

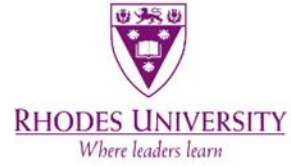
# The Institute of Social and Economic Research



# ISER

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH





# Annual Report 2024



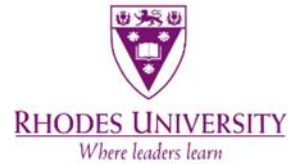
## Message from the Director

As Rhodes University marked its 120 years celebrations in 2024, the ISER turned 70. We are grateful for the productive years as we see the road passing fast towards the Diamond Jubilee (75) Celebrations.

In 2023 we promised our Advisory Board that we would turn a good level of effort towards research publications as soon as the university appointed the Director of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre. This happened on 1 March 2024. We put in place a writing community group on MsTeams that met twice every month, with the purpose of discussing and executing the writing of academic papers. We hosted workshops on skills to write reviews and analyse data. We kept records and kept everyone accountable for their writing activities and outputs. The group was made up of full time and contracted researchers, research fellows including post-doctoral fellows, Masters and Doctoral students. Based on the number of publications achieved since I joined the ISER as Director, these efforts contributed to our biggest payoff to date. From pages 32 to 34 we list more than thirteen (13) accredited publications with an ISER, Rhodes University as an affiliation. **Ten (10) of the publications were in peer-reviewed academic journals** and three (3) were book chapters. We also produced three (3) papers for the ISER's working paper series, thirteen (13) policy briefs and four (4) Honours projects, with internal supervision arrangements, and one (1) technical research project report. All these were possible also through our research-affiliation partnerships put in place in the previous three years. In total, the ISER produced at least **thirty three (33) research outputs with only two (2) permanently employed academic staff members**. The outputs supported at least three of the four different research focus areas of the ISER, namely the environmental, education and skills, human development and quality of life areas.

Beyond the research outputs, I note with pride the contributions of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLIC) and the ISER's Land and Investments Science Cluster (LISC) in Africa project towards the building of continental and other international partnerships. We formally signed MOUs for research and teaching collaborations in different countries located in West Africa (Ghana) and East Africa (Rwanda and Kenya), through the LISC.

The works of our researchers and fellows were recognised by international organisations at different international conferences. Professor Emeritus Valerie Møller was presented a glass plaque with the inscription: '*Pioneer in Quality-of-Life ~ Awarded by the Regional ISQOLS Conference in Africa ~ Valerie*'. and had a scholarship for post-graduate students named after her by the organisation's conference in Johannesburg. Dr Faten Attig-Bahar was acknowledged in Helsinki for her great work in organising the biggest congress for the Sustainability, Research and Innovation Africa Satellite event in Durban, South Africa.



We continued our work on scholarly public engagement with excellent quarterly seminar events and a round-table discussion, which attracted audiences beyond the university, from different national and global locations. Our administrative support (especially by Ms Bint) for the Future Earth through the Africa Hub and its Leadership Centre was immense; this is also reflected in the extensive annual report submitted to the National Research Foundation (NRF), which was also shared with the ISER Advisory Board.

The amount of work achieved and reported for 2024 in this report illustrates the power of dreaming big, working hard, harnessing good relations and executing wisely! An evaluative and visual reflection of where we are as an Institute against the goals we set for ourselves in November 2020 is presented as Figure 1 on page 35.

I wish to thank my ISER colleagues, fellows, associates, networks, students and everyone who supported the ISER for all their notable contributions. Makwande - (may there be so much more in future)!

Sincerely,

Nhlanhla Cyril Mbatha

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## **CHAPTER 1**

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

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In part, this 2024 ISER annual report presents managerial, operational and research activities that were presented for approval by the Advisory Board in February 2024, as well as after the last meeting in August 2024. 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. In 2025, the ISER will present and discuss a revised five-year strategy for approval by the Advisory Board.

#### **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**

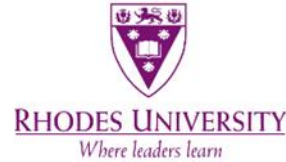
*Leading research for Africa*

#### **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 (Academic): 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.

**ISER Director (Academic): Prof. Nhlanhla Cyril Mbatha**

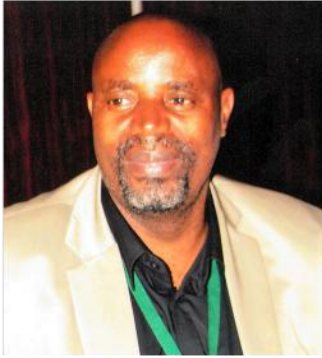
Prof. Mbatha is the current Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University, after acting as Dean and CEO at the Unisa School of Business Leadership in early 2020.



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.

**FEAHLIC Director (Support): Dr Daniel Nyanganyura**



We were delighted to have a vastly experienced candidate being appointed to take over as Director of the FEAHLIC in March 2024, replacing Prof. C Mbatha who had been acting in the position since June 2023.

Dr Daniel Nyanganyura is a professional Atmospheric Physicist and science manager who has vast experience in Africa working with different stakeholders that include governments, inter-governmental bodies, the science community and civil society organisations. He has a vested interest in activities that seek to promote science for development, build inter-disciplinary and transboundary research capacity and science networks as well as bridge and foster the science-policy interface. Dr Nyanganyura holds a PhD in Atmospheric Physics, an MSc in Agricultural Meteorology, and a BSc 4th Year Honours in Physics from the University of Zimbabwe; and a Licentiate Degree in Education in the Specialty of Physics and Astronomy from Pedagogical University Enrique José Varona, Havana, Cuba. He is the current Director of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre. He worked as the Executive Director of the African Science, Technology and Policy Institute; Regional Director for the International Science Council Regional Office for Africa; and Programme Specialist for Physics, Mathematics, and Engineering Sciences at the International Council for Science Regional Office for Africa; an air pollution researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Mainz, Germany; a Physics lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe; an Advanced Level Physics and Computer Science Teacher.

