

# The Institute of Social and Economic Research



# ISER

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH





# Annual Report 2023



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*

## **Message from the Director**

The ISER has taken major leaps forward on several fronts and consolidated ground on previous activities and projects in 2023, a year that marks a significant new chapter in our journey to become a more resilient and sustainable Institute. We have continued to work steadily to develop the right skills and partnerships to address Africa's social challenges as we build an Institute that not only richly contributes to research leadership and practice at Rhodes University, but also engages in advocacy work on policy-related matters on a national, continental and global level.

### **Establishment of the Future Earth Africa Hub and its Leadership Centre**

Our biggest leap forward has been the establishment of the National Research Foundation's Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLC), a Rhodes University and University of Pretoria (UP) initiative that extends the vital work of the global Future Earth organisation in Africa. The launch of the Future Earth Africa Hub (FEAH) and its Leadership Centre took place at the Nelson Mandela University Research and Innovation Week in June 2023, representing a major milestone that will continue to grow our continental representation and capacity in the Future Earth network of scientists, researchers, and innovators collaborating for a more sustainable planet.

The FEAHLC is co-led from the ISER, with Prof. Mbatha as the acting Director, and the implementing partners include the Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC), the Institute of Water Research (IWR) and the Future Africa (FA) campus at the University of Pretoria. The decision to house this initiative at the ISER was taken deliberately to rebuild this Institute in its pursuit of its vision and mission to build research and policy networks across the African continent. It puts the ISER on a platform to better leverage funding opportunities around and through the NRF.

Dr Faten Attig-Bahar from Future Earth Global Secretariat joined the ISER in October 2023 to support the establishment of the FEAHLC on a consultant basis, supported by the Rhodes University HR department. In June and October 2023, Dr Attig-Bahar and Prof. Mbatha attended two events in Panama (SRI 2023) and in Rwanda (UN Climate Change Programme) to develop African-based partnerships for the Future Earth Africa Hub and the Leadership Centre.

The inaugural Sustainability Science Cluster meeting of the FEAHLC was held over two days on 27-28 November at the Future Africa campus at the University of Pretoria, with invited delegates from Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana, as well as all implementing and consortium partners.

### **ISER degree and learning programmes**

Through its formal and informal learning programmes, the ISER now contributes directly towards the teaching portfolio of the university.



The Interdisciplinary Honours Degree in Development Studies (coordinated by the ISER) is now known and discussed nationwide and in other parts of the continent on various platforms. 2023 saw its highest number of applications and finally admitted students coming from outside Rhodes University, including the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University), University of Mpumalanga, University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of the Free State (UFS), and University of Cape Town (UCT).

The Winter School on Data Analysis needs some attention. Concrete talks are underway to present the course to a Rwandan cohort as part of a Youth Development Programme in that country from 2024. Other discussions on the course involved SALGA and the NRF in July 2023. Unfortunately, it is becoming clearer that a captured South African public sector is more preoccupied with layering bureaucracy as work, and less with using bureaucratic processes to promote actual outputs that improve the quality of life of citizens. This means meaningful research support and practice would increasingly get funded externally. Similar sentiments were shared at the IWR's Board meeting.

### **ISER in the field**

On the provincial front, fieldwork visits were undertaken to the Western Cape province for the WRC project and to Matatiele in the Eastern Cape province for the WWF project. Fieldwork keeps us true to the spirit of social research. The third training event and fieldtrip on the Cost-Benefit Analytical framework for water sector stakeholders, including government, researchers, and business, led by the ISER and supported by the ELRC in the Breede River Catchment area of the Western Cape (WRC-funded research) took place in January 2023.

### **ISER in the press**

The ISER was highly active in the national media space, starting with public debates on the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine in February 2023 (News24 Friday's Editor Brief and the SABC news), the implications of RSA losing its AGOA benefits as a result of political links with Russia towards preparations for the BRICS summit (see News24 editorial coverage and the SABC news reports). The latest discussions of AGOA were linked to the AGOA Forum hosted by RSA for the whole continent (see *Daily Maverick*, and the *Mail & Guardian's* business news articles and the eNCA and SAfm coverage of the ISER). The ISER is now deeply entrenched in the imagination of the South African public and US government trade policy-making platforms when it comes to analytical discussions of global trade, economic and associated political events and issues.

### **Academic and public engagement highlights**

The ISER did better than planned for 2023 in public engagements, with seminars/webinars organised and presented on topical issues.

Highlights in this area include:

- Dr. Steffen Otterbach, Universität Hohenheim in Germany and ISER visiting Research Fellow), came to Rhodes University in September/October 2023 on the Hobart-Houghton Research Fellowship, jointly at the ISER and the Department of Economics and Economic History. He presented two stimulating seminars at the ISER and in the Economics Department. Thanks go to Prof. Jen Snowball for supporting this initiative.
- Professor Tabitha Kiriti-Nganga, Chair of the WTO Chairs Program at the University of Nairobi and the ISER Visiting Research Fellow from the University of Nairobi,, hosted a women's month public discussion on Gender and Trade in Africa.
- Professor Emeritus V. Møller alongside Dr Ben Roberts of the HSRC presented their research findings on Youth and Hope for Youth Day on 16th of June 2023 on national television (SABC). Professor V. Møller is still deeply involved in academic research publication and networking which adds great academic value to the work of the ISER in the Human Development and Quality of Life Theme.
- Prof. M. Gustafsson presented a public seminar discussion on the Politics of Education in South Africa.

A public engagement session with the Environmental Rural Solutions (ERS), the WWF, the ISER and the IWR, represented by Prof. Tony Palmer, Prof. M. Gustafsson and Prof. N.C. Mbatha was organised and nationally advertised. Unfortunately the WWF cancelled as its main funder, Nedbank, could not attend.

### **Progress on the Journal of Contemporary African Studies**

We're proud to have made good progress with JCAS during 2023. The JCAS historical backlog is down from the 300s to 100s within eighteen months - but still requires strong management to avoid another wave. We are putting a system in place to manage possible future build-ups.

The ISER research and operational projects, human resources management, marketing and branding efforts, partnerships development and finances are presented in detail in the report.

I'd like to express my gratitude to the Board members for dedicating their time, energy, and passion for three years to support and ensure the success of our five-year strategy. I am also grateful to the Board members for agreeing to remain on board until the end of the five-year strategic period.



I appreciate the Board members' guidance and support during ISER events. Particular thanks go to the JCAS Task Team, which has successfully developed a transparent and more effective future governance infrastructure for the journal through its Editorial Board.

I am grateful to all the members who took the time to support our seminars and contributed ideas at formal and informal settings. Thank you for brainstorming with me and making our Board meetings more productive and engaging. Your dedication and support have been invaluable, and I am truly grateful for your contributions towards our success.

It has all been appreciated.

**Cyril Nhlanhla Mbatha**

## Table of Contents

Message from the Director.....	2
CHAPTER 1 .....	8
VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS WITH VALUES .....	8
1.1 Introduction.....	8
1.2 The vision and mission statements of the ISER .....	8
1.3 The ISER team and research associates .....	10
The core team .....	10
ISER associates .....	16
CHAPTER 2 .....	28
RESEARCH STRATEGY, OUTPUTS AND KEY ACTIVITIES.....	28
2.1 Introduction.....	28
2.2 The core business activities .....	28
2.3 Research generation .....	28
2.4 How the ISER’s work relates to selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) .....	29
2.4.1 The current Research Implementation Strategy .....	30
2.4.2 For books, book chapters and other articles.....	31
2.4.3 Report on 2023 research activities .....	32
2.4.4. Formal programme: The ISER Interdisciplinary Honours Degree Programme .....	37
2.4.5. Informal programmes and workshop engagement .....	39
2.4.5.1 Data Analysis short course .....	39
2.4.5.2 Short Learning Programme (Cost-Benefit Analysis).....	40
2.4.5.3 CBA training in the Breede River Catchment .....	40
2.4.6 Post Graduate student supervision .....	41
2023 student supervision .....	41
Honours long paper.....	42
Master’s Degree .....	42
Doctoral Degree .....	42
2.4.7 Community engagement.....	43
2.4.8 Academic citizenship.....	43
2.4.9 The operational strategy to support the vision and mission.....	43
CHAPTER 3 .....	45
SCHOLARLY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT .....	45
3.1 Introduction.....	45
3.2 ISER seminar series .....	45
3.3 ISER Working Papers .....	51
CHAPTER 4 .....	53
CURRENT AND INITIATED PROJECTS .....	53
4.1 Introduction .....	53
4.2 Current research projects.....	53



Project 1: The Water Research Commission (Social Learning) .....	53
Project 2: WWF Project.....	55
Project 3: FEAHLC.....	56
4.3 Pipeline research projects.....	61
Project 1: Office of the Premier Eastern Cape Government.....	61
Project 2: Eastern Cape Provincial Labour Markets Intelligence Project .....	62
Project 3: ISER led Sustainability Science on Land and Investments .....	63
Project 4: ISER-HSRC .....	63
Project 5: Skills Development project for Rwanda with Vanguard Economics .....	63
Project 6: Water Research Commission (Social Learning).....	64
4.4 Operational projects in 2023 .....	64
Project 1: The ISER Archives Restoration project .....	64
CHAPTER 5 .....	65
PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS REPORT .....	65
5.1 Introduction.....	65
5.2 Key partners within Rhodes University .....	66
5.3 Key partners external to Rhodes University.....	66
5.4 NGO and private business partnerships .....	67
5.5 Partnership plan going forward .....	67
CHAPTER 6 .....	68
COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING REPORT .....	68
6.1 Communications and marketing objectives of the ISER.....	68
6.2 Communications and marketing strategy.....	68
6.3 ISER Channel Focus.....	69
6.4 Execution progress report.....	69
6.4.1 Media coverage results .....	69
6.4.2 Webinar support.....	73
6.4.3 Social media.....	73
CHAPTER 7 .....	75
THE JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN STUDIES (JCAS) REPORT .....	75



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS WITH VALUES**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In part, this 2023 ISER annual report presents managerial, operational and research activities that were presented for approval by the Advisory Board throughout 2023 and after the last meeting on 23 November 2023. The ISER's vision and mission statements, which were developed after the current Director joined the Institute on 1 May 2020, are also outlined below for continuous evaluation and reflection.

### **1.2 The vision and mission statements of the ISER**

The vision and mission statements indicate the Institute's focus on advancing research that is not only locally or provincially based, but also has great relevance to national and continental social and economic challenges. At the ISER we believe that our shared values must guide us in navigating the collective journey to achieve and execute our vision and mission, respectively.

#### **OUR TAGLINE**

*Leading research for Africa*

#### **OUR VISION**

We strive to be a globally recognised centre of transformative social and economic research excellence that contributes towards a fairer, more just and equitable society through championing African-led enquiry, innovation and knowledge-sharing.

#### **OUR MISSION**

The ISER is a dynamic African hub of high quality and pioneering social and economic research that is opening gateways for community-rooted knowledge to be recognised and incorporated in policy and practice aimed at improving the natural environment and quality of human life.

## **OUR VALUES**

### **Excellence in groundbreaking, ground-up, rigorous and multi-faceted research**

We strive to achieve excellent and effective results through policy-relevant, community-led research that can be practically applied. We are equitable, transformational and inclusive in our subjects and methods.

### **Social transformation and environmental sustainability**

We champion socio-economic justice for sustainable and improved livelihoods, ensuring equitable access and the preservation of bio-cultural diversity. Our research informs policy that recognises multiple and evolving values, including local natural resource stewardship, spatial justice and community sustainability. We provide platforms that promote diverse expressions and facilitate knowledge-sharing towards finding common ground.

### **Advancing and sharing Africa-led knowledge**

We create, connect and enable knowledge networks across South Africa and the African continent. We support dynamic socio-economic research, innovation and development that comes *from the continent* rather than *to the continent*.

### **Social commitment and community engagement**

The real value of what the ISER does depends upon the long-term, positive impact that we can make on the economic vitality of people, organisations, and communities through engaged and transformative research.

### **Innovation**

We are open to ideas that challenge conventional views and drive innovation. We believe that in order to stay relevant, we must constantly improve with society's changing needs to develop work that pushes forward the boundaries of research.

### **Accountability**

We are accountable to society, marginalised communities, the research community, Rhodes University, our funders, our respondents, and all stakeholders. We accept personal responsibility and accountability for our actions and results. We respond to the needs and expectations of our research partners with urgency, exercising good judgement in addressing changing circumstances.

### **Integrity**

We are driven by our commitment to enabling vulnerable groups to overcome poverty and improve quality of life, and not by personal gain or alliances with vested interests. We are honest, and act with integrity. We do not tolerate unethical behaviour; we challenge it as a matter of personal responsibility.

### **Respect, diversity and equality**

We treat our colleagues, partners, donors, and research and community partners with fairness, respect and sensitivity. As part of this respect, we share co-engaged learning with all contributors. We value diversity and draw upon the different strengths, cultures, ideas, experience and talents of people.

