop land or set up businesses in a sustainable way; a Sustainable Development Implementation Plan (SDIP) which includes programs that encourage biodiversity, effective open space management and, better management of settlements; a Climate Change Response Strategy which looks at ways to save energy and the more effective use of public transport, as well as ways in which the public and private sectors can promote renewable energy from the sun, wind and, waves.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

implemented via eleven corresponding program or, focal areas: integrated human settlements; climate change; drugs, gangs and substance abuse; skills development; World Cup 2010; public transport; property development; the Expanded Public Works Program; A Home for All; governance; and, reducing poverty.⁷⁹

DSD in the Western Cape: frameworks, policy, and practice post 2004

Developmental frameworks

The DSD in the Province describes itself as “the lead department in Developmental Social Services, Poverty Reduction, and Social Capital/Cohesion”, with a priority role to play in the protection, care, and support of the most vulnerable members in communities, especially children, persons with disabilities, older persons and the poverty stricken. The DSD has a particular focus on supporting services aimed at developing youth and strengthening the family, in partnership with other (largely non-governmental) role-players.

In line with imperatives set by the MTSF, the DSD in the Province locates its own developmental goals and objectives within wider national frameworks like ASIGISA and, the PGDS vision. Two key provincial policy frameworks appear to have especially guided the orientation and direction of the department since 2004: the Provincial Integrated Poverty Reduction Strategy and Social Capital Formation Strategy, both of which DSD played a key role

⁷⁹ Out of the eleven focal areas, a so-called “Big Five” iKapa Projects evolved: Integrated Human Settlements; Public transport and World Cup 2010; drugs, gangs and substance abuse; climate change; and, skills development.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

in formulating. A closer inspection of the department between 2005 and 2007 highlights a provincial department caught up in frenzied policy formulation, planning, restructuring, and change management processes and challenges. In the case of DSD, as indicated above, this was initiated and compounded by two key strategic shifts from national DSD – the establishment of SASSA, and launch of its new operational strategy in the form of the ISDM, both of which took place in early 2006.

Strategic shifts

The DSD began setting up SASSA in the Western Cape from April 2006. This was a massive exercise consisting of redeploying administrative staff into the new structure, and finding appropriate premises, all of which created a level of internal confusion. Many DSD staff interviewed at provincial and district office level about this transitional moment consider the “break” from active welfare administration as necessary but, not necessarily that well thought through at practical or, logistical levels. At both conceptual and operational levels the advent and impact of SASSA is highly significant.

Its establishment tore out core functions and ways of doing “business” in the department that had been institutionalized for more than seven decades (1937 to 2006), leaving in its wake and inside the DSD a critical mass of staff, especially social workers, still largely informed by a residual welfare orientation, and institutional culture. The simultaneous establishment of SASSA and introduction of the ISDM set in motion an intense and highly demanding period (for all staff), filled with relentless consultative meetings and workshops in the Province that began in the second half of 2006, ending towards late 2007.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

A central aspect underpinning the ISDM strategy was that if the department was going to become more focused on poverty reduction and social development programs with potential to impact on the most vulnerable groups in South African society, it had to decentralize and strengthen DSD at Provincial level and, more importantly, build capacity at its critical point of implementation – the District Office (DO). Because the strategy was highly dependent on the capacity of its core implementation units meant that a lot more developmental capacity (conceptual, staff competence, leveraging strategic partnerships) needed to be built in these structures which, as noted above, were staffed largely by individuals whose formation, practice, and day to day functions were still driven by social welfare and social relief demands.

Change and continuity: findings and reflections on the DSD from the field⁸⁰

Background to the national study

In late 2005 the National DSD commissioned a large quantitative and qualitative review of its services and poverty relief projects located in the 21 “poverty nodes” where DSD operated alongside the ISRDP and URP programs. Three poverty nodes in the Western Cape were part of the national study: Khayelitsha and Mitchell’s Plain in the Cape Metro (URP) and, the Ceres District Municipality (ISRDP).⁸¹

⁸⁰ The assessment draws on empirical data and insights from field research and support work undertaken by the author between 2006 and 2008, described in more detail in the paper.

⁸¹ The purpose of the national research program was to develop a better understanding of social and local economic development as well as service delivery challenges in the nodes; guide the department in designing an integrated intervention strategy; and, assist government to plan and implement well structured and integrated development programs. Its objectives were to: learn how communities perceived and defined poverty and development; what people on the ground considered to be the main causes of poverty and what their indicators of development were; to understand the livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms of communities in the nodes in

More to life than economics and livelihoods

The study, implemented by research teams in all nine provinces, had three major components: an initial evaluation consisting of quantitative and qualitative baseline data on the scale and scope of DSD services and activities across all of the ISRDP and URP nodes; a support phase offered to staff at provincial and District Office (DO) levels, based on priority challenges identified from the first evaluation; and, a follow up 2nd more evaluative study that tracked significant changes and shifts in relation to DSD projects and service delivery. The second evaluation aimed to get updated information on the functioning of DSD-supported projects and identify whether, and how, issues raised during the first baseline research had been resolved.