He is a member of the South African Institute of Physics (2019 - present) and serve/served on the following: Advisory Board of the African Physics Newsletter (2020 - present); International Advisory Committee of the African Light Source (2020 - present); member of the Water Institutes Alliance Task Team (2020 - present); Advisory Group for the Africa Regional Mechanism of the United Nation Major Groups and Other Stakeholders - representing the Science and Technology Community (2016 - present); member of the Technical

Advisory Board of the first phase of the African Open Science Platform (2017 - 2020); member of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Leading Integrated Research for Agenda 2030 in Africa (2015 - 2021); ex-officio member of the International Science Council Regional Office for Africa (2016 - 2021); ex-officio member of Africa Future Earth Committee (2016 - 2020); and member of Future Earth Regional Office for Southern Africa Interim Steering Committee (2019 - 2020).



**Financial administrator (Support): 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.



**FEAHLC Administrator (Support): 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 FEAHLC. Khezi is responsible for the administration of FEAHCL 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 FEAHLC for about two months.



**General administrator (Support): 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. In May 2024, the ISER bid farewell to Bulelani, who joined the Nelson Mandela University as a full-time student. We wish Bulelani all the best in his future career!



**ISER Acting Administrator (Support): Ms Janine Goliath**

Ms Goliath came back to the ISER in 2024 to replace Mr B. Mothlabane on a short term basis while we are in the process of appointing a permanent administrator for the ISER.

Janine is an experienced office administrator with over 10 years of expertise in the field. Born in Makhanda, she pursued studies in Office Administration, equipping herself with strong organizational, bookkeeping, and computer literacy skills.

Janine began her career working at law firms, where she honed her administrative and secretarial abilities in high-pressure environments. Over the years, she has expanded her expertise to include event coordination, computerized administration, and meticulous record-keeping. Her efficiency, attention to detail, and ability to manage multiple tasks make her a valuable asset in any professional setting.



**Research assistant (Academic Support): Dr Mzukisi Kuse**

Dr Mzukisi Kuse 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 centred 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 graduating with a PhD in 2024.



**JCAS Research Assistant (Academic/Admin Support): 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.



**Researcher (Academic/Admin Support): Dr Ola Adeneyi**

Dr Ola Adeneyi 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.



**Post-Doctoral Researcher (ISER/FEAHLCLand Cluster): Dr Frans Mothupi**

Dr 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.



**Post-Doctoral Researcher (FEAH-NRF): Dr Anastasia Moloto**

Dr Anastasia Moloto holds a Doctor of Technology degree in Business Management from the Tshwane University of Technology's Business School in the Department of Business Administration. Her research interests are public administration, governance, sustainability and technology. She has authored and co-authored twelve articles in both national and international journals. She is currently a Post Doctoral Fellow at the National Research Foundation (NRF) secondment from Rhodes University to support Future Earth Africa regional hub activities.

Dr Moloto joined the NRF in October 2023 and left in October 2024 to join UniSA on a full-time basis.

**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 Motsemme was appointed Chief Editor in July 2022. Prof. Motsemme is currently Associate Professor in the 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. 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



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

Prof. 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 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 and continued in the position as Visiting Fellow in 2024.



**ISER**  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL  
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**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*



### **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. In 2024, Dr Attig Bahar was appointed Deputy Director of the FEAHLC, based at the University of Pretoria. Congratulations!

### **Dr Ben Roberts**



Dr Ben Roberts is a Research Director in the Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES) research division at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), and research fellow of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University. He has a PhD in Social Policy and Labour Studies from Rhodes University and an MSc Urban and Regional Planning (Development) (with distinction) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He has coordinated the HSRC's South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) series since its inception in 2003, and in late 2023 oversaw the fielding of the 20th annual round of surveying. He also leads survey series on elections for the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) and financial literacy for the Financial Sector Control Authority (FSCA). He was a member of the UJ-HSRC COVID-19 Democracy Survey project team, which provided vital insight into the social implications of the pandemic and lockdown on the public between 2020 and 2022. He has extensive experience with the design and micro-econometric analysis of representative surveys, with a particular emphasis on the measurement of attitudes, poverty and subjective wellbeing. Ben's research interests and areas of expertise include attitudinal measurement and social change, the quantitative analysis of poverty, inequality and redistribution, subjective wellbeing and quality of life, election studies, crime and safety, and financial literacy. Recent book publications include *Quality of Life and Human Well-Being in Sub-Saharan Africa: Prospects for Future Happiness* (with Valerie Møller, Springer) and the edited SASAS volume *Family Values, Cohesion and Strengthening in South Africa* (with Zitha Mokomane, Jarè Struwig and Steven Gordon; HSRC Press).

## RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



### **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).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH STRATEGY, OUTPUTS, OTHER KEY OPERATIONAL AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

As discussed in the Director's note, the ISER embarked on focusing its energies on academic research outputs. To this end we created a writing group on MStems meeting every other week with as part time researchers, M&D students and the new crop of Post-Doctoral Fellows. One of the post docs came through the FEAHLC stationed at Rhodes University, supported by the VC and another through the FEAH, stationed and supported by the NRF. The post-docs have provided much needed contributions as previously envisioned in 2020. With the research focus, this chapter presents an overview of its overall five-year strategy devised for the ISER to build its key research areas. This strategy provides an understanding of the direction within the five-year vision and mission that the ISER undertook from 2020 until now. 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**

This section outlines the Institute's core business activities, with plans 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 strategy, outputs, other key operational and academic activities (Chapter 2) \*
- b) Scholarly public engagement (Chapter 3)\*
- c) Current and newly initiated projects including FEAHLC (Chapter 4)\*
- d) Continuous research networks, partnerships and collaborations (Chapter 5)\*
- e) Communications and marketing Chapter 6)\*
- f) The Journal of Contemporary African Studies (Chapter 7)\*
- g) Reflections on strategies to build new resources (a new Chapter 8)

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 strategy

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 DEVELOPMENT &amp; QUALITY OF LIFE</b>
4	<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES</b>

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

[\(https://www.ru.ac.za/iser/research/\)](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)	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> End poverty in all its forms</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p><b>Goal 6:</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p> <p><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</p>
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	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p> <p><b>Goal 8:</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p>
International trade in goods and services	<b>Goal 17:</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

### 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 have been 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 Development and Quality of Life*, now seem fully established, as reflected in our academic research outputs.