### **Collaboration and partnership**

Collaboration with internal and external partners is necessary to increase the effectiveness and relevance of our work and research.

## **1.3 The ISER team and research associates**

### **The core team**

#### **Researcher: Dr Reesha Kara**



Dr Reesha Kara is currently a researcher at the ISER focusing on human and economic development. She recently completed a year as a postdoctoral fellow at the Neil Aggett Labour Studies Unit (NALSU) where her work looked at single motherhood among educated women in South Africa. This was closely linked to her PhD, also completed at NALSU which adopted a mixed methods approach and focused on identifying trends and characteristics of never married older mothers in South Africa. Her research interests include single motherhood, socio-economic wellbeing, gender relations, poverty and social issues concerning everyday South Africans. Specifically, Reesha has years of experience and training in quantitative research methodology, focusing on the analysis of nationally representative survey data. Many of her research projects have been developed around the use of social statistics to understand social and economic phenomenon. Reesha has a Master's degree in Population Studies, Honours degree in Sociology and Bachelor of Social Science (Industrial Psychology and Sociology) degree from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Dr Kara returned from maternity leave in May 2023 after the birth of her and Preston's son, Ezra.

**Academic and research administrator: Ms Jamie Alexander**



Jamie Alexander does a great job as an Academic and Research Administrator for the ISER, supporting the Institute with academic and research projects including the Institute's Seminar Series, Working Paper Series, Academic Networking and other related projects.

Jamie has embarked on completing her PhD on sacred cultural landscapes and their application for bio-cultural diversity conservation. Her MA explored children's cultural environmental narratives and their role in the transmission of cultural connection to and protection of biodiversity. Her honour's thesis focused on tourism, crime and benefit in relation to the tourism industry in Vilankulo, Mozambique.

In the past, Jamie has worked as a social anthropologist and environmental consultant, being involved in assessing the impact of numerous large-scale development projects in South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Egypt and Kenya. She has also been involved in the interactive environmental arts-based programmes of the Arkwork Collective and was one of the facilitators of the Arkwork Circus. This project, centred on vulnerable and at-risk youth, utilised arts-based education, drama and storytelling to enable participants to create a community production which was performed at the Grahamstown Festival.

Jamie's research interests include sacred spaces, cultural landscapes, cultural identity and belonging, environmental perceptions, Local Ecological Knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, cultural environmental narratives, bio-cultural diversity conservation, participatory learning processes and tourism.

**ISER Director: Prof. Nhlanhla Cyril Mbatha**



Prof. Mbatha is the current Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University, after acting as Dean and CEO at the Unisa School of Business Leadership in early 2020.

In 2015 he was the first Director of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) - Regional Leadership Centre in Southern Africa (RLCSA), an initiative by the former US President, Barack Obama. Mbatha was also Chief Research Manager and Head of the Labour Markets Research Unit (LMRU) at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) from 2012 to 2013, before becoming Head of Finance and Economics at Unisa's Business School.

Before joining Unisa in 2009 as an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics he was a Senior Lecturer at Rhodes University's Department of Economics and Economic History, where he taught undergraduate and post graduate courses in Environmental Economics, Public Finance, Microeconomics, Development Economics. At Unisa's Business School he taught macro and microeconomics for business leaders and managers. He actively conducts research on natural resources management, including research on South Africa's land and water laws, agricultural economics and land reform projects across the African continent. His other research interests include topics on the interface of labour markets and skills development. In the last 15 years he has been a senior research consultant on topics including Public Finances Management, Labour Markets & Further Education and Training, International and Regional Trade Integration for numerous government departments and research councils in South Africa as well as for international donor organisations like the UNDP in Botswana and the World Trade Organisation.



**Financial administrator: Ms Gail Bint**

Gail completed her matric at Port Alfred High School. She worked in the finance industry for 18 years before joining the ISER in 2014. She has been doing an incredible job of ensuring that the ISER's finances are used appropriately, recorded accordingly and reported on and presented every month, using international standards of accounting. Gail has a great sense of humour and is a pillar of strength for the Institute.

We were delighted when Ms Bint returned from medical leave in May 2023.



**General administrator: Mr Bulelani Mothlabane**

Bulelani Mothlabane was born in Grahamstown. After completing his matric in 2007 at Graeme College he studied towards a National Diploma in Tourism Management at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). After completing his diploma Bulelani worked at Makana Tourism from 2012 till 2014 as an Information Officer. He was then appointed the Administrative Assistant at ISER in 2014. Bulelani does an excellent administrative job in the office, on the ISER's webpage and other social media platforms of the Institute. During 2023, Bulelani took on additional administrative responsibilities.



**Research assistant: Mr Mzukisi Kuse**

Mzukisi Kuse, is a PhD candidate at Rhodes University. He has been involved in coordinating various courses, community projects and scientific endeavours which includes people from all walks of life who are involved in natural resource management and have an interest in transformative learning. He also has industry experience which spans over several years and has also worked in different companies.

His PhD centres around expansive learning, evaluation and monitoring of stakeholder engagements, co-management of resources and water security issues. He is passionate about teaching people, especially

people without “formal education”, and is now a researcher and a practitioner who is positioned in the science-education nexus.

Mr Kuse joined the ISER in November 2023 as a general research assistant across all projects and also contributes to operational projects. Congratulations to Mr Kuse for submitting his PhD thesis in December 2023.



**Research Assistant (JCAS): Ms Ayanda Gamedze**

Ayanda Gamedze is a PhD candidate at Rhodes University. She has five years of teaching experience as a tutor and Teaching Assistant for the Rhodes University Department of Sociology and Industrial Sociology, and in 2020 and 2021, she presented a course on gender and social media.

Her PhD is an exploration of how men respond to narratives of hegemonic masculinity and their experiences of rape culture, and her 2019 MA thesis was a look at how Black women experience Historically White Universities. Her research interests centre on gender, sexuality, feminism, and intersectionality.

Ms Gamedze joined the ISER in January 2023 and is responsible for the general coordination of Taylor & Francis ScholarOne system.



**Research Assistant (JCAS): Dr Ola Adeniyi**

Dr Ola Adeniyi has been an attorney for more than 20 years, with a Masters of Law degree from Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria, obtained in 2003. She graduated with a Doctor of Law degree from the University of Pretoria’s Centre for Human Rights more than six years ago. She has been a University of Ottawa Queen Elizabeth Scholar and OpenAIR fellow, as well as a research fellow with the Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law (CIPIT) Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya. She has been a fellow at the International Centre for Women’s Leadership (2018) Coady International Institute, St Francis Xaviers University, Antigonish, Nova



Scotia, Canada. She has written and presented extensively on issues around women's challenges, including the historical and sociological problems of child marriages in African countries.

Dr Adeneyi joined the ISER in 2023 and is responsible for coordination of JCAS article reviews and Honour's student project supervision.



**Administrator (FEAHLIC): Mrs Khezi Jobo**

Mrs Khezi Jobo is the Administrator for the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre with over eight years of experience as an office support person. She currently works alongside the management team for Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre and worked for the University of Cape Town for several years before joining FEAHLIC. Khezi is responsible for the administration of FEAHLIC and uses her positive attitude and energy in joining various projects to advance her skills and experience.

Mrs Jobo was formally appointed in October 2023, taking over from Ms Janine Goliath who assisted at the FEAHLIC for about two months.



**Post-doctoral Researcher (FEAHLIC): Mr Frans Mothupi**

Mr Frans Mothupi passed his PhD in Environmental Science at Rhodes University in December 2023 and has research experience in a variety of topics in multiple disciplines. He has conducted research using different research methodologies from both the natural and social sciences. He has a vested interest in Africa's developmental challenges, particularly rural development, with a keen focus on sustainable livelihoods, agriculture, food security, and land and agrarian studies. He has gained experience in working on research projects outside his area of interest.

Mr Mothupi joined the ISER in December 2023 and is responsible for research coordination in the ISER's-led Sustainability Science cluster in land and investments.

## ISER associates

### Professor Emeritus Valerie Møller



**VALERIE MØLLER** is Professor Emeritus at Rhodes University. She was appointed to the new chair of Quality of Life Studies at Rhodes in the Institute of Social and Economic Research in 2007. Before that she was director of ISER (1998–2006) and headed the Quality of Life Research Unit at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, in the 1990s. She grew up in the southern United States and Switzerland. A sociologist by training, she received her Ph.D. from the University of Zürich. She and her architect husband arrived in Africa in 1972 in a VW kombi and stayed. She has lived and worked in southern Africa since that time.

Together with South African colleagues, she initiated the South African Quality of Life (SAQoL) trends study that has tracked the personal well-being of South Africans from all walks of life since the early 1980s. In 1996 and 2004, together with Alex Michalos, editor of the leading international journal on quality-of-life, *Social Indicators Research*, she organised 'roving conferences' to promote social indicators and quality-of-life research among South African scholars. The 2004 'Roving Conference' held at Rhodes University formed part of the University's Centenary celebrations.

Valerie Møller has published some 200 research articles, chapters in books, and research monographs covering a wide range of topics related to quality of life and well-being. She has edited or co-edited a number of Springer volumes on quality-of-life topics including two focusing on South African quality of life (published in 1997 and 2007).

She is an international Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) *Distinguished QoL Researcher* in recognition of her lifetime achievements and accomplishments in quality-of-life studies. She hosted the ISQOLS 7th conference at Rhodes University in 2006, and served as ISQoL's President (2007–8). She serves on the boards of a number of quality-of-life journals and received the 1997 (with Lawrence Schlemmer) and 2013 Best *Social Indicator Research (SIR) Paper* awards. The 2013 Best *SIR Paper* reported on three decades of the SAQoL trends study.

### **Communications and Marketing Strategist: Ms Tamaryn Brown**



Tamaryn does a fantastic job working with the ISER on a part time basis as a consultant supporting the ISER team in its communications, marketing and branding activities.

Tamaryn worked in communications for General Electric in London, Belgium and New York, before joining Ogilvy in South Africa. She co-founded Kaelo Engage, a consultancy focused on cause communications, including the successful CSI multi-platform series Kaelo-Stories of Hope. She joined Connect Media in 2010 (then Chillibush PR), which she now owns.

Tamaryn has gained extensive local and international experience in public relations, communications and sponsorship, working on both the client and agency side in various sectors, including hospitality and entertainment, property, FMCG, financial services, technology, automotive, mining, construction, logistics and renewable energy. She has extensive experience working within the public and educational sector, serving clients such as the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). Tamaryn has worked for Brand South Africa and the Industrial Development Corporation, and served as media liaison for Hyundai during their sponsorship throughout the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Tamaryn is passionate about cause-related work and development communications. Recent experience includes delivering integrated communications for KFC's Add Hope initiative, annual savings campaigns for the South African Savings Institute, CSI and cause-related marketing for Pandora, cause-related literacy campaigns for Pizza Hut across Africa and anti-tobacco campaigns for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a global NGO based in Washington.

She has a proven record in developing breakthrough strategies and managing integration of paid, earned, shared and owned platforms to build powerful brand stories.



**Editor in Chief, the Journal of Contemporary African Studies (JCAS): Professor Nthabiseng Motsemme**

The ISER hosts the Journal of Contemporary African Studies (JCAS), an interdisciplinary journal in the human sciences which seeks to promote a scholarly understanding of developments and change in Africa. Professor Nthabiseng Mutsemme was appointed Chief Editor in July 2022. Prof. Mutsemme is currently Associate Professor in Department of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg, where her key responsibilities include teaching, supervision, research and publication. She has contributed towards programme-specific frameworks, guidelines and administrative processes at the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) and University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), as well as being responsible for conceptualising and implementing research administration and post-graduate capacity development programmes and training.

**VISITING PROFESSORS**



**Prof. Edward Webster:** BA (Hons) Sociology (Essex), Msc Social Policy DPhil (Oxon)

Prof. Webster is currently Professor Emeritus in the Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP), at the University of the Witwatersrand which he has served for almost 40 years. He is recognised both locally and internationally for his significant contribution to scholarship, especially in the field of Industrial Sociology.



**Prof. Ben Fine:** BA, BPhil (Oxon), PhD (London)

Prof. Fine is Emeritus Professor of Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has (co)authored or edited over thirty books and published over 250 articles covering a wide range of economic theory, economic and social policy, development economics, political economy and the history of economic thought, with a strong intellectual commitment to interdisciplinarity.



**Prof. Pantaleo Daniel Rwelamila:** PhD, Construction Economics, (Liverpool, UK ) (UCT)

Prof. Rwelamila is a professional project manager and a project procurement expert specialising in procurement policy, infrastructure procurement and management of risks and contracts management; international development projects; and strategic alliances. He read Construction Engineering Economics, Project Management and Construction Project Procurement at ARI/ARDHI University (Tanzania), Brunel University (United Kingdom) (CM-Project Management) and University of Liverpool/University of Cape Town (United Kingdom/South Africa)(Project Management & Procurement Systems) respectively.