Poverty and DSD services across all nodes: synthesis of national findings⁸²

The national study identified and captured findings at a range of different levels: across the entire spectrum (21) of urban and rural nodes; across the urban nodes and rural nodes, separately; and, area-specific findings in each poverty node, such as Khayelithsa and Mitchell's Plain in the Western Cape.

The quantitative study, based on 400 random interviews in each node, revealed high levels of poverty in the rural nodes; differences between the nature of urban and rural poverty; unemployment levels increasing in urban areas, although offset by increased access to social grants thereby, decreasing overall (income) poverty; and, the critical importance of local governance to address poverty reduction. The findings confirm recent

dealing with the challenges of poverty; establish the quality of social development services in the ISRDP and URP nodes; and establish the status, progress and impact of local projects implemented under the PRP in the 21 nodes

⁸² The national qualitative study was based on a sustainable livelihoods approach investigating: assets (economic, human and social); causes of vulnerability (stresses and shocks); policies, processes, institutions and organizations (formal and informal); desired outcomes; livelihood strategies; and, opportunities.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

findings on the significance of the social grant in reducing income poverty and highlighted that while lack of income was a key issue, people tended to perceive poverty as more than an income deficit. Other factors noted were constraints in terms of mobilizing sufficient resources to sustain a socially desirable quality of life, and the psycho-social aspects of HIV/AIDS. With respect to DSD services, findings were that the effectiveness of DSD services was difficult to measure; that demand outstrips supply; that a certain level of uncertainty exists around targeting; and, that the overall quality of services could be improved. On the institutional side, DSD district offices were perceived to be under-resourced with respect to infrastructure, administrative support, communication systems, coordination, and, integration.

Critical challenges arising out of the national study as a whole were: the lack of a clear identity and role in DSD in relation to the specificities and focus of its social development role now that social welfare had been devolved to SASSA; that DSD services were insufficient and under-resourced to meet demand; that only a small number of discrete poverty relief projects existed across the nodes and that those that did exist needed to be re-conceptualized in order to become more strategic in focus; that coordination within DSD itself and particularly in relation to local government and the Social Cluster needed to be improved (IDPS etc); and, that the DSD was challenged to carve out a more developmental role for itself in relation to internal consultative and planning mechanisms.

Overall findings: the urban nodes

A synthesis of findings across the (8) urban nodes found that high rates of unemployment characterized all the URP nodes,⁸³ with the average rate of

⁸³ Information in the following paragraphs in this section was obtained from Strategy and Tactics 2008 'ISRDP/URP 2006 baseline/2008 measurement survey', Strategy and Tactics, Johannesburg. This

More to life than economics and livelihoods

unemployment in the nodes having increased from 63% in 2006 to 65% in 2008 and, more than half (54%) of people interviewed reporting being out of work for four or more years, indicating a structural problem of unemployment.⁸⁴ Fifty-seven percent of households interviewed in 2008 were female-headed, with more than a third of households (38%) having children in them who were not children of the head of the household, indicating a sharp increase from 27% in 2006, and 33% of households reporting that they were looking after orphans. Forty-nine percent of households interviewed in the urban nodes in 2008 accessed child support grants. Empirical evidence confirmed that government grants (including pensions) had become the most important source of income for households in all the nodes, followed by income from work.

Regarding basic service delivery, the findings are once again consistent with the findings of the Presidential Review. Respondents indicated a general decline in service quality for water and electricity, but general improvements for most other basic services. There was an increase in access to piped water in the yard, but a decline in piped water into the house, and unhappiness with water quality appeared to be growing. There was an increase in the percentage of people saying they found it difficult to pay for their food needs (from 60% in 2006 to 65% in 2008) and knowledge about the food parcel program dropped from 18% to 12% over the same period. Eighteen percent of respondents felt that no sphere of government was doing anything to improve their quality of life, up from 11% in 2006, while HIV and AIDS and alcohol abuse remained the top health concerns for residents across the urban nodes. Although home-based care (HBC) was viewed as

report was part of the quantitative survey accompaniment to the qualitative research carried out by Khanya-aicdd comparing data from the 2006 baseline and a follow-up survey in 2008.

⁸⁴ Unemployment as a proportion of the economically active population, excluding pensioners, full-time students, those on disability grants and other similar categories

More to life than economics and livelihoods

important, only 3% of households interviewed were accessing it in 2008, with 3% providing HBC to others.

The overall urban study also looked at DSD in relation to direct interventions it made to address poverty, largely the community-based projects it supported as part of its Poverty Reduction or Sustainable Livelihoods component. Of the 21 projects reviewed in the eight nodes, 15 were income generating (IG) projects, meaning that they existed to sell a product or service at a profit to generate an income for the project members, and eleven provided a free service to the community such as caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Some projects were more difficult to categorize since they were involved in more than one type of activity so were recorded more than once. The most common activity involved food gardening/vegetable growing/ crops/plant nursery. Most projects were aimed at poverty alleviation and, in many cases, food security. All projects involved some form of skills training so that with these skills, members could engage in income generating activities.⁸⁵

A number of critical challenges emerged in relation to the projects. Training was highlighted as a key issue in half the urban nodes, especially business skills, viewed to be lacking and of uneven quality. Trainers were not always proficient in the specific area they were employed for and training was sometimes done before crucial decisions on ownership had been made.