The most underdeveloped research area with minimal research activity is now the *International Trade in Goods and Services*. The *Education and Skills Development* area has received more attention within the FEAHLC, which conducts specific capacity development training through programmes aimed at supporting emerging researchers and community stakeholders through its various units. Some of these programmes, e.g. Capacity for Policy Engagement efforts are led by the ISER’s Director within the FEAH. In terms of research outputs, Dr Hompashe’s article from his HSRC report on TiMSS data was published in the *Development Southern Africa Journal* in 2024.

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*

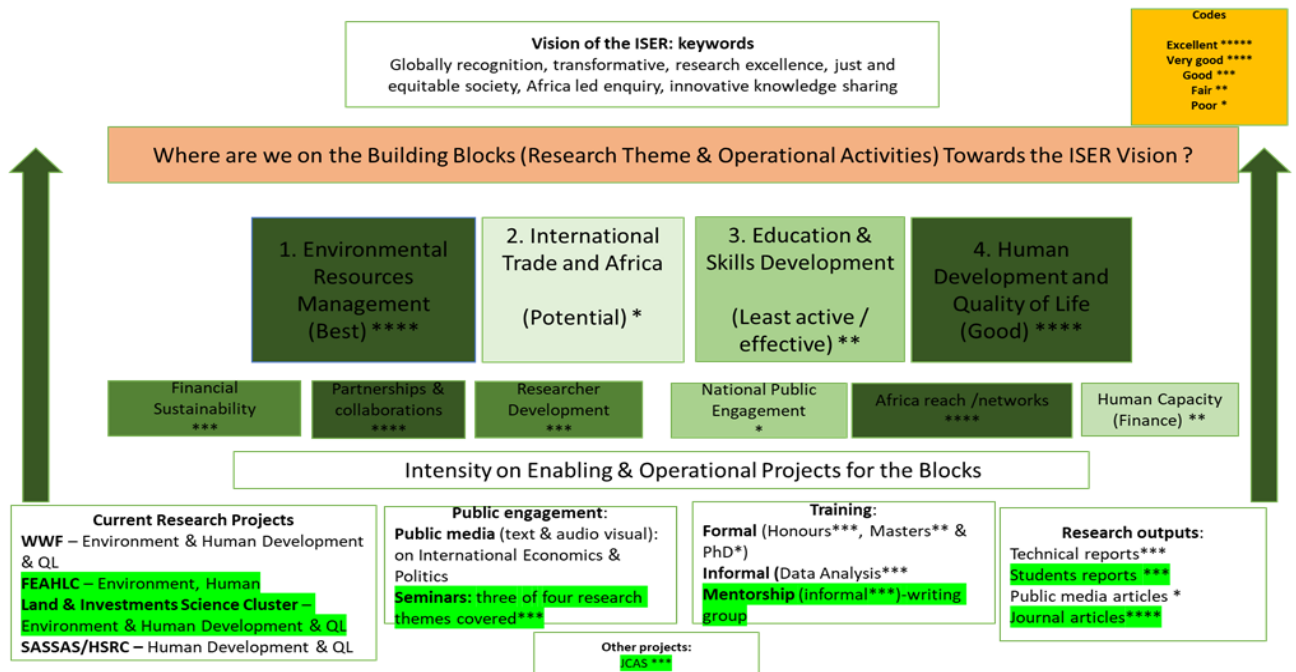
two main academic/research outputs per year. The big research project outputs would in turn lead to various smaller outputs, including at least one working paper and two policy briefs. These outputs would then lead to at least two seminar presentations, and at least two or more media articles to support 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 below 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
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:*

Based on the strategy above, Figure 1 below presents a quick dashboard of indicators on how the ISER team has performed in 2024 against its four thematic research areas. For example, the most active research theme remains the *Environmental Resources* research focus area, followed by the *Human Development & Quality of Life* area, where most of the ISER's research outputs have been produced. Our research activities and partnerships in Africa have been given a great boost by the establishment of the FEALHC and ISER's Land & Investments Science Cluster. The *International Trade in Goods and Services* area, however, still needs some attention as it lags behind all the other areas. This area needs more strategic attention to build it up in the near future.



**Figure 1:** Self-reflection of performance against the ISER vision and mission in 2024

Over the past four years, the ISER managed to secure a multi-year projects, from the WRC, WWF, and co-secured the FEAHLC with other units at Rhodes University. Although the FEAHLC does not generate income or profits for the ISER, it has had additional spinoffs of securing project funds, for example for the Land & Investments Science Cluster project. And with the current land & investments science team we are working towards securing more multi year project funds.

#### 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 fellowship funding programmes. The positions would focus around supporting the Institute’s research generation and outputs. The plan has been to have a postdoctoral 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 2024, the ISER secured two post-doctoral fellows funded by Rhodes University and the NRF. With the writing support project in place, the post docs produced at least three working papers with three

papers submitted to various journals. In addition the writing support programme also encouraged other researchers to write papers as reflected in the outputs report below.

### 2.4.3 Report on 2024 research activities

Generally, research outputs have been compromised with Prof. Mbatha taking on the responsibility for the establishment of management platforms for the ISER and then the acting Directorship of the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHL) in 2023. Nevertheless, a number of potential outputs for papers and policy briefs came from ISER supervised students. These are presented below. The writing group strategy worked.