**Prof. Tabitha Kiriti Nganga:** PhD Economics (University of Queensland, Australia)

Tabitha Kiriti Nganga is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford and is a Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics and Development Studies at the University of Nairobi specializing in International Trade, Gender, Poverty and Food Security. She is the Coordinator of UNCTAD Virtual Institute and the Chair of the WTO Chairs Program in the University of Nairobi. She is also a member of the National Consultative Committee Trade Facilitation, National Consultative Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), National Consultative Committee on University Education, Chair of the Post Graduate Studies Committee in the Department of Economics and Development Studies and a member of the Post Graduate Studies Committee in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Nairobi. Tabitha is Senior Fellow in the Pan African Scientific Research Council. She has done extensive research, has authored and co-authored papers in trade, food security, poverty, gender and women studies, advocacy, social protection, gender-based violence, affirmative action, education and health. She has held trade, poverty, food security, 2 gender, advocacy training workshops not only at the local level but also at the regional and international levels. She is currently a mentor of the Global Value Chains Phase 2 project at the AERC and a Visiting Research Fellow at Oxford University, Department of Economics: Centre for the Study of African Economies. She attained her PhD from the University of Queensland in Australia, a Diploma in Legal Instruments of International Economic Relations and Regional Integration from the University of Barcelona, an MA degree in Economics from the University of Nairobi and a bachelor's degree in education with specific focus on Economics and Business Studies from the same University.

## VISITING FELLOWS



**Dr Steffen Otterbach** Doctoral Degree in Economics (Hohenheim)

Dr. Steffen Otterbach is Post-doctoral Researcher and Lecturer at the Institute for Health Care & Public Management at the University of Hohenheim, Germany from where he holds a PhD in economics. With a specialization in empirical economics his research interests are in the fields of labor economics, health economics, and development economics. His research focuses on the impact of working conditions (e.g. working time and mismatches between actual and desired working hours) on health and wellbeing. His research interests also include food security and nutrition aspects in developing countries. Dr. Otterbach has extensive experience in analyzing large-scale data sets including the German Socioeconomic (GSOEP) Panel Study, the Australian Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics Study (HILDA), or the South African National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS).

Besides a number of research visits and conference participations in the United States, Australia, South Africa, and Kenya, Dr. Otterbach equipped himself with further international work experience at the Organization of Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD). He is a research affiliate at the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA) in Bonn, Germany, and a member of the Senate Committee on Research at the University of Hohenheim. Besides others, his work has appeared in *Social Indicators Research*, *China Economic Review*, and *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health*.

Dr Otterbach visited the ISER and the Department of Economics and Economic History in 2023, with financial support from the Hobart Houghton Research Fellowship.





**Prof. Martin Gustafsson** PhD, Economics (Stellenbosch)

Martin Gustafsson is an education economist and associate professor attached to the Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP) unit, which in turn is linked to the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University. He moreover provides technical assistance on a part-time basis to the national Department of Basic Education, Pretoria, South Africa. He is based in Pretoria.

Since 2021 he has collaborated on a voluntary basis with ISER at Rhodes, engaging in occasional guest lecturing and providing support to post-graduate students with a strong education planning interest. As part of his relationship with ISER he has also explored in more depth his secondary interest, namely education and communication relating to climate change policy.



**Dr Faten Attig Bahar**

Dr. Faten Attig Bahar is a climate change and renewable energy expert with a wealth of expertise in implementing both research and work programs in the area of energy technologies, energy systems modeling, climate mitigation and finance, the water-energy-food nexus, and the green transition.

Additionally, Faten is a Certified Renewable Energy Project Developer of the German Renewable Energy Academy (RENAC). She has also obtained certificates in Renewable Market Leadership, Green Finance and Energy Efficiency from the same Academy, and was an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow in the International Climate Protection Program (2019 -2020).

Moreover, Faten is very active with international and regional committees that promote sustainability and climate protection. She holds positions of responsibility in various African and International NGOs including:

- The Future Earth Governing Council, Future Earth WEF Nexus KAN and previously, the Future Earth African Committee
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Research Board on Weather, Climate, Water and the Environment
- The Young Earth System Scientists Community, (YESS community)

Additionally, Faten is the author of several children's books (20 published books in Arabic), and has won several awards as an outstanding author for the youth since 2007.

Dr Attig Bahar from Tunisia joined the ISER as leading consultant for the FEAHLC from October 2023 and was appointed Visiting Fellow by Rhodes University for the ISER in December 2023.

## RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



**Mr Wandile Sihlobo** Master's Degree, MSc in Agricultural Economics (Stellenbosch)

Mr Wandile Sihlobo is the Chief Economist of the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz) and the author of "*Finding Common Ground: Land, Equity, and Agriculture*".

He is a Senior Lecturer Extraordinary at the Department of Agricultural Economics at Stellenbosch University and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand.



**Dr Dumisani Hompashe** PhD, Economics (Stellenbosch)

Dr Dumisani Hompashe has over eight years of experience working in the higher education sector. He started working as a lecturer at the University of Fort Hare in 2013. He also serves as Research Associate at the Research for Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP) unit and the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Stellenbosch University and Rhodes University respectively.

He obtained a Secondary Teacher's Diploma from the then Griffiths Mxenge College of Education in 1990. In 1998, he acquired a Certificate in Environmental Education from Rhodes University. He got his BA degree in Economics and English from the University of South Africa in 2001. He also attained BA Honours (Financial Economics) and MCom (Financial Markets) from Rhodes University in 2004 and 2009. In March 2021, he graduated with a PhD (Economics) from Stellenbosch

University. His research interests include the quality of education and healthcare, inequality of education outcomes, and development economics. Competencies: Data analytic techniques, Qualitative data collection methods, use of various statistical software packages including Stata, SPSS and Eviews.

## RESEARCH FELLOWS



**Dr Samuel Dominic Sadian** PhD, Sociology (Barcelona)

University of Barcelona Barcelona Spain Oct. 2013– Nov.2017  
(Defended Feb. 2018)

PhD: Doctoral dissertation in sociology. Passed with excellence. Doctoral dissertation focussed on overcoming the conceptual and empirical shortcomings of neo-Marxist and other productivistic approaches to modern social change in the humanities and social sciences. It portrays consumer practices as an essential dimension of struggles for recognition in circuits of market exchange, centralised redistribution and social reciprocity and develops an approach to consumption potentially applicable to a wide range of modern social settings, using case studies from post-Second World War South Africa in the fields of housing, healing and clothing.

Rhodes University Grahamstown South Africa Feb.2006– Jul.2009  
(Awarded Apr. 2010)

MA: Dissertation in political and international studies. Passed with distinction. Master's dissertation focused on Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's contributions towards an ontologically informed critique of procedural versions of liberalism. This entailed critically relating elements of Taylor's philosophical anthropology to his more historically situated writing on theories of justice, civic humanism and the practical politics of recognition in modern societies.

Rhodes University Grahamstown South Africa Feb.2003– Nov.2003

BA (Joint honours): Majored in English & Political and International Studies. Passed with distinction and full academic colours.

Rhodes University Grahamstown South Africa Feb.2000– Nov.2002  
BA (Undergraduate): Majored in English & Political and International  
Studies. Passed with distinction and full academic colours.



**Prof Michael Rogan MA & PhD (UKZN)**

Michael Rogan is an Associate Professor in Economics and Economic History, and an active member of the Neil Aggett Labour Studies Unit (NALSU) where he runs some of the largest projects. He is also an honorary research fellow at the HSRC's Education and Skills Development Research Programme and a research associate in the global research-policy-action network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). He holds a PhD and a Master's degree from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Prof Rogan's work over the past five years has focused largely on informal employment, gender, poverty, food security, education and skills development, and survey design.



**Mr David Fryer MSc, (UKZN, Pietermaritzburg)**

David Fryer is a political economist at Rhodes University's Department of Economics and Economic History, where he teaches macroeconomics, microeconomics, and political economy and labour. He is part of the Neil Aggett Labour Studies Unit (NALSU) and is a co-editor of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. David's research interests include labour markets, education and skills systems, and the role of macroeconomic and social policy, with a particular interest in social democracy and multilateralism. At a local level, David has recently been focusing on Makhanda, and Rhodes University's position in the community. He is currently engaged in research projects on the contribution of local agency to sustainability, Early Learning, Rhodes University's 9/10<sup>th</sup> programme, and the performance of Economics 2 students.



**Prof Tally Palmer PhD (Rhodes University)**

Professor Emeritus Tally Palmer is the former director of the Institute of Water Research and the ARUA Water Centre of Excellence. Some of her responsibilities included developing research direction and strategy, securing grant income, and Supervision of Post-Graduate Students.

Prof. Palmer was previously the Executive Director of the National Research Foundation (NRF) before re-joining Rhodes University as Director of the IWR in 2012.



**Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka B.Prim Ed (JP) (University of Port Elizabeth), B.Ed (Hons), D.Ed (University of Stellenbosch)**

Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka started her professional life as a Grade 1 teacher. She now holds a Tier 1 South African National Research Foundation/Department of Science and Technology Chair in Global Change and Social Learning Systems, and is a Distinguished Research Professor at Rhodes University.

Her Chair is based in the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University, which she directed for 15 years (2000-2015). The current focus of the Chair's research is transformative social learning and green skills learning pathways in areas of biodiversity, the water food nexus, climate change, social and environmental justice, and just sustainability transitions.

She has served on over 20 national and international research and policy programmes and scientific committees focusing on education, transformative learning and sustainability and is regularly invited to present keynote contributions in this area. Prof Lotz-Sisitka contributed to the various iterations of South Africa's national curriculum process, and to various national committees and forums developing some of the first ever environmental health, management and education qualifications in South Africa, and she led development of the first ever Environmental Sector Skills Plan for South Africa.

She served as Editor-in-Chief of the Southern African Journal of Environmental Education for 13 years (2003-2016) and served one

term as co-editor of the Learning, Culture and Social Interaction Journal (2021).

## POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW



### **Dr Charity R. Nhemachena**

Dr Nhemachena is an Agricultural Economist with nine years of professional experience in research, programme / project management, monitoring and evaluation in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Dr Nhemachena secured funding for six months from the ELRC NRF Chair and is supporting JCAS. Her current role focuses on implementing multidisciplinary research across diverse socio-economic challenges in rural and urban spaces, locally, nationally and on the African continent. Subject areas include socio-economic research activities on the use of agricultural land and environmental water resources, cross border trade, rural to urban livelihoods, informal to formal economic sector activities, development and education issues for youth employment.

Dr Nhemachena supported JCAS until August 2023.



## CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH STRATEGY, OUTPUTS AND KEY ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the overall strategy devised for the ISER to build its key research areas. It provides an understanding of the strategic direction and the five-year vision that the ISER undertook from 2020 onwards. The chapter outlines the ISER's research focus areas and includes an overview of some of its core activities, for example the research generation strategy, an outline of the scholarly and media efforts, highlights of network building, student development through supervision and teaching capacity, and finally, the basic strategic plan to execute the Institute's mission.

### 2.2 The core business activities

The list outlines the Institute's core business activities, with strategies for their execution laid out sequentially. Reports with further details on what has been performed for each activity are presented under the following headings / chapters:

- a) Research generation and dissemination
- b) Scholarly public engagement
- c) Community engagement
- d) Continuous research network building
- e) Post graduate student (M&D) supervision
- f) Teaching, through the ISER co-ordinated Interdisciplinary Honours Degree in Development Studies, and short learning programmes
- g) Academic citizenship
- h) Overall supporting strategy for building resources

The ISER began the process of actioning these areas of activities in 2020, although some only commenced in 2021 and some in 2022 (e.g. the Honours Degree offering). The details of reasons for this are made apparent in the specific parts of the report.

### 2.3 Research generation

Given the available expertise and experiences in the ISER, the Institute proposed in 2020 that it would generate research by focusing on **four research themes**:

Research area number	Short description
-------------------------	-------------------



1	<b>THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</b> a. Land use and management reform b. Water use and management reform
2	<b>EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</b>
3	<b>HUMAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT <sup>1</sup></b>
4	<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES</b>

These research areas are detailed more expansively on the ISER's webpage.