⁸⁵ However, in Galeshewe, the Galeshewe Youth Initiative was aimed solely at empowering the youth with a variety of training from life to business skills. In Motherwell, although the Ibhongololutsha ICT Empowerment Resource Centre's primary purpose was technical and business skills training to project beneficiaries, it also operated as a small business providing internet, photocopying, and faxing services. In other projects, activities which could also result in income generation were used as a basis for psycho-social enrichment of single parents or the elderly such as the Thokoza Club in Inanda. Some projects were engaged in more than one activity e.g. the Masibambane Community Gardening in Khayelitsha which supports community gardens and related activities, including home-based care (HBC) and the Inanda Diversion project in Inanda which provides skills training in bead making and the production of cultural clothing.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Linking training to placement at existing workplaces was a challenge and projects struggles to get training and information on opportunities, including tenders and funding. The monitoring and assessment of training influenced the success of implementation in projects.

The sustainability of projects – threatened by lack of continued funds, support and planning – was another key issue, with lack of adequate DSD support raised in almost all nodes. A lack of project sites and markets, or lack of access to them, was highlighted, as were the difficulties projects faced in trying to expand their work and/or diversify. Other issues included a concern that community-based projects did not have a diverse funding base and were therefore reliant on DSD and the goodwill of volunteers for what little funding they had. Lack of, or limited, stipends for volunteers and members was another issue and concern along with the uncertainty of future funding.⁸⁶

Lack of integration, co-ordination, planning and communication and associated issues between DSD, projects, and other role-players or stakeholders was of concern across all nodes. Specific examples included strategic direction/issues not being sorted out before projects' business plans were drafted; unrealistic targets; lack of proper M&E systems; initiatives not being linked to placement at existing workplaces; and, DSD projects being conceptualized at provincial level in ways and forms that did not always resonate with local needs or aspirations. Changing objectives, roles and responsibilities during the life cycle of projects and the resultant loss of focus

⁸⁶ Some projects felt that the DSD funding application process was overly complex and stringent. This connected closely to issues of inappropriate and too complex business plans highlighted in the first evaluation. The practical application of the sustainable livelihoods approach in designing projects was not well understood in some nodes and, as a result, the DO supported very few projects under this line item in its budget. However, the DO staff wanted to increase the number of these projects. Participants in the evaluation also felt that DSD was not playing a proactive role in identifying other poverty relief and community development projects.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

and continuity undermined success. Sharing knowledge between projects also remained a challenge with projects doing similar work not learning from each other or gaining the benefit of best practice models.

Policy shifts at higher levels drove key changes at nodal level in the period between the two evaluations. Most significantly, DSD's new emphasis on social development rather than welfare and the de-linking of welfare functions and devolution to SASSA marked the start of an overall reorientation of activities at nodal level. The extension of outsourcing of services was also a significant change driven from the top. The Poverty Relief Program (PRP) became focused on food security and income security, in line with provincial thinking and directives, with social services confined to crisis intervention clients considered most vulnerable and at risk. Only a limited number of new (sustainable livelihood) projects were planned.

Evidence suggests that the shift in emphasis and activities from disbursing grants to a developmental orientation was difficult to implement across the nodes, with some staff members not as yet clear on what they were meant to be doing and wanting more guidance from higher levels in DSD to assist them to re-vision. The transfer of grant disbursement and associated staff to SASSA resulted in a staff vacuum and confusion about future roles for remaining staff. The lack of structured mechanisms for strategic discussion and sharing of emerging and cross-cutting issues at the DO level remained a challenge for institutional transformation at district level, as did an ongoing lack of resource materials and statistics on trends related to each node needed build the knowledge and understanding of district staff on the socio-economic profile of each area. Across all nodes, a lack of appropriate structures and systems, staff and staff capacity, resources and strategic guidance, and alignment and integration across departments, made the transition very challenging.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Findings from DSD research undertaken in Khayelitsha

Research and support work undertaken in the Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain urban nodes during 2006 and 2008 confirm overall national trends. For the purpose of this paper area-specific findings, categorized around a number of themes, are used to highlight the kinds of challenges, opportunities, and constraints government faces, especially a department like DSD, in attempts to become more 'developmental'.

The research site: context and profile

Khayelitsha is a relatively well researched urban settlement located approximately 30-35 km from the centre of Cape Town, constructed as an apartheid dumping ground for African residents from the Western Cape in the mid-1980s. While the settlement began as a highly contested and controversial option for African residents living in the Western Cape, over the years it has incrementally grown into what is now considered to be the largest urban settlement in the City of Cape Town, consisting of at least 22 "suburbs" or "villages" made up of a mix of formal and informal settlements.