#### **Accredited outputs (journal articles and book chapters)**

##### Published journal articles

1. **Bachiri B, Rahmoun, K, Bahar FA** (2024). *Enhancing photovoltaic performance through interfacial Engineering: A comparative analysis of bismuth iodide (BiI<sub>3</sub>) and Cs<sub>2</sub>BiAgI<sub>6</sub> as interlayer materials in the design of perovskite solar cells*. International Solar Energy Society. Published by Elsevier Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.solener.2024.112765>
2. **Gustafsson, M.** (2024). Poverty, inequality and atmospheric colonisation: Pointers for the school history curriculum. *Yesterday & Today*, No 32 December 2024. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2024/n32a2>
3. **Hompashe, D.** (2024). *Does instructional leadership drive educational improvement in South Africa? Evidence from Oaxaca-Blinderde composition analysis*. Development Southern Africa 2024. Vol 41. No.2. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2024.2309455>
4. **Mbatha, N. C.** (2024). Engaging with human-to-land relationships for engaged science: A complex-systems view for African land studies. *South African Journal of Science*, 120(9/10). <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2024/19154>
5. **Møller, V., Roberts, B.J. & Zani, D.** (2024). 'Born Free' Dreams: South African Township Youth Discuss Their Hopes for a Better Life in Future. *Applied Research Quality Life* **19**, 1681–1709. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-024-10303-2> SharedIt link: <https://rdcu.be/dEpkY>  
Open Access
6. **Moreno-Ibáñez M, Casado M, Gremion G, Rabanal V, Adojoh O, Anoruo C, Arshad A, Bahar FA, Bello C, Bergstedt H, Caccavo JA, Champollion N, Choy ES, De Los Ríos MF, Detlef H, Dey R, Gamal G, Guímaro HR, Hancock S, Hansen C, Hare V, Höfer J, Jabir T, Jain S, Jawak S, Latonin M, Martin J, Fredy Mojica J, O'Hara R, Onafeso O, Prasath RA, Alves EQ, Ruez-Villanueva S, Rosenbaum P, Ruiz-Pereira S, Savaglia V, van Soest M and Vural D** (2024) *Engagement of early career researchers in collaborative assessments of*

- IPCC reports: achievements and insights*. *Frontiers in Climate* 6:1395040. doi: 10.3389/fclim.2024.1395040
7. **Pillay, M., Kara, R., Govindasamy, P., & Motala, R.** (2024). *Food security and disability in South Africa: an analysis of General Household Survey data*. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2024.2388264>
  8. **Singer, J., Wöhr, A. and Otterbach, S.** (2024). *Gambling Operators' Use of Advertising Strategies on Social Media and Their Effects: A Systematic Review* Accepted: 29 February 2024. *Current Addiction Report*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40429-024-00560-4>
  9. **Sioen GB, McGreevy S, Ungvari J, Attig-Bahar F, Juhola S** (2024). *Charting the course for the next decade of sustainability research and innovation*. *Global Sustainability* 7, e46, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/sus.2024.41>
  10. **Struwig, J. & Roberts, B.** (2024). 'Exploring Environmentalism Across Nations: Understanding the Influence of Societal Social Progress on Environmental Values, Norms, and Behaviour', *International Journal of Sociology*, 447–475. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207659.2024.2420498> [Accepted 21 Oct 2024; Published 4 Nov 2024]

#### Published book chapters

11. **Mokiwa, H.O. and Adeniyi, O.O.** (2024). *Creating Liberating Universities: Engaging Communities in Participatory Action Research*. In: Msila, V. (Ed.) *Creating Liberating Universities: Engaging Communities in Participatory Action Research*. African Sun Media under the the SUN PReSS imprint, Stellenbosch, South Africa (Chapter 9). **ISBN:** 978-1-991260-49-9.
12. **Roberts, B., Davids, Y.D., Struwig, J., Mokomane, Z., & Møller, V.** (2024). *Quality of life and political support in South Africa: A resilient nation?* In: Reddy, Bohler-Muller, Mokomane, Soudien (Eds.), *Quality of Life and Wellbeing. State of the Nation*, HSRC Press, Pretoria, South Africa. (Chapter 11). **ISBN 13:** 978-0-7969-2663-0.
13. **Roberts, B. & Mchunu, B.** (2024). 'The Economic Freedom Fighters: Stagnant or Resurgent?'. In Schulz-Herzenberg, C. & Southall, R. (Ed.) *Election 2024 South Africa: Countdown to Coalition*, Jacana and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (pp.149-168).

#### Submitted to journals

1. **Adeniyi, O. and Kara, R.** (2024). *Women's inclusion in Agriculture: An analysis of relevant South African Policies*. Submitted to the *South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*.

2. **Mbatha, C.N.** 2024. Market Access for Communal Land Farmers in South Africa: A Complex Systems Case of the Eastern Cape Province and some Implications for Research and Extension Support. Submitted to the S.A. Journal of Economic Management Sciences.
3. **Mothupi, F.M. and Kara, R.** The Impact of Subsistence Agriculture on Household Food Security in the Eastern Cape: Insights from the 2023 General Household Survey. Submitted to Agriculture and Food Security.

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

1. **Kara, R. and Mbatha, C.N.** (2024). Future Proofing the Grass-Fed Beef Value Chain (GFBVC): A Case Study in the Matatiele area of the uMzimvubu Water Source Area in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa. ISER Summary Report, WWF-SA. 28 February 2024.

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

**Prof. Mbatha** presented the following papers:

1. Presenting the Land & Investments Science Cluster Science at the Research and Innovation (SRI) Africa Satellite Congress 2024. Durban, South Africa.
2. Presenting the Land & Investments Science Cluster Science at the Research and Innovation (SRI) Congress 2024. Helsinki, Finland.
3. Presenting the Land & Investments Science Cluster Science at the Future Earth Swedish Hub, Stockholm, Sweden.