(<https://www.ru.ac.za/iser/research/>)

## 2.4 How the ISER's work relates to selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The research activities and focus areas of the ISER primarily support contributions towards the achievement of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

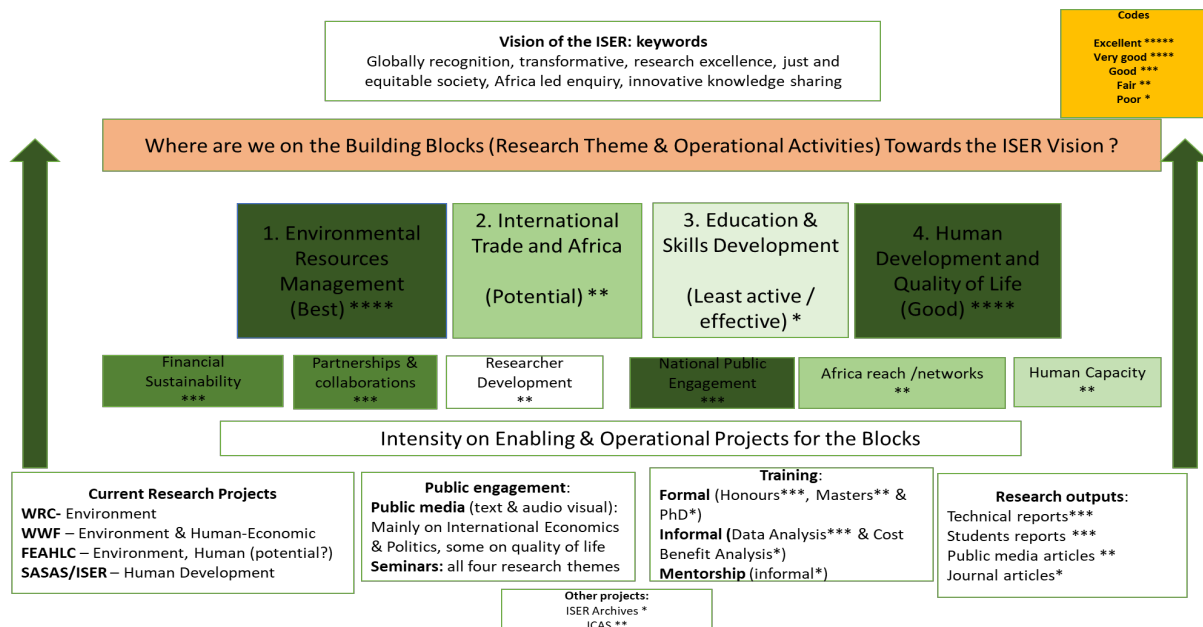
Research area	Sustainable Development Goal
The use and management of environmental resources (land & water)	<b>Goal 1:</b> End poverty in all its forms <b>Goal 2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture <b>Goal 6:</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all <b>Goal 15:</b> Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Education and skills development	<b>Goal 4:</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Human and economic development	<b>Goal 3:</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages <b>Goal 8:</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
International trade in goods and services	<b>Goal 17:</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

<sup>1</sup> The research focus area of Human and Economic Development will change to Human Development and Quality of Life during 2024 to account for the work of Prof. Møller.

### 2.4.1 The current Research Implementation Strategy

With the Institute’s resource constraints, all research areas above would not be able to receive equal attention at all times. Rather they will be gradually and sustainably developed as the Institute acquires more human capital. Of the ISER’s four strategic research areas, the areas of *Environmental Resources Management* and *Human and Economic Development* including the advancement of quality of life, now seem fully established, as reflected in academic research outputs.

The most underdeveloped research area with minimal research activity is the *Education and Skills Development* area, although there have been seminar discussions on education and skills development, as well as public engagement with media houses and formal participation at provincial level regarding policy formulation on human resources development. In addition, the HSRC grant awarded to Dr Hompashe in 2021 produced an academic research article that was submitted to the Development Southern African Journal awaiting publication in 2024.



**Figure 1:** Self-reflection of performance against the ISER vision and mission

At the Advisory Board’s first meeting in 2020, the Director presented *the plan of hosting at least two multi-year projects per year*. The plan is to house one project in two of the four identified research focus

areas. To generate output from each project area, there will be focus on *a minimum of at least two main academic/research outputs per year*. The big research project outputs would in turn lead to various smaller outputs, including at least one working paper and two policy briefs. These outputs would then lead to at least two seminar presentations, and at least two or more media articles to support our communications and marketing strategies. This was accepted as the core map plan to drive the research activities of the Institute. With more human resources becoming available, the accepted plan is to then kick-start the development of the next area, which would then duplicate the research output and activities as described. Table 1 presents the blueprint plan for each multi-year project.

**Table 1: Academic research generation**

ACADEMIC RESEARCH GENERATION						
Multi-year project 1			Multi-year project 2			
Main research report per year			Main research report per year			
At least one academic article	At least one policy brief	At least one seminar discussion	At least one academic article	At least one policy brief	At least one seminar discussion	At least one seminar discussion
Dissemination through communications strategy: a) At least two print media articles b) At least one broadcast discussion			Dissemination through communications strategy: a) At least two print media articles b) At least one broadcast discussion			

*Reflection:*

*So far, the ISER has hosted two main multi-year research-focused projects per year (i.e. the WWF and WRC). These projects have produced a number of draft reports for funders, but have not generated media, working or academic papers. We need a strategy to get technical reports turned into other types of outputs.*

**2.4.2 For books, book chapters and other articles**

Outside of the multi-year research projects, the plan has been to have at least one post-doctoral position made available with funds applied for from channels such as the NRF and Rhodes University's post doc funding programme. The positions focus around supporting the Institute's research generation and outputs. The plan has been to have a post-doctoral fellowship that generates either a book or a series of book chapters or a series of journal or working papers (two per year and four in two years).

*Reflection:*

In 2023, the ISER had one post-doctoral fellow (Dr Nhemachena) funded by the NRF, although most of her energy was spent on the JCAS backlog emergency project. In December 2022, two post-doc positions were advertised, one to stand in for Dr Kara while on leave and another to add to the JCAS backlog team. The post-doc appointments were not successful for technical reasons, but the funds were used to appoint two Research Assistants, namely Dr Ola Adeneyi (graduated more than five years ago) and Ms Ayanda Gamedze (not yet graduated).

### **2.4.3 Report on 2023 research activities**

In 2023, research output generation was negatively affected by Prof. Mbatha taking on the responsibility for the establishment and running of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLIC). However, a number of potential outputs for papers and policy briefs came from ISER supervised students. These are presented below.

#### ***Accredited journal articles***

##### Published

**Møller, V., Cocks, M., and Vetter, S.** Nature-connectedness and well-being experienced during best and worst times of life: A case for safeguarding biocultural diversity. *The Journal of Social Indicators Research* 165, 1053-1089

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-023-03063-3> SharedIt link: <https://rdcu.be/c3fF1>

[Note from the author: To my knowledge, this paper might be the first publication reporting data collected for the 2012 Nature Survey. It will earn a full subsidy for the university as all three authors are Rhodes University scholars.]

##### Submitted

**Møller, V., Roberts, B.J. and Zani, D.** 'Born free' dreams: South African township youth discuss their hopes for a better life in future. Submitted to Springer's *Applied Research in Quality of Life* (ARIQ)

#### ***Technical research reports***

**Palmer, A., Gustafsson, M., Kara, R., and Mbatha, C.N.** 2023. Revised - Future impacts and threats of climate change and socio-economic conditions on the Grass Fed Beef Value Chain in the Matatiele region of the Eastern Cape Province, SA. Interim report 2, WWF-SA.

**Mpolwana, M., Mbatha, C.N., Lotz-Sisitka, H., Thifulufhelwi, R., and Kuse, M.** (2023). Participatory course to activate ecological infrastructure for water security learning networks. Final report to the Water Research Commission (WRC), Pretoria.

### ***Conference papers and other presentations***

***International Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) Conference: Towards a People-First Economy: A World to Win. 21 – 25 August, 2023. Rotterdam, the Netherlands.***

- **Møller, V.** 2023. South African township youth share their lived experience of hope: A focus-group case study.
- Prof. Møller's Belgian research partner presented a paper on the ACSA measure of quality of life that listed names of several QoL colleagues including Valerie Møller. Valerie was assigned chair of the session in which he presented.

***Development in the Anthropocene: The tough task of working towards planetary wellbeing with low-income households. 21 October 2023. Pretoria, South Africa.***

- **Valerie Møller** was invited to participate in the Nova Institute's meeting to discuss energy solutions and quality-of-life that affect South Africa's low-income households.

[Note: The Nova Institute is involved in exciting energy projects that will assist in clean energy solutions that work for township and rural households. Nova assesses the impact of their work systematically through quantitative and qualitative QoL studies.]

***UN-Habitat Quality-of-Life Initiative: Improving Quality of Life in Towns and Cities. 31 October-1 November 2023. Toronto, Canada.***

- **Valerie Møller** was invited to join the UN Habitat's High Level Roundtable with Academia discussion organised under the Quality-of-Life Initiative held in Toronto, Canada, on October 31 and 1 November 2023. She attended online.

### ***Other academic assignments: reviews and support for research***

- **Relational Wellbeing: A State of the Art Review – Critical Review**

**Valerie Møller** was invited to prepare a critical review of youth studies that would focus on Relational Wellbeing (RWB). Relational well-being is a relatively new field of quality-of-life (QoL)

studies, that has been pioneered mainly by positive psychologists. Her report was submitted to the HSRC in Cape Town on 15 February 2023.

- **Research activities in June and July 2023**

**Valerie Møller** spent a month coding the four open-ended responses to questions on hopes and fears for self and for nation collected from 3200 respondents in the 2022 HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS). This data will inform on changes in South African hopes and fears over time.

- **Peer reviews**

**Valerie Møller** peer-reviewed a number of submissions to quality-of-life journals in the course of 2023.

- **Research networking**

***With Hope scholars:***

**Valerie Møller** met two leading QoL and hope scholars at the 2023 ISQOLS conference in Rotterdam. Professor **Andreas Krafft** chaired the session in which she presented. **Dr Emma Pleeging** had received ISQOLS' PhD dissertation award at last year's ISQOLS conference in Vermont, USA – Valerie had first met Emma there.

**Andreas Krafft** gave Valerie his latest Springer volume, '*Hope across Cultures: Lessons from the international Hope Barometer*' and the contact details of his South African co-editor. Valerie arranged to meet Professor **Tharina Guse** ahead of the Nova meeting in Pretoria on 20 October 2023. She brings her experience as a practising clinical psychologist to her studies of hope from a positive psychology perspective.

***With QoL scholars:***

It was exciting to learn that one of the Nova delegates knew **Valerie Møller**, as he had participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> ISQOLS conference that was hosted at Rhodes University in July 2006. Our 2006 ISQOLS conference is the only one to be held in Africa to date.

***Support for ongoing youth research:***

**Valerie Møller** had assisted with a South African focus group study that aimed to update earlier qualitative research on South African youth's hopes for 'My life in the new South Africa' under democracy. The Richards et al. publication acknowledged Valerie's 'guidance

and input during the analysis of the data', and that she had made available 'additional NRF funds' for the project.

**Richards, R., Graham, L., and Mthembu, S.** (2023). Then and now: Youth attitudes in South Africa over time, *Youth Voice Journal*, ISSN (online): 2056-2969

### ***Master's and PhD theses***

During the year in review no Master's and PhD research projects were completed.

### ***Honours Degree research projects***

a) Title: *China and South Africa's Economic Development*

Student name: Gauata Makaleng

Supervisor name: Dr Charity Nhemachena

Research theme: International Trade

b) Title: *The Socioeconomic Influence of the National Arts Festival in Makhanda Eastern Cape*

Student name: Ngawo Mati

Supervisor name: Dr Reesha Kara

Research theme: Human and Economic Development

c) Title: *Irrigation Schemes in South Africa and their failure*

Student name: Yondela Kalipa

Supervisor name: Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Research theme: Environmental Resources Management

d) Title: *Building Sustainable Livelihoods for Rural Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill 2020*

Student name: Kgabane Lengane



Supervisor name: Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Research theme: Human and Economic Development

e) Title: *Study of Rural Education Quality and its Post Secondary School Outcomes*

Student name: Siyamthanda Nomoyi

Supervisor name: Prof. Martin Gustafsson

Research theme: Education and Skills Development

### ***Potential ISER policy briefs from post graduate Master's and Honours projects***

The Honours Degree programme generated a number of potential research outputs, including draft policy briefs by eight post-graduate students (Honours) who participated in our course/module on Public Policy Analysis. These have the potential to contribute towards the ISER's Policy Brief Series in 2024.

The potential policy briefs that may result from all student research outputs and respond to three of the ISER's four thematic research areas, namely **Environmental Resources Management, Human and Economic Development, and Education and Skills Development**, are listed below.

- a. **Makaleng, G. (2023).** *Migration determinants and its policy implications on education in S.A.* ISER, Rhodes University.
- b. **Khetsi, K. (2023).** *What are the determinants of happiness and wellbeing among South Africans?* ISER, Rhodes University.
- c. **Lengane, K. (2023).** *Land Tenure and Agricultural Productivity.* Honours Research, ISER, Rhodes University.
- d. **Poswa, G. (2023).** *What are the links between being English language competent (reading and writing) and attending a tertiary institution and being computer literate?* ISER, Rhodes University.
- e. **Mati, N. (2023).** *The Socioeconomic and demographic factors of unemployment in South Africa.* ISER, Rhodes University.
- f. **Nomoyi, S. (2023).** *Study of the Relationship between Education and Employment.* ISER, Rhodes University.