Research showed that since its development in the early 1980s significant public and private sector resources have been spent on physical infrastructure and putting in place what the City of Cape Town calls "dignified" public spaces, as well as implementing programs and initiatives aimed at addressing pressing social, economic and cultural challenges.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Khayelitsha was ranked as the fourth best with respect to health indicators: those affected by malaria in the past 12 months; percentage experience difficulties accessing health care; percentage

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Despite significant public and private investment, the majority of Khayelitsha residents, especially those living in informal settlements, are considered vulnerable and poor. Some of the biggest drivers of poverty in Khayelitsha are its spatial location, far away from industrial opportunities; a relatively insecure environment due to high levels of crime, substance abuse, and violence; its stigmatization as a sprawling black “ghetto” in the City; and, ongoing high HIV and AIDS prevalence rates.⁸⁸

The DSD plays a vital role through its social service provision

The study confirmed that the DSD played a vital, if not as yet measurable, role in the overall goal of reducing poverty in the Western Cape, largely by virtue of the scale and outreach of its various social services and poverty-related interventions most of which are implemented through service providers. These focus on food security, domestic violence, substance abuse, early childhood education, HIV and AIDS, the elderly, disabled, and income generation.⁸⁹

Khayelitsha ranked in the middle in relation to other URP nodes (50%) when it came to service deficits, while Mitchell’s Plain ranked higher. The indicators used for this were: percentage receiving social grants, percentage using DSD services; percentage rating government services as poor; percentage with access to a phone; percentage who believed that

unable to work due to poor health. HIV/AIDS was viewed as the major health issues in the community, although lower when measured across the nodes; access to health services rated lower than in other nodes, with distance and payment being critical issues. The overall recommendation emanating from the study was for an integrated intervention that incorporated health, poverty, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

⁸⁸ Information in this paragraph was obtained from Strategy and Tactics 2006 ‘Department of Social Development baseline survey: Khayelitsha reports’, Strategy and Tactics, Johannesburg. This report was the quantitative survey accompaniment to the qualitative research carried out by Khanya-aicdd in the 1st evaluation.

⁸⁹ In line with the way DSD operates as a whole, most of its services and projects are outsourced, meaning that DSD strategies are implemented through intermediary service providers and project grantees. This gives the department very little control over the quality and focus of services it supports through its network of service providers which flies in the face of one of the key findings of the recent Presidential Review which argues that government has in general had the most impact with interventions directly under its control.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

government coordination is poor; percentage who thought local government performance was poor; and, percentage who had never heard of the IDPs. In line with national trends, 53% households receiving social grants at the time received the CSG; 10% receiving grants received the old age pensions; 45% encountered DSD services at the source, the DSD DO; 29% of respondents interacted with DSD at pension Pay-Out Points; and, no respondents were aware of any other DSD services being provided in the area signaling a very low level of awareness regarding what other roles and services the DSD offers to residents in the area.

Overarching strategic shifts impacting on the work of the DSD in the area

Strategies and policies designed at the top levels of institutions take a while to become operational and are often a lot more radical in impact than anticipated at the time. The study as we know coincided with the period when the Province was actively engaged in implementing the ISDM, trying to “cascade” its main operating principles and elements down to the DO level. The transitional process (SASSA and ISDM) had far-reaching implications, meaning that the process needed to be well planned and managed, challenging in an institution largely driven by external demands. As a consequence it was viewed as intensive and challenging.

Although a lot still needed to be done to bring everybody on board, at both conceptual and operational levels, the evaluation revealed a steady and growing commitment to the changes brought about by the new strategic operational framework. At the DO level, planning for improved alignment with the eight core DSD programs and more effective delivery was already becoming the norm by the middle of 2008. A newly introduced operational plan (2007/08) and review findings show strong institutional commitment to

More to life than economics and livelihoods

ensure that local level planning and programming became aligned with the overall vision and goals of the ISDM.

Institutional capacity to manage and implement strategic shifts

At the same time, largely because the ISDM was introduced into an already over-stretched institutional environment, staff charged with managing the transitional process found it very hard to keep up with the number and nature of new and ongoing demands. The shift added additional tasks to staff already over-worked and over-loaded with ongoing social services and social relief. While more resources were allocated for staff recruitment, appointments did not always happen at the correct staffing level. As a consequence skills being brought into the department at DO level were not always congruent with skills needed to take on a more developmental role, and while management seemed clear about what was needed they argued that strategic support was not necessarily available from the Provincial office.

The magnitude and size of area and population that DSD has to service in Khayelitsha is another overwhelming factor for DO staff, with demand always outstripping supply, leading to what the management described as an ongoing “low morale” amongst staff. Although staff were eager and highly committed to turn the department’s new vision into material benefits for the area, they argued that the DO lacked structured mechanisms and strategic leadership for sharing emerging and cross-cutting issues within the DO staff, between the DO and Provincial Office; and, between the DSD and other stakeholders.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