Prof. Mbatha at the SRI Congress in Helsinki, Finland

**Valerie Møller** and **Ben Roberts** presented papers at two International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) conferences: **ISQOLS Malaysia** (Kota Kinabalu, 25-28 June 2024) and at the 1<sup>st</sup> regional **ISQOLS Africa** (hosted by University of Johannesburg at Irene Country Lodge, 3-5 October 2024).

**Conference papers presented in 2024 at ISQOLS Malaysia <sup>a</sup> and at ISQOLS Africa**

1. 'Born-Free' Dreams: South African township youth discuss their hopes for a better life in future <sup>a, b</sup>
2. A Resilient Nation? Quality of Life and political support in South Africa <sup>a, b</sup>
3. South African hopes and fears thirty years into democracy: A follow-up replication of Hadley Cantril's Pattern of Human Concerns <sup>a</sup>
4. Brief History of Quality-of-Life Studies in South Africa: Milestones, Measures, and Pioneers <sup>b</sup>  
Intercultural Felicitometry: The potential of Bernheim's ACSA to overcome relativity-bias and thus make results comparable <sup>b</sup>

**1<sup>st</sup> Regional ISQOLS Africa conference hosted by Talita Greyling, University of Johannesburg.** Valerie and Ben presented papers in four tracks at ISQOLS Africa that covered historical perspectives, adolescent well-being, measuring well-being, and well-being and resilience. ISER sponsored three of their Honours students, **Bukho Gwayena, Lusanda Mabandla, and Luleka Mkhanya** to attend a ‘crash-course’ introduction to quality-of-life studies for newcomers to the field presented by Joseph Sirgy.



Happy ISER students post-conference ISQOLS Africa (3–5 October 2024) at OR Tambo airport on 6 October 2024. They had attended Joseph Sirgy’s pre-conference workshop on the first day, followed by participation in sessions of their own choice over the three conference days.

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

- **Research activities**
  - a. **The Democracy @30 research project 2024.** See Project 1 in Chapter 4 below. **Ben Roberts** visited Makhanda in March and December 2024 to work on the project with **Valerie Møller** and **Dalindyabo Zani**.
  - b. **HSRC review, August and September 2024.** The HSRC invited Valerie Møller on 1 August 2024, to serve on the expert panel tasked with the review of the Developmental, Capable, and Ethical State (DCES) division.

### **Recognition**

- **Award.** On the last day of the ISQOL Africa conference, **Valerie Møller** was presented a glass plaque with the inscription: '*Pioneer in Quality-of-Life ~ Awarded by the Regional ISQOLS Conference in Africa ~ Valerie*'.
- **ISQOLS Valerie Møller Fellowship.** In 2024, **Valerie Møller** was informed that the ISQOLS board had decided that the ISQOLS fellowship for a postgraduate researcher would in future bear her name. The ISQOLS Valerie Møller Fellowship supports a postdoctoral researcher from a developing country conducting research in quality of life, happiness, or well-being studies, with a full year membership, conference registration, travel funding, and mentorship (<https://isqols.org/ISQOLS-Valerie-Moller-Fellowship>).



Valerie (centre) with Pam and Joseph Sirgy at ISQOLS Africa (3–5 October 2024). Joe was listed as the conference's Crash Course Instructor on the Psychology of Well-Being and Quality of Life. Our ISER students attended Joe's pre-conference workshop on 3 October.

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

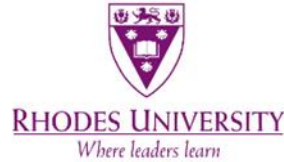
During the year in review no Master's and PhD research projects were completed.

### **Honours Degree research projects**

1. **Mkhanya, L.** (2024) *The Impact of Gender in Household agricultural activities and its implications for food security in the Eastern Cape.* ISER, Rhodes University, Makhanda.
2. **Gwayena, B.** (2024). *Happiness and Well-being of South Africa's youth.* ISER, Rhodes University, Makhanda.
3. **Mabandla, L.** (2024). *Personal Wellbeing in Postgraduate Students.* ISER, Rhodes University, **Makhanda.**
4. **Nyangiwe, Z. (2024).** *Skills Mismatch in South Africa, to what extent does it impact unemployment, specifically youth unemployment?* ISER, Rhodes University, Makhanda.

### **2024 Honours Degree Policy Briefs**

1. **Mdleleni, P.** (2024). *Investigate the relationship between household agriculture and food security in South Africa.* ISER, Rhodes University
2. **Ikutiminu, S.** (2024). *Explore the link between gender of household head and food insecurity in South Africa.* ISER, Rhodes University
3. **Zondo, M.K.** (2024). *Is there a gendered profile to education in South Africa?* ISER, Rhodes University
4. **Fulela, E.** (2024). *What are the challenges to accessing tertiary education in South Africa?* ISER, Rhodes University
5. **Giba, K.** (2024). *What are the main modes of transport used by scholars to attend school? Expound on the risks linked to walking to school.* ISER, Rhodes University
6. **Majodina, S.** (2024). *An overview of social grants in South Africa – which are the most common grants that are collected?* ISER, Rhodes University
7. **Masisi, K.** (2024). *What is the demographic profile of individuals who work in the informal sector in South Africa?* ISER, Rhodes University
8. **Masinga, N.** (2024). *Employment in South Africa – who are being employed in the stagnant economy?* ISER, Rhodes University
9. **Makhanya, L.** (2024). *Understanding the educational, age and gender differences among the unemployed in the country.* ISER, Rhodes University
10. **Gwayena, B.** (2024). *Youth unemployment – to what extent can a mismatch of skills be attributed to the high levels of unemployment among youth in the country?* ISER, Rhodes University
11. **Mabandla, L.** (2024). *Happiness among South Africans – what are the dynamics of household happiness in South Africa?* ISER, Rhodes University
12. **Nyangiwe, Z.** (2024). *A glimpse into household agricultural activities – understanding the characteristics of households who engage in agricultural activities in SA. Is there a difference in the provincial distributions of these households?* ISER, Rhodes University



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

During 2024, the third intake of the formal ISER's Interdisciplinary Honours Degree in Development Studies in the Humanities faculty was successfully coordinated by Dr Reesha Kara.