- g. **Kalipa, Y. (2023).** *Migration: What are the determinants and policy implications for labour market opportunities?* ISER, Rhodes University.
- h. **Sofianos, B. (2023).** *The socioeconomic impediments to clean water access in SA.* ISER, Rhodes University.

#### **2.4.4. Formal programme: The ISER Interdisciplinary Honours Degree Programme**

During 2023, the second intake of the formal ISER's Interdisciplinary Honours Degree in Development Studies in the Humanities faculty was successfully coordinated by Dr Reesha Kara.

*Some of the Interdisciplinary Honours Degree Programme students in the ISER, 2023*



*The strategic goal of this programme is to prepare students for Master's and PhD research on public policy topics as well as to generate research outputs, including papers and policy briefs from good student submissions.*

Eight (8) students registered for the ISER module and five (5) registered for the ISER Honours degree. The programme saw its highest number of applications and finally admitted students coming from outside Rhodes University, including from universities like Wits University, Mpumalanga University,



University of the Western Cape, University of the Free State, University of Cape Town, etc., at the start of the 2023 academic year. It means that the ISER online campaign to attract students is proving effective.

The ISER is proud to have had three (3) Master's Degree students emerging from the Interdisciplinary Honours Degree.

Participating departments include the ISER, Political and International Studies, School of Languages and Literatures, Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Sociology and History.

Special thanks go to the following external facilitators for supporting the honours programme from the ISER:

- a. Prof. Martin Gustafsson (Stellenbosch University and ISER Research Fellow)
- b. Ms Lynn Woolfrey (UCT, DataFirst)
- c. Dr Nontuthuzelo Gola (SANBi)
- d. Prof. Mike Rogan (RU, Economics)
- e. Mr David Fryer (RU, Economics)

## **Background**

The ISER recognised a national lack of the type of research skills that are required for it to execute fully on its mission and vision. Because of this, discussions were initiated with a number of academic departments at Rhodes University to launch an honours degree programme to train and prepare students for the kind of work that relates to applied research and policy, using as the vehicle the Interdisciplinary Honours Degree in Development Studies in the Humanities faculty. The initial discussions catalytic to the launch of the ISER-facilitated degree began with discussions with the head of the Department of Political and International Studies and colleagues in the Department of Economics and Economic History.

The ISER Honours Degree Programme for Social and Economic Policy Research Analysis under the banner of the Interdisciplinary Honours Degree Programme of the Humanities was included in the Rhodes University calendar for 2022 and 2023. Thank you to all Rhodes University staff and members of the Board who contributed to discussions in shaping this programme.

In 2023, more progress was made in the applications and admissions of students for this degree. For the first time, this included applications received from part-time and working students who applied for



admission in 2024. The effort going forward is to document and archive the evolution of this formal programme within the ISER.

In 2023, one of the graduating students from this programme in 2022 was offered funding to conduct research for her Master's degree by the ISER. In addition, two of the graduating students who were registered for the programme in 2023 have been offered NRF funding towards the completion of their Masters degrees in 2024.

The advertisement (posted on social networks) for the degree programme in 2024 attracted many responses. More than twenty-five (25) applications were received from potential students across the country. This means that social media advertising is effective for the ISER.

#### **2.4.5. Informal programmes and workshop engagement**

This section provides details on training, workshops, etc. that were conducted or led by the ISER.

##### **2.4.5.1 Data Analysis short course**

The ISER hosted the Data Analysis short course in late June 2023. The course was presented by Dr Reesha Kara from the ISER (Rhodes University), Ms Lynn Woolfrey from DataFirst (UCT) and Prof. Martin Gustafsson from the Department of Education.

The Data Analysis training course contributes towards the skills development of our formal student for whom it is compulsory to attend and who are assessed on their use of these skills in their research projects.

In addition, the Data Analysis training is used to reach out to potential external partners in research, where the ISER offers training in order to foster new networks. The course was advertised nationally in order to brand the institute among other providers.



Mr Kgabane Lengane (KG), a 2023 Honours ISER student and potential Master's degree student to be funded and to work in the cannabis project funded by the Premier's Office.

*Reflection:*

*In future, the standing strategic plan is to run parallel workshops with other organisations, including SALGA, the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs, provincial government of the Eastern Cape province, if or when they come onboard. But a collaboration that is most likely to take off is one for Rwanda and Uganda with Vanguard-Economics, a consulting firm based in Rwanda.*

**2.4.5.2 Short Learning Programme (Cost-Benefit Analysis)**

The Cost-Benefit Analysis training is discussed in Chapter 4. The course was presented for the WRC project from late 2022 to early 2023 in the Breede River Catchment in the Western Cape province.

**2.4.5.3 CBA training in the Breede River Catchment**

The third and final field trip and training workshop on the Cost-Benefit Analytical framework for water sector stakeholders (government, researchers, businesses, etc.) was run successfully by the ISER and the ELRC in the Breede River Catchment of the Western Cape (WRC funded research) and took place in January 2023.

Please refer to Section 4.2 in Chapter 4 for more details.



#### **2.4.6 Post Graduate student supervision**

The supervision of students is guided by the current ISER's research policy. The policy outlines a registration process and procedures in place for the admission and supervision of students as follows:

Master's and PhD students can register directly through the ISER. When ISER had enough academic members of staff (Mike Reynolds, Robbie van Niekerk, Laura Alferts and Mike Rogan), the ISER had a research committee that decided on student applications and assigned supervisors. The ISER Director approved applications on the system. The ISER Research Committee approved the research proposals of Master's and Doctoral students before those went to the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee or the Commerce Higher Degrees Committee for approval. This approval by a higher degrees committee is required before fieldwork can commence, as is the ethical clearance by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC).

Now that the ISER as an academic department or entity is too small (i.e. has too few academic members of staff), the ISER currently works through the research committee of other relevant departments which ISER has collaborative ties with, e.g. Economics (2021 and 2023), the Business School (2022), to get its students' proposals approved for submission to the relevant faculty under which the hosting department falls in the university. This can work especially well with students who are co-supervised between ISER and other Rhodes University departments.

A person who wants to apply to do a Master's or PhD through the ISER has to apply on the university's online system and indicate that the ISER is the department to which they are applying. That application is then routed to the ISER Director for approval. The Director can get support and input from other RU discipline-relevant academics to make a decision to accept or reject the student. As the ISER grows it will be closer to being able to host its own internal research committee.

Applying students are asked to supply a writing sample and CV in addition to degree certificates, academic transcripts and the like to give more insight into the applicant's writing ability. ISER also has the right reserved to interview applicants if needed before making a decision.

#### **2023 student supervision**

The ISER currently provides student research supervision or co-supervision across the university. The supervision is provided based on available supervisors with a topic falling in one of the ISER's four research focus areas. In 2023 supervision was also provided to students registered in the departments



of Economics and Economic History (Master's degree) as well as Political and International Studies (Honours level) and the ISER (Honours, Master's and PhD).

The ISER had the following students registered and supervised in 2023:

**Honours long paper**

Student name: Gauata Makaleng

Supervisor name: Dr Charity Nhemachena

Student name: Ngawo Mati

Supervisor name : Dr Reesha Kara

Student name: Yondela Kalipa

Supervisor name: Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Student name: Kgabane Lengane

Supervisor name: Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Student name: Siyamthanda Nomoyi

Supervisor name: Prof. Martin Gustafsson

**Master's Degree**

**Ms Brynley van Aardt** – *Land Reform Policies in Sub Saharan Africa: A comparative study between Ghana and South Africa*

Supervisor name: Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Requested to be re-register in 2024:

**Mr V. Kubhayi** (Masters in Economics co-supervised at ISER) – Topic: *Africa-Trade*

Co-Supervised by Prof. Cyri Nhlanhla Mbatha and Prof. Tsitsi Mutambara

**Doctoral Degree**

**Ms Hudah Namurenge** – *Public Partnership Projects in Uganda*

Co-supervised for a PhD in Commerce: Prof. **Pantaleo Rwelamila** Rwelamila and Prof. Cyril Mbatha

The long-term strategic plan in this supervision is to develop students to become experts in the research focus areas of the ISER to enable them to take intellectual and administrative leadership roles in ISER. In

The ISER can offer degrees and qualifications for those who are already working professionals, and who may be in very demanding positions, e.g. in government or national organisations. The option for part-time study registration is open for consideration at post graduate level. This option is already being used by student with one application received for 2024 Honours registration. This is something that is especially attractive to participants attending ISER workshops and research programmes.

Being able to teach, supervise and mentor young and emerging researchers in this manner is one distinctive advantage that the ISER has over other academic departments or research organisations including the HSRC. As a result the ISER, even though smaller, is still able to influence and drive public policy discussions at both provincial and national level, public discussions through media engagement, conduct and produce research, etc., in a similar way to the bigger research organisations.

#### **2.4.7 Community engagement**

The ISER continued its community engagement work at a provincial level within the Human Resources Development Council at a provincial level in the Eastern Cape province. The ISER continues to support the Makhanda Circle of Unity, an organisation set up to support positive development in Makhanda.

#### **2.4.8 Academic citizenship**

The ISER Director continued participation at various academic and research committees across the university, including the boards of the faculties of humanities and commerce, as well as the Senate and other committees or task teams set up for specific purposes by the Chairs of the faculty boards and Senate.

#### **2.4.9 The operational strategy to support the vision and mission**

The vision for the ISER is to have in place four fully functional research areas or units, each led by senior researchers to provide leadership and execute the requisite activities in the identified focus areas. For this, funds are required to hire human resources and to support research activity costs.

The initiated plan for building human resources is to train researchers internally by identifying postgraduate students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa who can be groomed into playing the lead researcher roles. *This process of targeting students is already underway*



*with early successes reported across this report, for example through the Honours Degree programme and the new Master's degree students that are starting to emerge from the Honours programme.*

The plan for 2024 is to focus on using some of the good students' projects and funded project reports to develop academic research outputs of the ISER. This activity was unfortunately not possible in 2023, given the time demanded and given for the establishment of the NRF funded Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLIC), which the ISER is co-hosting with the IWR and ELRC for Rhodes University and the University of Pretoria.

## **CHAPTER 3 SCHOLARLY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The ISER's research and engagement plan centres on the fulcrum of "Leading research for Africa". The Institute's primary focus is to be a dynamic African hub promoting innovative social and economic research with a focus on knowledge sharing across multiple platforms and co-engaged participatory research which can contribute to improving livelihoods, well-being, and social and environmental justice. Rather than being confined to an academic setting, the ISER aims to elevate the discussion by creating platforms and incentive for the sharing of new research and the discussion of current debate and concerns, from participatory engagement to policy and economic development planning.

Researchers and practitioners whose work falls within these arenas have been invited to engage and share their work via webinars and online platforms, which are in turn designed to function as knowledge-sharing platforms that can grow and synergise organically. There is a particular focus to support and promote African researchers, particularly women and vulnerable groups, to ensure that we are growing and supporting research networks by and for the continent, especially in arenas where these voices have been historically silenced and unheard.

### **3.2 ISER seminar series**

The ISER seminar series is designed around hosting seminars every three months (one per quarter), with additional seminars added in to respond to timely, seminal research as well as national and international events that relate directly to the Institute's research fields. Seminars may also be aligned with national public holiday themes such Africa Day or National Women's Day.

In 2023, the seminars were deferred to the second semester because labour shortage at the ISER. However, the target of four seminars per year was achieved during the second semester. The seminars presented discussions on all four of the ISER research themes to further contribute to the Institute's mission of building the four key research areas.

The seminars were focused around new and emerging research, for example engaged research, academic papers, chapters or books, and other study reports relating to policy, governance and socio-economic development.

The seminars continued in the format of a hybrid approach, with both in-person and virtual attendees. This is because the online forum lends itself to increased accessibility and dissemination of research



outside the university, while also allowing digital records to be available for anyone to access in perpetuity. The ISER seminar series mailing list grew to over 600 recipients in 2023.

In addition to public engagement on research and policy debates, seminars were also used to support the branding and marketing strategy of the ISER. For example, through the seminar series, the ISER continues to grow its mailing list of national and international potential partners, including from national media houses, and, as a result, journalists came to some of the ISER seminar to cover the discussions.

The seminars were carefully designed to fit around other ISER events to ensure there is adequate time to devote to their planning and execution. With the increasing plethora of academic webinars we also needed to strive to avoid research fatigue and to avoid potential clashes with research partners' seminar series. In 2023, the negative effect of holding too many seminars in short succession was lower registration numbers for the online component, compared to 2022.