An ambiguous image and role with respect to welfare functions

While staff are conversant with the broad contours of the ISDM and its overall direction, there is general consensus that the identity and image of the DSD remains ambiguous with respect to its social assistance role, even though it has de-linked itself from playing a direct or public role with respect to social (welfare) grants. The inability for the department to shake or rise above its image as a welfare department is compounded by a number of factors. Firstly, because SASSA continues to operate from the same building in Khayelitsha (as well as Mitchell's Plain) the first impression a local resident gets of DSD when he/she walks into the building is a social welfare one, given SASSA's overwhelming staff and infrastructural presence. While the DSD staff may know that SASSA is an independent agency of government with its own staff, the public have not been assisted to make that distinction. Secondly, the DSD continues to have a responsibility when it comes to social relief, including disaster relief and management. This pulls the department back into a welfare paradigm, irrespective of stated intentions. Its ongoing role for social welfare service provision, even though implemented through other service providers, means that its ongoing and main operational partners remain welfare oriented. And, thirdly, since most DSD staff are either trained social workers or, auxiliary social workers, the bulk of its human resource capital and capacity, linked to budget, remains focused on the welfare-related side of its work.

The limits of the DSD and social (community) development, social cohesion and social capital

Social development, along with concepts like social cohesion and social capital, remain fuzzy and largely un-contextualized notions in post apartheid South Africa. While many activities and interventions the department undertakes or supports can be labeled 'social development' or,

More to life than economics and livelihoods

make a contribution towards improved 'social cohesion', it is fair to say, that social interventions remain strategically under-explored and untracked in terms of impact at individual, family, household or, community levels. There are certainly no clear examples in projects and services reviewed in Khayelitsha, apart from funds allocated to ECD and more generalized capacity building activities, that human development is being specifically targeted or, supported. There is very little evidence of discussions or debates taking place at the DO level to clarify what more the DSD could be doing in relation to social or community development, with staff expressing a level of frustration on how to proceed in this area.⁹⁰

In line with the overall thrust of the Province, informed by the imperatives of the MTSF, more than 50% of funds under the control of the DO at the time of the study were allocated to ECD centres. Although business plans and progress reports were done in accordance with the DSD prescribed format, a one-size-fits-all approach did not allow for a real engagement between DSD and its project applicants. The lack of relevant social or community development capacity in the DO made it difficult for existing Community Development staff, mostly young and inexperienced, to carve out a more developmental role for the department at the local level. They are currently supervised by social workers with limited project or community/social development experience. A good example of this is that while the DO had given capacity building support to food garden initiatives, staff did not always have enough development knowledge or experience to

⁹⁰ The 1st qualitative evaluation (2006) highlighted the fact that with the exception of a large grant to the City of Cape Town's Urban Renewal Unit (used to support the latter's poverty-related projects and interventions in Khayelitsha) the DSD had made limited use of the PRP or Sustainable Livelihoods component of its budget to address poverty or social needs in the area, a trend that continued into 2008. Poverty reduction and relief were predominantly addressed through social grants (managed by SASSA), and social services provided by contracted social security service providers.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

discern what kinds of interventions were needed to make a difference to people's ability to generate an income or livelihood in a sustainable way.⁹¹

Connections and strategic partnerships

The DSD at DO level is well connected and linked through the vast range of service providers it supports on the ground, through its linkages at Provincial level and, through its National Office to a vast network of South African and international agencies. Although there are definite signs of improvement since the introduction of the ISDM, the DSD is generally not perceived as being an active networking department. One of its weakest links is its relatively poor working relationship with local government in the area.⁹² The limited nature of its partnerships, beyond the usual, and lack of visibility as a key player in the area, even though the department is probably THE central player in terms of actual or potential social impact and outreach, appears to be linked to a perceived lack of leadership capacity in the DSD. There is no evidence, either at DO or Provincial level, of a leadership that can as yet clearly articulate, champion, communicate, and mobilize support for the overall work of the department or, wider social development interventions and outcomes, in partnership with other stakeholders – Health, Housing, Arts and Culture, Safety and Security, Home Affairs, and local government. This lack of leadership and creativity in the development of partnerships and interventions can be directly traced, in my assessment, to a lack of conceptual clarity and confidence on what DSD should or could be

⁹¹ At the time of the 1st evaluation only five projects were being supported through funding from the Poverty Relief Program (PRP), while all were dealing with relevant issues raised in the situation analysis of the node (HIV and AIDS, food security, job creation, skills development) and targeted vulnerable groups, the size and scale of social and economic challenges facing the area mitigated against meaningful impact

⁹² The fact that minimal linkages had been made between the DO in Khaeylitsha and the City's URP which focuses specifically on poverty reduction in the node was a startling finding of the 1st evaluation (2006). This trend continued as a challenge for the DO at the time of the 2nd review (2008).

More to life than economics and livelihoods

doing with respect to linking social development, social services and, social grants/social protection in this or any other area.

Conclusions

The DSD currently fulfill three core functions or roles: social protection – social grants (SASSA) and CHBC as part of the EPWP; social welfare and relief services – through DSD social and auxiliary workers and contracted service providers, and what they call ‘emerging local organizations’; and, social development/sustainable livelihoods through direct project support, with the latter largely focused on food security and income generation.