*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.*

Twelve (12) students registered for the ISER module and four (4) registered for the ISER Honours degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. The programme saw a high number of applications from across the country, which highlights the effectiveness of advertising through social media like Facebook.

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

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

1. Prof. Martin Gustafsson (Stellenbosch University and ISER Research Fellow)
2. Ms Lynn Woolfrey (UCT, DataFirst)
3. Dr Nontuthuzelo Gola (SANBi) standing in for Prof. Tally Palmer
4. Dr Tamaryn Frederichs (RU, Economics) standing in for Prof. Mike Rogan
5. Mr David Fryer (RU, Economics)

#### **Background**

Historically, 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, 2023 and 2024. Thank you to all Rhodes University staff and members of the Board who contributed to discussions in shaping this programme.

In relation to this course, the Board encouraged that the ISER documents the evolution of this course. In 2024 we approached the School of Journalism to find a suitably qualified candidate for this documentary using a multimedia approach. See the advertisement of the School of Journalism below.



#### OVERVIEW

The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University is looking to partially fund a creative young mind who is studying towards an Honours degree, 4th year BJourn or PGDip in Journalism & Media Studies at Rhodes University. The student must be interested in multimedia studies. The condition of the tuition support is that the Honours, JMS4 or PGDip research project documents a selected ISER project using a historical and multimedia lens (i.e. a mix of text, images, drawings, audio, video, etc.) The ISER will contribute R35 000 towards tuition fees for the 2025 academic year.

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BURSARY

To be eligible for this bursary, the student must:

- Possess a degree in Journalism and be accepted for Honours studies OR 4th year BJourn OR BA or PGDiploma in Journalism
- Be good with ethnographic and archiving research methods
- Have an overall mark of at least 65% at 3rd year.

If you think this will be you in 2025, please send your academic transcript and CV to:

**Janine Goliath**  
janine.goliath@ru.ac.za  
+27 (0)46 603 8873

#### ABOUT THE ISER

Established in 1954, The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) soon developed a diverse portfolio of research initiatives involving its own staff and staff members of other Rhodes academic departments. Engagement by academics from a range of departments in the work of the ISER contributed not only to the quality of the ISER's research, but also enriched teaching within those academics' home departments. Currently the ISER focuses on multidisciplinary research across varied socio-economic challenges in rural and urban spaces, locally, nationally and on the African continent under the leadership of Prof. Cyril Nhlanihla Mbatha.

## **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 from 24-26 June 2024. 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 students 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.

The following students participated in the Data Analysis short course:

Lavinia Tangi-Jehova Nghidinwa

Mzukisi Kuse

Michel Karabo Zondo

Suphile Xoliswa Nonhlanhla Majodina

Luleka Mkhanya

Zanoxolo Nyangiwe

Bukho Gwayena

Lusanda Mabandla

Frans Makwena Mothupi

Emihle Fulela

Similoluwa Adriella Grace Ikutiminu

Sanchez Nyasha Matope

Kwakhanya Giba



Participant Dr Frans Mothupi receiving his certificate from Dr Reesha Kara

*Reflection:*

The ISER and Vanguard-Economics in Rwanda agreed on a contract and model to launch this course in Kigali. An MOU was signed and advertising was done. However, despite all the interest shown by the public, we did not attract enough registered participants for the course to be offered in a financially viable way in Rwanda. The Board advised us not to proceed if this meant subsidising the course from ISER resources.

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

The Cost-Benefit Analysis training was not offered in 2024.

#### **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.

#### **2024 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 2024 supervision was also provided to students registered only in the ISER for the Honours, Master's and PhD degrees.

The ISER had the following students registered and supervised in 2024:

### Honours Degree

1. **Ms Luleka Mkhanya**

Supervisor names: Dr Frans Mothupi and Dr Mzukisi Kuse

2. **Ms Bukho Gwayena**

Supervisor name: Dr Reesha Kara

3. **Ms Lusanda Mabandla**

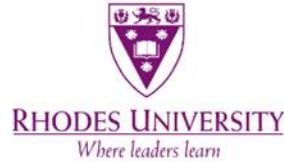
Supervisor name: Prof. V. Møller

4. **Mr Zanoxolo Nyangiwe**

Supervisor name: Dr Ola Adeniyi



Some of the ISER Honours students attending the Eastern Cape Post Graduate Economics Conference (September 2024)



## **Master's Degree**

### **Mr Kgabane Lengane**

Supervisor name: Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Title: *A framework to identify and value benefits to support communal land small farmers in the Eastern Cape province. A case of mobile livestock auctions in the Umzimvubu Catchment.*

### **Ms Siyamthanda Nomoyi**

Supervisor: Prof. Martin Gustafsson and Prof. Cyril Mbatha

Title: *What role do Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges play in Human Capital Development and Youth Unemployment.*

## **Doctoral Degree**

### **Ms Hudah Namurenge**

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

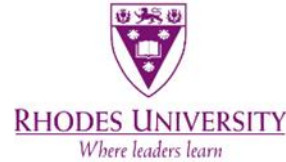
Title: *Public Partnership Projects in Uganda*

#### *Reflection:*

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.

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 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.