Each ISER webinar was planned and executed with a working group that is made up of ISER staff, our social media strategist, and the presenters and discussants for the seminar in question. This ensured a smooth and engaged process that included email and WhatsApp group updates and dry test runs and checks. ISER's seminar series in 2023 provided further avenues to grow our research partnerships, for example, the co-hosting seminars with partners at different universities. Ultimately, the Institute continued to aim for participation in the seminar series that is vibrantly useful, comfortable and enjoyable experience for participants.

### **The following seminars were hosted by ISER in 2023:**

#### **Gender Mainstreaming in Kenya's Trade Agreements - *The Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (Area: Cross Border Trade in Africa)***

**Research area: Gender and International Trade**

**Guest Speaker: Prof. Kiriti Nganga** - Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics and Development Studies at the University of Nairobi

**Discussant: Dr O. Oluwakemi Adeniyi**

**Chair: Dr Reesha Kara** - Researcher, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University

Date: 8 August 2023

## **Gender Mainstreaming in Kenya's Trade Agreements:**

### **The Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement**

Given the background of general exclusion of women in the economy and the labour force in many African countries (OECD, 2018), the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) promises development that is inclusive and sustainable for women at national and international levels (African Union, 2021). But will the AfCFTA achieve this if enterprises are not able to take advantage of cross-border connectivity because of current challenges on the ground? Is the AfCFTA effectively gender-mainstreamed?

To celebrate the achievements of women and contribute to their future socio-economic advancement through important events held throughout this Women's Month in South Africa, Visiting Professor at the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the World Trade Organisation Chairs Programme holder in Kenya, **Professor Tabitha Kiriti-Nganga** of the University of Nairobi, presents her findings and recommendations for policy using a Kenyan case study.

The ISER is pleased to invite you to participate in this truly African discussion by women with experiences from three regions of the continent on the challenges and opportunities for women as presented by the current implementation of the AfCFTA.

**Online:** [REGISTER](#) for Teams Webinar

**In-person:** The **Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER)**, 6 Prince Alfred Street, Makhanda, Rhodes University - please RSVP to [b.mothlabane@ru.ac.za](mailto:b.mothlabane@ru.ac.za)

*"Some of the sociological problems that we have experienced include deep challenges that prevent women from participating fully in the labour force especially in developing countries like Kenya. While Kenyan women participate in international trade as entrepreneurs, workers and consumers, etc., they participate in the labour force only as self-employed or working for someone else (OECD, 2018). Their participation (FLPR) rate is also much lower than men."*

#### **SPEAKERS:**

##### **Distinguished guest speaker: Prof Tabitha Kiriti-Nganga**

Tabitha Kiriti Nganga is a Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics and Development Studies at the University of Nairobi specializing in International Trade, Gender, Poverty and Food Security. She is the Chair of the WTO Chairs Program in the University of Nairobi, member of the National Consultative Committee Trade Facilitation, National Consultative Committee on TBT, National Consultative Committee on University Education, Trade Program advisor at the IEA, Kenya and currently a mentor of the GVCs Phase 2 project at the AERC. She was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Oxford University's CSAE from January to March 2023 and is currently a visiting professor at Rhodes University ISER. Tabitha is Senior Fellow in the Pan African Scientific Research Council and has done extensive research, authored and co-authored books, book chapters, journal articles, policy briefs and working papers. She has been recognized by the University of Nairobi Vice Chancellor as the best in performance contract in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in March 2022 and in December 2022.

**Discussant: Dr O. Oluwakemi Adeniyi**

Dr O. Adeniyi has been an attorney for more than 20 years, with a Masters of Law degree from Obafemi Awolowo University Nigeria, obtained in 2003. She graduated with a Doctor of Law degree from the University of Pretoria's Centre for Human Rights more than six years ago. She has been a University of Ottawa Queen Elizabeth Scholar and OpenAIR fellow, as well as a research fellow with the Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law (CIPIT) Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya. She has been a fellow at the International Centre for Women's Leadership (2018) Coady International Institute, St Francis Xaviers University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada. She has written and presented extensively on issues around women's challenges, including the historical and sociological problems of child marriages in African countries.

**Chair: Dr Reesha Kara**

**The Politics of Improving Learning Outcomes in South Africa  
(Area: Education and Skills Development)**

*Presenter:* **Prof. Martin Gustafsson** – education economist and associate professor attached to the Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP) unit, which in turn is linked to the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University

*Respondent:* **Mr David Fryer** – political economist at Rhodes University's Department of Economics and Economic History

*Chair:* **Dr Reesha Kara** - Researcher, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University

Date: 14 September 2023

The ISER invites you to join us in this seminar which provides a fresh perspective on South Africa's educational quality challenges, aimed at contributing constructively to national education policy debates.

**Discussion paper title: *The Politics of Improving Learning Outcomes in South Africa***

**Summary:**

While improvements have been made towards a more equitable education system in South Africa, outcomes remain well below those of other middle-income countries. Even within Africa, South Africa lags behind, with weak foundational skills in areas such as reading and numeracy, especially amongst younger learners. Only 20% of South African children can read by age 10, with the country coming last in an international reading literacy study (PIRLS 2021). There is rising concern over the adverse long-range implications for skills in the labour market, poverty reduction and social cohesion.



Several political and non-political factors continue to hinder educational development in South Africa, including weak education planning capacity, poor quality teacher training at universities, an electoral system which rewards politicians who tend to focus on visible phenomena such as school infrastructure and certification, and corruption within the schooling system and institutions as a whole. The South African experience confirms that a more politically informed approach to education policy analysis is illuminating and necessary, leading to considerations into the political economy of education.

Professor Martin Gustafsson, together with Dr Nick Taylor (JET Education Services), have been investigating the political economy and ideology of South Africa's educational development, paying special attention to the acquisition of foundational skills in the early grades. The study forms part of the international Research in Improving Systems of Education (RISE) programme, a comparative meta-study aimed at presenting new global insights into the political economy of schooling. This focuses on understanding why foundational skills among learners are so low in developing countries, and how this problem can be resolved.

**Some Key Questions:**

- a. Given South Africa's current political economy context, how likely is it that desired educational quality improvements in future will be realised?
- b. What historical factors, over the last four decades or so, have shaped the policies, institutions, leadership and quality trends in South Africa's education system?
- c. What conceptual frameworks seem particularly effective for taking South Africa's political economy debates forward in the area of education?

**Attend online:**

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER AND ATTEND ONLINE](#)

**Join us in-person:**

ISER's Seminar Room, 7 Prince Alfred Street, Makhanda, Rhodes University.

RSVP to [b.mothlabane@ru.ac.za](mailto:b.mothlabane@ru.ac.za) for catering purposes.

**GUEST SPEAKER:**

**Professor Martin Gustafsson**

Martin Gustafsson is a former history teacher who currently works as an education economist, producing research for the Department of Basic Education (DBE), South Africa's national authority for schools. He is a member of ReSEP (Research on Socio-Economic Policy), a unit at Stellenbosch University's Department of Economics, and is a visiting research fellow for the ISER, Rhodes University, South Africa. His research interests include economics of education (including teacher pay), development economics, cross-country comparisons in education, education policy design, research-policymaking linkages, applied econometrics, and multi-year modelling of financial and non-financial values in education planning.

**RESPONDENT:**

### **Mr David Fryer**

David Fryer is a political economist at Rhodes University's Department of Economics and Economic History, where he teaches macroeconomics, microeconomics, and political economy and labour. He is part of the Neil Aggett Labour Studies Unit (NALSU) and is a co-editor of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. David's research interests include labour markets, education and skills systems, and the role of macroeconomic and social policy, with a particular interest in social democracy and multilateralism. At a local level, David has recently been focusing on Makhanda, and Rhodes University's position in the community. He is currently engaged in research projects on the contribution of local agency to sustainability, Early Learning, Rhodes University's 9/10<sup>th</sup> programme, and the performance of Economics 2 students.

### **CHAIR:**

**Dr Reesha Kara**

### **Big Food, Fast Food and Proximity to Supermarkets: *Using Google Data to Measure the Role of Fast Food in South Africa's Obesity Epidemic***

*Research area:* **Human and Economic Development / Quality of Life**

*Presenters:* **Dr Steffen Otterbach** - post-doctoral researcher and lecturer at the Institute for Health Care and Public Management, University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany

**Prof. Michael Rogan** – Associate Professor at Rhodes University's Department of Economics and Economic History

Date: 28 September 2023

### **To what degree is climate change a threat to grass-fed beef value chains and rural livelihoods?**

*Research area:* **Environmental Resources Management**

*Project lead:* **Prof. C.N. Mbatha** – Director of the ISER

*Presenters:* **Prof. Anthony Palmer** – R.U.

**Prof. Martin Gustafsson** – education economist and associate professor attached to the Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP) unit, which in turn is linked to the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University

Date: 19 October 2023

The WWF, however, asked for postponement of the seminar to accommodate the Nedbank funders whom they failed to invite on time.

**Summary of seminar areas:**

	<b>Research Area</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1	Environmental resources	Climate change and beef production	A. Palmer & M. Gustafsson	Hybrid
2	Human and Economic Development	Proximity to supermarkets as a factor in obesity	S. Otterbach & M. Rogan	Hybrid
3	Education & Skills	Politics of improving learning outcomes in S.A.	M. Gustafsson	Hybrid
5.	Trade in Africa	Gender mainstreaming in Kenya's trade agreements	T. Kiriti Nganga	Hybrid

**3.3 ISER Working Papers**

ISER Working Papers were designed as a platform to share research findings, be they fieldwork findings, research reports, collaborative project findings, or pre-publication versions of articles, research reviews, book chapters or specialised project reports. This platform is targeting in particular Master's and PhD students. However, no working papers were published in 2023.

**Possible ways to overcome this in 2024 would be**

- a. For the ISER to introduce an annual Working Paper Series competition, where the best working paper wins a token prize.
- b. The JCAS was (is) also in discussion with the FEAHLC to join resources through their Capacity Development Programme
- c. One area which offers untapped potential is to consider creating a short brief/opinion piece out of each seminar which takes into account the main points as well as the discussion and debate afterwards, something which can be quoted and used in a similar way to working papers. We are getting a lot of engaged and thoughtful seminar questions which would be nice to work with a bit more, especially considering our mandate for the seminars, which is to elevate the intellectual debate.



For 2024, the ISER is already working on the following potential working papers or policy brief from 2023 student submissions.

## CHAPTER 4 CURRENT AND INITIATED PROJECTS

### 4.1 Introduction

The ISER's activities are not only research-related, but as discussed previously, relate to areas including community engagement, seminar or webinar organisation, training workshops, communications and branding, etc. Nevertheless, research projects generate third stream income for the university and the Institute. Other projects, such as hosting of seminars, training or soliciting of working papers may require funds from the ISER coffers if there is no external sponsorship for them. While these communications, marketing and branding activities require the ISER or its fellows to produce research for dissemination and public discussion on various platforms, the estimated brand awareness value in monetary terms that is created from these activities outweighs the cost (refer to the media coverage report for 2023 in Chapter 6). Below is the outline of ongoing and planned projects in 2023.

### 4.2 Current research projects

#### Project 1: The Water Research Commission (Social Learning)

Title: ***Participatory course to activate Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security Learning Networks*** (Project Number: C2020/2021-00639)

**Aim:** The “Participatory course to activate Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security (EI4WS) Learning Networks” project aims to pro-actively design and develop a participatory course for strengthening the Social Learning and Knowledge Mediation and Management practices around EI4WS financing, policy, planning and development. Briefly, the project aims to support capacity development through a training course for investing in ecological infrastructure. This is reflected in the project slogan: “*Xabisa Indalo for Water*” an isiXhosa phrase which translates to “*learn to invest in nature for water*”.

The project was implemented in three phases: 1) a contextual profiling, training needs and knowledge asset analyses to inform development of course materials and tools for mediation of EI4WS practices; 2) course curriculum deliberations and course piloting; and 3) consolidation of a Training of Trainers course that can be scaled into other catchments. The course supported EI4WS Change Projects and strengthened learning networks in the Berg-Breede and uMngeni catchments, which are demonstration catchments for the bigger EI4WS project implemented through partnership led by Development Bank of Southern Africa, SANBI, WRC, and other agencies.

**Fieldwork visuals:** Ecological Infrastructure and Social Learning project, 2023:



**Rhodes Leadership Team and Participants on site in Franschhoek, Western Cape, 2023**

**Presentations from participants in Cape town, 2023**

This project was successfully completed in 2023 with the final report submitted on time to the Water Research Commission (WRC). No academic papers have yet been developed from the data, though the publication of papers is planned for 2024.

It is encouraging to report that a proposal for the extension of this project with the ELRC has been submitted to the WRC for work to be conducted in other catchments from 2024.