While its outsourced social grants function is clear and can be tracked, what DSD supports with respect to social services or social development is not easily visible to an outside observer or someone trying to analyze its resource distribution or, allocations across a particular area. At the time of the final review (2008) it was not possible to extract data on specific activities or interventions DSD supported with respect to each service provider funded by the DSD, let alone track or measure impact each may be having with respect to poverty reduction, food security, income generation, orphans and vulnerable children, people living with HIV and AIDS or, those caring for those affected by HIV and AIDS or, Sustainable Livelihoods.

The DO (staff and infrastructure) in Khayelitsha cannot adequately address the scale and scope of need or opportunities that arise in the area and, as already noted and confirmed in discussions with DO staff, the area is too big to be treated as a single area. Greater Khayelitsha consists of a number of “villages” or “suburbs” that stretch out across 15kms, making access to the DSD services difficult, especially for residents living in resource poor neighborhoods in the area.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

In relation to project interventions, the DSD could not at the time easily track or, disaggregate what projects or interventions it was directly or indirectly supporting in terms of potential impact on poverty reduction or, social development in the area. At the time of the review monitoring and evaluation staff members were being actively recruited at the DO level, indicating serious attention to the issue at both DO and provincial level. It DSD does not appear to be a visible or vital role player with respect to poverty reduction and social services, remaining largely identified as a dispenser of social grants. The fact that SASSA continues to operate from DSD premises in Khayelitsha means that the social grant function obscures other roles and functions which are also not promoted. Its vast outreach in terms of social services and social relief is obscured by the fact that most of this is outsourced to service providers with independent profiles and identities.

The DSD's chosen mechanism to promote a new image and guide strategic change, especially at the DO level, the ISDM, requires high levels of strategic management and community development skills and knowledge which were not well defined and therefore limited at DO level. Staff recruited were brought in at a relatively low level or grade within the public service, meaning that the DO was not as yet attracting staff with the range of experience and skill it needed if wanting to shift its institutional thinking and operations towards being more developmental with respect to strategies, partnerships, and outcomes.

With respect to integration, staff members alluded to improved integration happening (internally and at a nodal level) but argued that not enough appeared to be happening across DSD services as a whole; between DO and DSD (provincial); or, with other tiers of government, especially the DSD and

More to life than economics and livelihoods

local government. A good example of this being the lack of linkage between the URP and DO with respect to poverty reduction in Khayelitsha. While clear opportunities for collaboration exist, given the ISDM vision and goals and those of the URP, there was minimal contact between staff from the DO and the URP staff at the time.

And, finally, while the DSD remains well positioned and poised at national, Provincial, and local level to play a key role in making the kinds of integrated program connections Barrientos talks about (cross-cutting poverty reduction interventions), integrating social protection (social assistance) with other more programmatic interventions, it appears to have a long way to go before it can rise to this challenge or, the challenge may be beyond its reach.

Conclusions, challenges, and opportunities

For the purposes of engaging with some of the issues raised in the paper a number of broad preliminary conclusions are put forward, along with tentative suggestions for a way forward. These are put forward to provoke further debate and discussion on clarifying what potential role public and civil society institutions can play, independently and as a collective, to take forward a social agenda in South Africa that simultaneously addresses poverty and inequality and, at a broader and more fundamental level, improves how citizens experience the quality of their lives.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Understanding poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon requiring multi-faceted responses from the public and private sphere continues to elude us in South Africa

The paper concludes that poverty in South Africa is widespread, largely feminine, chronic, structural, and multidimensional in nature. Secondly, that a vast range of interventions designed and applied to the challenges of poverty since 1994, while impressive in intent and commitment, do not appear to have made a qualitative difference to the lives of South African citizens, or, if they have, impact cannot be tracked, with the exception of the social grants. Limited tools, resources, and commitment make it more difficult and less desirable to track the qualitative impact of human capital investment or, positive and negative impacts of assets being redistributed to the poor in South Africa. There are a limited number if any, of the kind of multi-faceted social protection or social development program interventions deemed necessary to make a serious impact on poverty or, address fuzzy issues like social cohesion.

Proposal:

- Support, encourage, resource, and pilot indicators or creative methodologies to track the impact of qualitative inputs on offer aimed at addressing poverty and social cohesion
- Revisit and analyze poverty-related interventions across sectors and within a department like DSD and others in the 'social sector'
- Challenge the Office of the Presidency to re-think and re-shape its current approach to poverty, including its latest Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy (2008)

More to life than economics and livelihoods

which still echoes the kind of econometric and one-dimensional imperatives the paper challenges

The current development paradigm and all that flows from it has re-enforced a global tendency inside South Africa, especially government, that views and values measurable economic inputs and outcomes as superior to social or cultural ones.