#### **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.*

## CHAPTER 3

### SCHOLARLY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

#### 3.1 Introduction

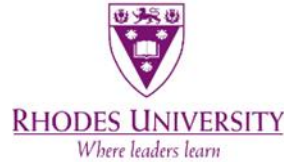
The ISER's research and engagement plan centres on the fulcrum of "Leading research for Africa". The Institute's primary focus is to be a dynamic African hub promoting innovative social and economic research with a focus on knowledge sharing across multiple platforms and co-engaged participatory research 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 Rhodes University Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) hosted a roundtable discussion and three seminars between February and August 2024. All the engagements were in hybrid form; virtual and in-house, at the Rhodes ISER annex building, in Makhanda. These engagements and seminars are intended to support and raise awareness about research into the four focus areas of the ISER, namely, (i) the use and management of environmental resources, (ii) education and skills development, (iii) economic development issues, and (iv) international trade in goods and services. The ISER identifies and approaches appropriate guests who can speak on their research, which relates to one of the ISER's four focus areas, and this is followed by appointing a person who can respond to the research work which the speaker presented. The ISER distributes the seminar invites and posters to the Rhodes University community, ISER database and on social media.

The ISER hosted the roundtable discussion, with the theme "*Sustainability Science and the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre in and for Africa*", on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2024. This was also an official launch of the *Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre*, at Rhodes University. Various Rhodes University personnel, external stakeholders, researchers, and students were present at the roundtable discussion. The roundtable discussion occurred in a hybrid form, with participants attending online and in-house.



The second engagement hosted by the Rhodes ISER was a seminar titled “*Sustainable Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for Public Strategic Projects in South Africa – Lessons from Others*”, on March 26, 2024. Professor P.D. Rwelamila (Professor Emeritus – University of South Africa (UNISA) was the distinguished guest speaker for the seminar, and Professor N.J. Pearse (Research Co-ordinator at the Rhodes Business school) was the respondent. This seminar covered the “Economic Development Issues” focus area and was attended by online and in-house participants.

The third ISER seminar was themed “*Africa’s youth: More educated, less employed, still unheard in policy and development*”, and it occurred on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. This commemorated Youth Day in South Africa, which is on June 16, and it covered the *Education and Skills Development* focus area of the ISER. The Distinguished Guest Speaker was Miss Asafika Mpako, the Communications Coordinator for Southern Africa at Afrobarometer, and Professor Nomalanga Mkhize from Nelson Mandela University was the respondent.

The final seminar was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2024 and it was titled “*Market Access for Common Land Farmers: The Case of the Eastern Cape Province and implications for SA’s land reform project*”. The seminar had a land use and management reform focus, which is part of the ISER’s “The Use and Management of Environmental Resources” focus area. Professor C.N. Mbatha was the speaker and Dr B. Muchara was the discussant. The seminar was attended by diverse participants, both online and in-house, including officials from government and NGOs.



**futureearth**  
Research. Innovation. Sustainability.  
**Africa Hub  
Leadership Centre**

## **A Round-Table Discussion on Sustainability Science and the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre in and for Africa**



Threats to the earth's sustainability require address from everyone. These threats are multidimensional, and mostly come from the social, economic use and misuse of the environment as well as its political mismanagement. Africa is most vulnerable to them partly because of its heavy reliance on rain agriculture, primary economies, and mostly non-accountable political systems. Proposed mitigations from green technologies to other adaptation efforts have been very slow to implement. Therefore, a sense of urgency, and strong leadership is required from stakeholders and to build this collective leadership we need all types of science discussions to take place on an on-going basis. For this purpose, the Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLC) invites you to a Round-Table discussion aimed primarily at exploring innovative ways to build, promote and lead Sustainability Science Research and Practice in Africa through Future Earth's Africa Hub Leadership Centre. The Round-Table discussion will brainstorm and share responses to questions on the FEAHLC, and Sustainability Science Research Clusters as follows:

**Short welcome:** Rhodes University Team

**What are Future Earth and Global Research Hubs?** Dr Daniel Nyanganyura (FEAHLC Deputy Director at UP, FA), Mr M. Nxumalo (NRF) and Dr Faten Attig-Bahar (FEAHLC support)

**What is the FEAH Leadership Centre at Rhodes and UP?** Prof. C.N. Mbatha (RU, ISER Director and FEAHLC Acting Director)

**What is Sustainability Science and Practice globally and what can it be in Africa?** Distinguished Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka (NRF SARCHI Chair, ELRC)

**How can we support and conduct Sustainability Science in Africa? And how do we do this through Science Cluster networks?**

Rhodes University Team (ELRC, IWR, ISER)

**Discussion on ways for promoting Sustainability Science and Practice in Africa:** Rhodes University Community

**Thanks:** Rhodes University Team

### SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) FOR PUBLIC STRATEGIC PROJECTS IN SOUTH AFRICA – LESSONS FROM OTHERS



Speaker: Professor P.D. Rwelamila

Respondent: Professor N.J. Pearce

Chair: Doctor R. Kara



Upholding human rights requires effective public service delivery. Various models on how to deliver these services have been experimented with globally. In different parts of the world the experiments, ranging from the use of purely private to completely government instruments, have produced mixed results. These have ranged from disastrous outcomes to some documented successes. In marking awareness campaigns on observing universal human rights, the ISER - in collaboration with the RBS and Unisa - invites you to a discussion on how some of the middle-of-the-road service delivery models like Public-Private-Partnership projects have been configured to perform. Reviews show that there have been some negative results from PPP models and about which we should be concerned. This is for both emerging and industrial economies.

#### Paper/Discussion Summary:

Public Private Partnerships (PPP) as a way of financing public sector projects through the private sector has emerged as a more acceptable and beneficial alternative to privatization. Furthermore, the special mind-sets and specific skill sets needed for successful PPP are now impacting on the development of various industries the world over. While their benefits may seem apparent, and of great promise to emerging economies like South Africa in particular, PPPs present major challenges which, if not adequately addressed, may undermine their very purpose, and lead to a distortion of public sector priorities when choosing which infrastructure to develop.