**Progress Report 2023**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Budget ZAR</b>	<b>Expected date</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Comment</b>
4. Draft Final Report for peer review, including M&E reports and ToT course materials.	R50 000,00	1 March 2023	Done	Submitted
1. FINAL PROJECT REPORT, COURSE MATERIALS AND SOCIAL LEARNING TOOLS	R268 000,00	31 March 2023	Done	Submitted



**Project 2: WWF Project**

Title: *Future proofing the grass-fed beef value chain: A case study in the Matatiele area of the Umzimvubu Water Source Area in the Eastern Cape, South Africa*

**Aim:** To present effects of climate change on the environmental and socio-economic attributes of the study area and to develop a policy brief and a business case for the Grass-Fed Beef markets.

**Fieldwork and survey visuals:** Grass-Fed Beef Value Chains (2023)



Mobile auctions in one of the villages around Matatiele



Talking to one of the cattle buyers at the mobile auction

This project has been faced with a number of management challenges. Given a few disagreements on findings and implications, the ISER team has had to reject a proposal from the WWF that the ISER research team works closely with WWF scientists to reach conclusions *collectively* on climate change effects. The basis for the rejection was to keep the scientific integrity of the research process. Unfortunately, this development has almost derailed the project. Another seemingly minor challenge seems to be around the co-branding of the project and engagements between the ISER and the WWF to project funders. This is currently being negotiated.

**Progress Report 2022**

Four research assistants have been engaged: two from Rhodes University and one from Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.

Deliverable	Budget ZAR	Expected date	Progress	Comment
1. Interim report 2	Part of R300 000	Submitted	Done	None
2. Interim report 3	Part of R300 000	December 2023	Draft ready	None



3. Compilation of 1 to 3	Part of R300 000	2024	Will be ready after report 3 is finalised	None
4. Business case	R80 0000 (not yet invoiced)	2024	Under discussion	Under discussion

**Project 3: FEAHLC**

**Title: The Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre hosted at the ISER with the IWR and ELRC**



**Aim:**

**Future Earth (FE)** is a global network of scientists, researchers, and innovators collaborating for a more sustainable planet. Its **vision** is of a sustainable and equitable world for all, where societal decisions are informed by openly accessible and shared knowledge. Its mission is to advance research in support of transformations to global sustainability. FE has twenty-seven (27) Global Research Networks (GRNs) that bring together innovators from academia, policy, business, civil society and more to address the world's most pressing sustainability challenges. Together, they generate the multifaceted knowledge needed to inform solutions for complex societal issues. FE is supported by nine (9) Global Secretariat Hubs, including the brand new African Hub, hosted by the NRF. The Leadership Centre is hosted at Rhodes University in collaboration with the ISER, ELRC and the IWR, while the Future Africa Campus

is housed at the University of Pretoria. The ISER co-hosts the leadership centre's through the director, administrator and financial management.

The Leadership Centre (LC), which is already operational, has been established primarily to support the NRF by leading the Sustainability Science agenda on the African continent, coordinate and develop the requisite research capacity as well as build networks in support of this research agenda.

The LC has articulated a vision of Africa's Sustainability Science (SS) leadership which will ensure Africa's visibility and voice are represented in the Future Earth's Global Secretariat and accelerate and amplify Africa's contribution towards the pursuit of Future Earth's global mission.

The success of the LC rests on the establishment of the regional **nodes**, consortium partners, the Sustainability **Science Clusters**, and **Early Career Researchers** as well as the development of a strong and well-coordinated African SS Association. These will be united in the common purpose of advancing SS in and for Africa, and advocating its priorities at the global level (see illustration in Figure 2 below).



**Figure 2: The FEAHLC conceptualisation**

The launch of the Future Earth Africa Hub (FEAH) and its Leadership Centre took place at Mandela University's *Research and Innovation Week* in June 2023. Prof. Mbatha gave the main presentation in the first of two sessions for the Future Earth Africa Hub.

*The launch of the Future Earth Africa Hub, which hosts the Leadership Centre of Sustainability Science in Africa-Mandela University, South Africa 2023. Representatives from Future Earth Global, Rhodes University, University of Pretoria, and the National Research Foundation.*



In June and October 2023, Dr Attig Bahar and Prof. Mbatha attended two events in Panama (SRI 2023) and in Rwanda (UN Climate Change Programme), respectively, to develop further African based partnerships for the Future Earth Africa Hub and the Leadership Centre.

*Dr Attig Bahar speaking at the Sustainability Research and Innovation (SRI) Congress held in Panama from 26-30 June 2023.*



Dr Attig Bahar attended the Geo Week and Ministerial Summit in Cape Town from 6-10 November 2023 to develop further African based partnerships for the Future Earth Africa Hub and the Leadership Centre.



*Dr Attig Bahar with delegates attending the Geo Week event in Cape Town.*



Of a total budget of R18 million over 3 years, R 4.012 million have been budgeted for 2024

Deliverable	Expected date	Progress	Comment
1. Administrative team	Done	Done	Appointed at ISER
2. Directorship	December 2023	Ongoing	Prof. Mbatha is acting assisted by Dr Attig Bahar at ISER
3. Deputy Director			Acting at UP
4. Scoping study	December 2023 / January 2024	Ongoing	

A draft of the Future Earth African Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHL) **scoping study inception report** was developed and made available in December 2023. It *presents the context in which the FEAHL is*

*being established, the purpose and scope of the scoping study, and the study approach and methodology, including the activities and deliverables.*

*The FEAHLC has decided to use the first three years of its existence (2023-2025) to understand its operating context, identify priorities, set the agenda, establish necessary structures, and begin implementing the agenda.*

The scoping study report proposes a number of activities such as stakeholder identification and engagement, a literature review, as well as data generation based on a set of research questions, which will be discussed at several review and reflection workshops. The ultimate goal of the scoping study is to develop an action plan that outlines strategies that will advance collaboration of stakeholders on the African continent and worldwide.

The Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre hosted a two-day workshop on **Sustainability Science Cluster** development on 27-28 November 2023 at the Future Africa Campus, University of Pretoria. The event brought together scientists and sustainability experts from South Africa, Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, the FEAHLC Consortium Partners, and the FEAHLC secretariat. The workshop covered crucial subjects concerning the implementation and operation of the Science Clusters, as well as the first review and learning discussion of the scoping study.

The **Land Investments Science Cluster**, launched in November 2023 at the Future Africa Campus is led by the ISER with R1 050 000 seed funding from the NRF. The land investment theme *examines the impacts and implications of land investments on policy, governance, and justice. The theme explores how land investments can be aligned with the existing policies and regulations at different levels and sectors, and how they can enhance or undermine the governance of land use and management. The theme also investigates how land investments can affect the distribution of costs and benefits among different stakeholders, especially in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The theme aims to promote a fair and sustainable land investment that respects the rights and interests of the land users and the environment.*

**A separate chapter will be dedicated to the Leadership Centre in the 2024 annual report.**

### **4.3 Pipeline research projects**

#### **Project 1: Office of the Premier Eastern Cape Government**



Title: ***A spatial framework for local municipalities' socio-economic development planning in the Eastern Cape Province***

**Aim:** This project was agreed as a collaborative effort between the School of Journalism and Media Studies (SJMS) and the ISER. It was supposed to be undertaken over the 2021 year, but it has not taken off. The contract between Rhodes University and the Premier's office was signed by the university's registrar in May 2021, but it has not been signed by the Premier's office representative.

### **Progress Report 2023**

The agreement was signed by Rhodes University VC and not signed at Premier's office. After our inquiries in early 2023, the office asked Rhodes University to put in another proposal looking at ***the commercialisation of cannabis in the Eastern Cape Province.***

The ISER set up a research team of **Mr Siya Jobo** (economist at Rhodes University), **Prof. Anthony Palmer** (IWR at Rhodes University) and a potential **ISER Masters student** whose Honours project was on the cannabis legislation in South Africa to run with the project.

### **Project 2: Eastern Cape Provincial Labour Markets Intelligence Project**

Title: ***Towards the development and implementation of the provincial labour markets intelligence framework and related programmes***

**Aim:** The proposed research aims to address the conceptualisation, development and execution of data from which signals for potential economic growth can be identified in time for:

- a) The skills and education supply sectors to respond on time;
- b) For potentially growing sectors where public and private sector investments can be made to ameliorate potential economic growth.

### **Progress Report 2023**

No feedback received in 2023 from the Eastern Cape provincial government in 2023 after this was requested by the ISER	
---	--





### **Project 3: ISER led Sustainability Science on Land and Investments**

**Title:** The financial and the land management science clusters in Africa through the FEALHC

**Aim:** A annual budget of R350 000 has been awarded for the ISER to lead and conduct work in this project from 2024.

### **Project 4: ISER-HSRC**

**Title:** Hope and optimism for the future in the post Covid-19 and global reset period

**Aims:** Using the SASAS 2022 survey data of the HSRC to interrogate and discuss quality of life indicators on personal and national wellbeing, the Cantril-ladder that explores hopes and fears, and items from the Snyder hope scale for good measure.

**Progress Report 2023** from Prof. V. Møller

We worked with my HSRC partner Dr Benjamin Roberts. His HSRC SA Social Attitudes Survey was in the field last year. I'm really excited, SASAS 2022 included several key quality of life indicators on personal and national wellbeing. We surveyed the PWI, NWI, and Cantril measures in earlier SASAS surveys. A paper was done in this area and results launched on Youth Day on 16 June 2023 on the SABC.

### **Project 5: Skills Development project for Rwanda with Vanguard Economics**

**This is an important collaborative development concerning Rwanda (and possibly Uganda).**

**Aim:** The ISER is in discussion with Vanguard Economics to offer the following training in Rwanda:

- a. Data Analysis Training: Short-Learning Programme in 2024
- b. Cost – Benefit Analysis: Short Learning Programme in 2024
- c. Honours Degree in Research Policy – possibly 2025
- d. Masters and PhDs in Research Policy – as soon as possible

### **Progress Report 2023:**

The Memorandum of Understanding is with the Rhodes University legal office.

### **Project 6: Water Research Commission (Social Learning)**

**Aim:** The extension of the WRC's Social Learning and Investment in Ecological Infrastructure course to other catchments during 2024. Total budget: R700 000.

#### **Progress Report 2023:**

Proposal was under construction.

## **4.4 Operational projects in 2023**

### **Project 1: The ISER Archives Restoration project**

#### **Aims**

- a. ISER Archive Redux – finding the ISER's missing publications
- b. ISER Archives – Restoration to website
- c. ISER Archives – Physical collation and cataloguing of the publications available
- d. ISER Archives – Digitisation of papers currently missing from the archives
- e. ISER Archives – Restoration of the physical archives to the ISER Archive room

#### **Progress Report 2023:**

About 50% on aims. The project remained on hold in 2023. The positive news, however, is that the ISER was handed back the Archives Building/Room by the Department of Sociology in 2023. The plan is to reuse the building also for the benefit of ISER students.

## CHAPTER 5 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS REPORT

### 5.1 Introduction

Given the human resources size of the ISER, establishing working partnerships and collaborations with people and organisations, both within Rhodes University and externally, is critical for all core activities of the Institute. These include partnerships we currently have, as well as new partnerships we are establishing to host seminars, solicit working papers, co-write journal articles, co-bid for projects, host training workshops and various other activities. This chapter presents a picture of current and initiated partnerships and collaborations from 2020.

*Reflection:*

*The establishment of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre, hosted on behalf of the NRF is becoming the engine of building partnerships, networks and contacts with emerging researchers and new research areas. This is one of the key roles of the FEAHLC. To this end, the Director has already attended networking events in two different continents, i.e. on the Sustainability Research & Innovation Congress in Panama for the NRF as Acting Director of the FEAHLC, as well as the Climate Change Research Programme in Rwanda for the FEAH's establishment.*

#### **A workshop facilitated by the FEAHLC at the World Climate Forum in Kigali 2023**



## **5.2 Key partners within Rhodes University**

Every person and every unit at Rhodes University is a potential ISER partner. However, given the new research focus of the Institute, the ISER has established strong collaborative relationships with the following departments and units:

- a) The Institute of Water Research (IWR)
- b) The Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC) and its SARCHI Chair of Global Change and Social Learning Systems
- c) Rhodes Business School
- d) Department of Political and International Studies
- e) Department of Economics and Economic History
- f) Department of History
- g) Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
- h) The School of Languages
- i) Department of Sociology
- j) Department of Environmental Science
- k) School of Journalism and Media Studies

## **5.3 Key partners external to Rhodes University**

- a) University of Johannesburg: Faculty of Humanities
- b) Nelson Mandela University: Faculty of Humanities
- c) University of Pretoria, Wits University, University of Limpopo and University of Fort Hare (Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre)
- d) University of Cape town, DataFirst
- e) World Wide Fund for Nature, South Africa
- f) Water Research Commission
- g) The National Research Foundation (Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre)
- h) Provincial Government ECSECC Eastern Cape Province
- i) University of South Africa: DVC for Research and Innovation
- j) Vangaurd Economics in Rwanda
- k) Kwame Nkrumah University (Ghana)
- l) Cape Coast University (Ghana)
- m) Kenyatta University in Kenya



- n) University of Nairobi
- o) Mzumbe University in Morogoro (Tanzania)

#### **5.4 NGO and private business partnerships**

- a) Environmental and Rural Solutions (ERS) in Matatiele Eastern Cape Province, South Africa
- b) Pathways Institute led by Mr Mazibuko Jara

#### **5.5 Partnership plan going forward**

The ISER continues to establish its collaborative partnerships for conducting research on the continent, especially around issues of cross border trade. A geographical spread of at least one formal partnership in each of the three regions - SADC, EAC and ECOWAS - is the target for 2024. The Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre will now be the platform to do this in sustainability science areas of environmental resources (e.g. Land and Investments), education (capacity development).