The paper has gone to some length to show how government incrementally subordinated the macro-social to macro-economic outcomes and imperatives, how this has influenced and shaped how we view citizen aspiration and need, and the design and targeting of interventions. This trend was given new impetus and direction from 2004 onwards under former President Thabo Mbeki who led from the front via the Office of the Presidency to “blaze a new trail” that included “trade-offs” along the way. A good example of this is that while youth search for personal development, exposure to a wide range of social experience, social and cultural outlets and opportunities in their respective communities, interventions on offer have tended to go in another direction. Most interventions on offer - from learnerships to funding from the UYF - are designed and driven by economic as opposed to social or cultural imperatives. The paper concludes that the time has come to turn the current development paradigm on its head in order to effect a fundamental shift in the minds of government and the wider public towards a paradigm that values and embraces the social and cultural side of South Africa life, as ends in themselves, rather than activities and outcomes subordinate to economic imperatives and outcomes.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Proposal:

- Mobilize support at all levels for a total re-think and re-visioning of our current developmental paradigm to include, as equal elements, social and cultural interventions.
- In reconfiguring the paradigm look beyond government to include developmental organs of civil society, development practitioners and academics as familiar with the social terrain as economists are when talking about macro-economic inputs and outcomes.
- Develop or find a language or, discourse that resonates with the deeply felt social, economic and cultural aspirations of all South African citizens.

South Africa has incrementally become a welfare state as the result of an expanded social grant system and range of other social protection interventions on offer

Without removing or diminishing the need for South Africa to address deeply embedded structural and chronic poverty challenges in the country or, the crucial role social grants have played in addressing this, the reality is that only a small percentage of those currently receiving unconditional cash transfers (pensioners, and the disabled) may be unable to engage in the formal or, informal economy through other interventions. The country's largest social grant, the CSG, while a major indicator of political will and commitment to address poverty and vulnerability in South Africa, it is also an indicator, given its expanding scale and scope, that something may be seriously wrong with South African society, and that we need to seriously explore mechanisms that go beyond social assistance or, the EPWP as a matter of urgency.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Proposal:

- Revisit and support opportunities on offer to create jobs, generate income or, offer new experiences to our citizens, especially youth, which develop them not only as income generators but as knowledge-based and active citizens in society

Social development remains an elusive and poorly understood concept in South Africa

The paper advocates developing a more nuanced and people-centred understanding and application of what is meant by the term 'social development', globally and in South Africa. The implications of not applying time and intellect to the concept are enormous and especially relevant in a social reality deeply scarred by decades and layers of social trauma and dislocation experienced under colonial, apartheid and, to some extent, post apartheid rule. The implication of the analysis of social development put forward in the literature, that society develops through inputs made by its brightest and talented visionaries and pioneers, challenges all of us in South Africa to re-think our concern and obsession with only looking at poverty from the perspective of the most income-deprived groups in our society, giving equal attention to the exploration of opportunities that nurture and support our brightest and talented citizens, irrespective of race, colour, class, or religion or, other bounded categories

Proposal:

- Establish a mechanism for identifying, as a collective, a re-conceptualized and grounded perspective and understanding of 'social development', including concepts like social cohesion, that take us into more exciting and

More to life than economics and livelihoods

potentially more effective and authentic social programs that resonate with wider citizen aspirations.

- Make 'social investment' as, if not more, important than economic investment

There is no clear link or interplay between social reality, social policy and, social protection in South Africa

The paper concludes that no visible interplay seems to exist between social policy, social protection or, social development interventions in post apartheid South Africa. While social policy is informed by the principles of the South African Constitution, rights and entitlements embedded in the Bill of Rights remain highly contested areas of struggle not always in synch with a dynamic and changing social reality. While clear opportunities for linkages exist, lateral ways of thinking are required to transcend normative boundaries in our society – race, class, gender, religion, and culture.

Proposal:

- Unpack and unravel this issue, theoretically and practically, with respect to South Africa in order to discern potential gaps in thinking and application. A good example being finding active ways to link the social grant system to wider opportunities on offer

More to life than economics and livelihoods

A department like DSD is unable to fulfill its role and position in relation to challenges posed by social protection, social services and, social development.

The paper spends a lot of time on unraveling the institutional history and trajectory of the DSD, as well as limitations DSD faces, in general and more specifically in relation to its position, role, functions, and developmental capacity at DO level. This leads one to a number of conclusions.

Firstly, based on existing findings and insights, the DSD appears to be structurally located at the centre and on the horn of a central South African social dilemma – how to move citizens out of a welfare reality into one that potentially taps into and utilizes the vast range and depth of intellectual, social, and cultural assets and experience inherent in our diverse society. Secondly, the DSD is a central, although largely invisible, player in almost all aspects of social distress and activity in South Africa and, at the same time, carries the responsibility for social development. Its social outreach while not quantified in the paper appears to be enormous if one adds up the number of beneficiaries linked to its various interventions and programs. In order to fulfill what is an essentially multi-dimensional role the department needs to transform itself into a more developmental Ministry and department capable of playing a leading role with respect to contextualizing and finding relevant interventions, especially if it wants to address murky and fuzzy concepts in our development discourse like, “social capital”, “social cohesion” and, “social inclusion”. The paper concludes that as currently conceptualized, structured, capacitated, and viewed by others, the DSD cannot meet these challenges, irrespective of will.