## CHAPTER 6 COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING REPORT

### 6.1 Communications and marketing objectives of the ISER

The communications and marketing objective is to build the ISER's reputation as a dynamic African hub of pioneering social and economic research, influencing policy and practice.

The broad communications and marketing objectives are to, a) attract donor funding to support research projects, b) attract new researchers and students from across the continent, and c) to leverage research so it can be practically applied and drive change.

*Prof. Mbatha discussing Africa-US relations in the media - SABC, 2023*

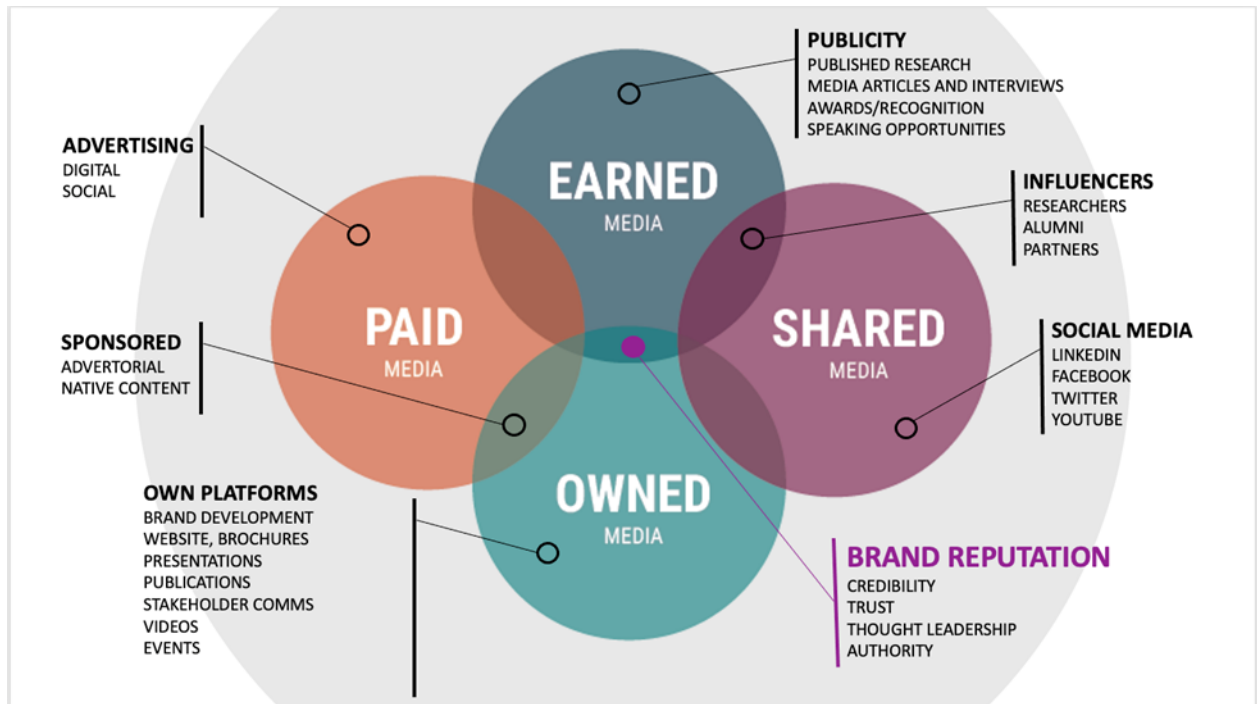


### 6.2 Communications and marketing strategy

**The approach is to:**

- a) present the ISER with a cohesive and clear brand, mission, vision and values aligned with the values of Rhodes University
- b) profile the ISER's research talent and partnerships
- c) amplify the voice of the ISER in discussions relevant to our research focus areas
- d) optimise ISER owned, earned, shared (social) and, where relevant paid, communication channels

### 6.3 ISER Channel Focus



### 6.4 Execution progress report

#### 6.4.1 Media coverage results

The ISER was quoted or referenced almost 50 times in the national media in 2023, and without much effort or investment from us compared to 2021. Media engagement covered diverse topics, including

- the war in the Ukraine
- youth in Africa
- US-SA relations
- the AGOA Africa Forum

The summary below shows that we potentially reached 5.2 million members of the public. If we were to buy this space with the editorial we would have paid R 4.396 304.70 in 2023. Compared to 2022, the PR AVE has gone up from R 2.1 million. Basically the investments we made in 2021 during Lockdown years where we did lots of deliberate media engagement is paying off. In 2023, editorial articles appeared in *News24*, *Daily Maverick* and *Mail and Guardian* and TV interviews were conducted with the SABC, eNCA and SAfm.



For public engagement and public awareness creation and marketing and branding of the Institute, we have done better than planned or expected. This is especially with regard to our public media engagement. At this point, the ISER is in the imagination of national discussions and debates on global economic and geo-political affairs. This is illustrated by the numerous calls and requests to contribute to media discussions on especially African trade issues as affected by global conflicts. We believe that through enough media engagements the ISER is likely to attract good students and research future research partners.

The media coverage results for the period December 2022 to November 2023 can be summarised in the following monetary value:

- a) TOTAL Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) VALUE: **R 1 465 434.90**
- b) PR AVE VALUE: **R 4, 396 304.70**
- c) REACH: **4 994 115**

ARTICLE	ISER FOCUS AREA	AUTHOR/GUEST	MEDIA	MONTH
FRIDAY BRIEFING   Ukraine war: One year on	Human and economic development	Prof. Mbatha	News24	February
Concourt Phala Phala blow for Ramaphosa			Cape Times The Star Online	March
Data Analysis Training Workshop announcement	Education and Skills	ISER	Facebook	June
'BORN FREE' DREAMS: SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIP YOUTH DISCUSS THEIR HOPES FOR A BETTER LIFE IN FUTURE This #YouthDay we're looking forward to the publication of a new study conducted by Valerie Møller, Professor Emeritus in Quality of Life Studies at the ISER	Human and economic development	Prof. Valerie Møller	Facebook	June
Rhodes University, in collaboration with the University of Pretoria, will host the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre from 2023 to 2026.	Human and economic development		RU/ISER Website Facebook	June

Launch of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre	Human and economic development	Prof. Mbatha	RU/ISER Website	June
Rhodes SRC presents Leadership Week	Education and Skills		RU Website Grocott's Mail	August
The Upside broadcast		Prof. Mbatha	Channel Africa	August
Collaborations target uniquely African solutions to water challenges	Environmental resources management	Institute for Water Research (IWR)	RU Website	September
The ISER at Rhodes University invites you to join in on this fascinating research-based discussion of the growing dangers posed by the Fast-Foods industry.	Human and economic development	ISER	Twitter	September
BOOK REVIEW   A Country of Two Agricultures	Environmental resources management	MR Wandile Sihlobo (ISER Research Associate)	BBrief	September
[WATCH] A Country of Two Agricultures: The Disparities, The Challenges, The Solutions	Environmental resources management	MR Wandile Sihlobo (ISER Research Associate)	Polity	October
ISER HYBRID SEMINAR - To what degree is climate change a threat to grass-fed beef value chains and rural livelihoods?	Environmental resources management	Prof. Mbatha	Twitter	October
eNCA – Today	International trade with focus on Africa	Prof. Mbatha	ENCA Twitter	November
Africa to leverage East-West battle in Agoa talks	International trade with focus on Africa	Prof. Mbatha	Mail & Guardian	November
United States won't lower its Agoa human rights standards	International trade with focus on Africa	Prof. Mbatha	Mail & Guardian	November
SAfm - Night Talk with Oliver Dickson		Prof. Mbatha	SAfm	November

The research work of Prof. Mbatha of Rhodes University's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) has been used and cited in the United States International Trade Commission's investigative report	International trade with focus on Africa	Prof. Mbatha	Twitter	November
Engagement from various departments has enhanced ISER research and enriched teaching. Interdisciplinary Honours Degree in Development Studies	Education and Skills	ISER	Twitter	November
Announcement of Successful Applications – Black Academics Advancement Programme	Education and Skills		NRF	December
<p>AVE: R 1 465 434.90</p> <p>PR AVE: R 4, 396 304.70</p> <p>REACH: 4 994 115</p>				

Prof. Valeri Møller being interviewed on SABC on 16 June 2023.



**SABC News - SA Today 16 June 2023**



Rhodes ISER  
14 subscribers



Subscribed



### 6.4.2 Webinar support

Social media campaigns took place for all the webinars reported under the seminar report (Chapter 3). Media were invited, and recordings were shared afterwards.

### 6.4.3 Social media

Social media should be used to proactively to:

- a. Build the ISER at Rhodes University brand awareness
- b. Promote and extend the reach of ISER events
- c. Profile areas of interest to trigger partnerships
- d. Foster brand connections with current and prospective partners and researchers
- e. Share the many different “voices” of ISER research
- f. Share key conclusions of published research with data visualisations and infographics
- g. Become part of national discussions relevant to research areas
- h. Provide open-access versions of primary research and engage with audiences in discussion

### Social media report from January 2023 to December 2023.

#### Overall Engagement

Total Posts: **65**

Total Engagement: **2,680**

#### Facebook @RhodesISER

Followers – **97**, up **44.78%**

Total Engagement – **2556**, up **45.14%**

Impressions - **162 016**, up **140.77%**

Post Clicks – **2433**, up **133.49%**

#### Twitter @RhodesISER

Following - **100**

Followers - **86**

#### LinkedIn

Followers – **52**, up **85.71%**

Total Posts – **19**, down **51.28%**

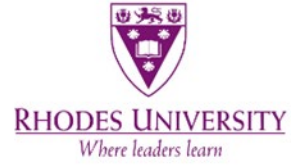
Total Engagement – **45**, up **15.38%**

#### YouTube

Views – **215**

Followers – **11**

Paid promotions marketing the seminars and the new Interdisciplinary Honours Degree have shown successful engagement.



## CHAPTER 7 THE JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN STUDIES (JCAS) REPORT

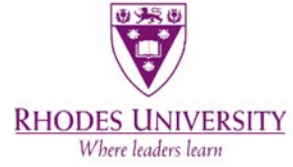
Prof. Nthabiseng Motsemme was appointed as the Editor-in-Chief of the JCAS in July 2022. In her year-end report, Prof. Motsemme discussed the achievements attained during 2023, including:

- under the effective coordination of one of the Co-editors, Prof Sally Matthews, the Special Issues backlog has been almost entirely cleared in 2023;
- the three-person backlog team consisting of an associate editor and two reviewers managed to reduce the historical backlog of over 400 manuscripts (with some dating as far back as 2014) to 60 manuscripts;
- the production target of publishing a minimum of four (4) publication numbers in 2023 was met, within expected timelines;
- Dr Thoko Sipungu (Department of Politics; Rhodes University), was appointed as Book Editor in 2023 after the resignation of Dr Kholeka Shange;
- five new Co-editors were appointed during 2023 and attended an induction workshop in November which was co-organised by Taylor & Francis;
- Co-editors met twice during 2023 to discuss challenges and explore strategies to tackle these, for example, the emerging backlog of 2023 manuscripts and the difficulty in finding reviewers;
- Taylor & Francis offered that Co-editors utilise their Reviewer Selection Support (RSS) system, consisting of in-house subject experts with specific training in selecting and inviting reviewers for specific articles for T&F journals. The RSS team have confirmed that they would be able to source and invite one round of 10 reviewers for up to 10 JCAS papers.
- Taylor & Francis introduced a new online submission portal and a number of features have been made available to JCAS. The submission portal is for authors and improves their experience of submitting to the journal.
- The appointment of a new Deputy Editor is envisaged for Q1 of 2024.

*According to the annual Taylor & Francis publishing report, submissions rose to 223 in November 2023, compared to 185 in November 2022. Final decisions were made on 111 manuscripts by November 2023, with the final acceptance rate standing at 31%. The top submitting countries were Nigeria (26% of the submissions), followed by South Africa (15%), Ghana, Ethiopia and the United Kingdom.*

*Taylor & Francis held an Editor workshop on peer review on 8 November 2023 and also offers suggestions and training modules online that Co-editors may access.*

\*Note from the November 2023 Advisory Board meeting: “Guide against a new backlog developing from latest submissions in 2024.”



\*\*\*Thank You\*\*\*