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Proposal:

- In line with arguments presented thus far in this paper, the DSD is challenged to play a key role in the kind of paradigm shift envisaged in this paper.
- The DSD needs to re-think and re-conceptualize the various roles and functions it is being asked to play and restructure, re-capacitate, and re-align itself with relevant government departments (Arts and Culture, Home Affairs, Safety and Security, Land Affairs, Housing) to more effectively address its social protection, social services, and social development roles in South Africa (including the way it categorizes and conceptualizes its current work and interventions)
- If unable to do the above, the DSD and government need to seriously review the department's overly ambitious and almost impossible mandate with respect to social protection, social services and, social development
- The Office of the Presidency which has assumed a key role and lead in setting the anti-poverty agenda for the country needs to seriously apply its intellectual mind in a direction that takes on the "social" with the same veracity and resources as it does with economic challenges and, needs to play a key role in reviewing the role, position, mandate and developmental capacity needs of the DSD

The current debate on the 'developmental state' in South Africa needs to be contextualized

The post apartheid government has increasingly articulated its ambition to become a 'developmental state', with the ANC strongly advocating that the concept needs to be contextualized. The recent Presidential Review concludes that the concept requires a lot more clarification in the next phase of our transition. The Fifteen Year Review identifies a number of what it

More to life than economics and livelihoods

calls 'critical fundamentals' that need to be in place if the state is going to have the capacity it needs to implement "the elements of strategic posture". One of the red threads running through the Review is what it calls "the capacity and limits of the state to pursue the objectives it sets in relation to reconstruction and development". It argues that improved performance and impact require institutional change, and that one of the most important advances made thus far is what it calls a "crystallization of thinking about what characteristics a developmental state needs to have at this stage of South Africa's transformation"⁹³

The Review puts forward the following three focal areas as a strategic way forward. Firstly it needs a strategic orientation, based on people-centred and people-driven change. Secondly, it needs organizational capacity, to ensure that its systems and structures effectively facilitate the implementation of agreed upon programs, insisting on the highest possible standards of public service. Thirdly, it needs to master long-term planning, as a prerequisite not only of technical capacity but also of the state's ability to give leadership to the rest of society by making long-term commitments that other actors can rely on. The Review argues that, where necessary, that could entail taking the nation along a path that might demand short-term sacrifices by various players in the interests of longer term gains for all.⁹⁴

This is a clear indication that the Office of the Presidency, as in 2004, intends developing a new developmental paradigm which, like the previous one, was based on certain assumptions about where the country was in its stage of development and what its citizens wanted or desired with respect to their quality of life. The paper concludes that assumptions about what South

⁹³ Fifteen Year Review, page 118

⁹⁴ IBID, page 119

More to life than economics and livelihoods

African citizens want and where we are in this moment of our history and development needs to be made explicit and openly debated before the Presidency takes “the nation along a path that might demand short-term sacrifices by various players in the interests of longer term gains for all”. A developmental state, in the South African context, must be one that listens, in order to discern what is needed and required by its citizens to improve their individual and collective lives. To ensure that our post apartheid state remains transparent and accountable means developing an active and knowledge-based citizen base, palpably weakened since the advent of democracy in 1994.

Proposal:

- Unless we undergo a shift at the highest level, starting with the Office of the Presidency, to develop a new conceptual framework to underpin a newly configured developmental path, accompanied by a language that talks to and resonates with the aspirations of South African citizens first and, overseas and domestic investors second, no amount of additional financial resources promised in the current budget will make a serious dent on the causes and drivers of poverty (at all levels), ongoing social and economic inequality or, social dislocation in our country.

References

Chronic Poverty Research Centre, (2008). *Chronic Poverty Report 2008-2009: Escaping Poverty Traps*

Cleveland, H, and Jacobs, G, (1999). *Human Choice: The Genetic Code for Social Development*

Department of Social Development, (2007). *Overview of 10 Year Integrated Service Delivery Plan: 2007-2017*

Devereux, S and Sabates-Wheeler, R, (2004). *Transformative social protection*, IDS Working Paper 232

Du Toit, A, (2005). *Chronic Poverty and Development Policy: Chronic and structural poverty in South Africa: Challenges for action and research*

Hassim, S, (2005). *Gender, Welfare and the Developmental State*, UNRISD Project on Gender and Social Policy

Magasela, W, (2006). *Towards a Constitution-based definition of poverty in post apartheid South Africa*, State of the Nation 2005-2006, HSRC Press

Neves, D and Du Toit, A, (2006), *Vulnerability and Social Protection at the Margins of the Formal Economy*

Office of the Presidency, (2008). *Towards a Fifteen Year Review: Synthesis Report*

More to life than economics and livelihoods

Parnell, S and Pieterse, E, (2007). *Living on the Margins: Realising the 'right to the city'*

Philips, S, (2004). *The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP): Overcoming underdevelopment in South Africa's second economy*

Poggenpoel, S and Olivier, L, (2004) *Investigating the Implications of Ten Years of Democracy for Women: The Role of the Department of Social Development*

South African Communist Party, (2005). *A Developmental State for South Africa: Discussion Paper for the 2005 Central Committee*

USAID, *Vulnerability and Social Protection at the Margins of the Formal Economy: Case Studies from Khayelitsha and the Eastern Cape*