The paper under discussion summarises some compelling examples of various PPP developments across both emerging and industrialised economies and uses the outcome summary of various practices to assess the practicality of PPPs as tools for dealing effectively with infrastructure challenges in emerging economies like South Africa. Key themes covered include how prevalent is the usage of PPPs in emerging economies; the costs and profits associated with PPP projects; the significant outlay involved in preparing PPP projects; PPP struggle to attract commercial financing; how developmental are PPPs; and the institutional and political problems that limit PPP success.

#### Who, when and where?

This hybrid-mode discussion is led by the Pan African Professor P.D. Rwelamila, Professor Emeritus of Project Management & Procurement Systems (Unisa, SBL), formerly from the University of Cape Town (UCT), and currently a Visiting Professor at the ISER of Rhodes University (SA) and Leeds Beckett University (UK) (**26th of March 2024 at 14:00 -15:45 SAT**).

#### SPEAKERS:



**Distinguished guest speaker: Prof PD Rwelamila**

Prof. PD Rwelamila is a professional project manager (CI and generic) and a project procurement management systems expert. Until December 2021, he was a Professor of Project Management & Procurement Systems at UNISA – School of Business Leadership & Currently Professor Emeritus – University of South Africa (UNISA) and “B2” rated researcher by NRF.



**Respondent: Professor Noel James Pearse**

Noel Pearse is a professor in the Rhodes Business School at Rhodes University, functioning as the Research Co-ordinator. He lectures in Leadership, People Management, Strategy Implementation, Change Management and Research Design on the MBA and Post Graduate Diploma in Enterprise Management programmes, as well as on various executive short courses.



**Chair: Dr Reesha Kara**

Dr Kara is a researcher at the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University.

**THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH- HYBRID SEMINAR SERIES INVITATION**



## ISER Seminar Series



**AFRICA'S YOUTH: MORE EDUCATED, LESS EMPLOYED, STILL UNHEARD IN POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT**




Speaker: A. Mphako

Respondent: Professor N.N. Mkhize

Chair: Doctor S.D. Sadian



**12 June 2024**  
**14:00 - 16:00**



The 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU's 2063 Agenda emphasise the important role of young people in catalysing sustainable and transformative governance and development in Africa. Home to a population with a median age of about 19, Africa's trajectory stands to gain immensely from its youth, if their energies and skills are harnessed effectively. This youth would, however, need to be given the space and opportunity to contribute to policy decision making. To mark South Africa's National Youth Day on June 16, the ISER invites you to discuss how the youth can be better empowered to shape democracy and the development policy agenda across the continent. This discussion will be based on a survey study by Afro-Barometer and will be led by Asafika Mpako and Nomalanga Mkhize as her key respondent.

**Study short summary:**

Although critics often cite lack of interest in politics among young people when it comes to political party participation and election voting, the study shows that the youth does in fact participate in politics but through unconventional channels and processes. These are mainly online political and social platforms and movements. They do this with the hope for political changes. The study also finds that although the youth form an important voting bloc they continue to remain under-represented in meaningful decision making processes. What keeps them out are a number of factors, including legal barriers to hold public office and socio-cultural norms. This is especially true for young women. So, we need to discuss and figure out how some of the barriers can be overcome to improve youth participation and influence on political decisions that directly affect their needs.

**Where and who:** The event will be in a hybrid-mode, led by Asafika Mpako, who is the communications coordinator for southern Africa at Afrobarometer.

**When:** 12 June 2024 from 14h00 to 15h45 SAT

**Special guest speaker: Ms A. Mpako**



Asafika Mpako is the Communications Coordinator for Southern Africa at Afrobarometer. Previously, she worked at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation on enhancing democracy, governance and human rights in Africa. Her professional and academic experiences span four continents – Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

Asafika holds a Bachelor's degree from UCT, and Master's degrees from Peking University and the London School of Economics. She has featured on the global list of 2023 Women of the Future, 50 Rising Stars in ESG and is also a recipient of the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

**Respondent: Naledi Nomalanga Mkhize**



Naledi Nomalanga Mkhize is an historian and community development practitioner. She holds an MA in History from Rhodes University and a PhD in Sociology from The University of Cape Town. Naledi Mkhize is a history professor at Nelson Mandela University and was a Sam Moyo Postdoctoral Fellowship at Rhodes University. Her current position at Mandela University is Director of the School of Governance in the Humanities College.

**Moderator/Chair: Sam Sadian**

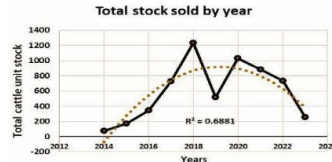


Dr. Sam Sadian is a research fellow of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University and a post-doctoral fellow at the University of the Western Cape. His doctoral dissertation focussed on overcoming the conceptual and empirical shortcomings of neo-Marxist and other productivistic approaches to modern social change in the humanities and social sciences. His Master's research focused on the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's contributions towards an ontologically informed critique of procedural versions of liberalism.

**THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH  
SEMINAR SERIES INVITATION - HYBRID EVENT**



**Market Access for Common Land Farmers:  
The Case of the Eastern Cape Province and implications for SA's land reform project**



Speaker: Prof. Nhlanhla Mbatha

Discussant: Dr Binganidzo Muchara

Chair: Dr Samuel Sadian



**1 August 2024  
14:00 - 15:45**



**Summary of the discussion:**

Land use and management reform as well as agrarian development policies in post-1994 South Africa are probably the most politically and economically contested terrains in our contemporary society. Partially, this is because the policies have encountered primarily two sets of structural challenges. The first set has been the slow pace at which legal claim and transfer processes of land units to previously disenfranchised communities and persons from state-owned and expropriated land properties have proceeded. Essentially this set of challenges confronts the modification of private to collective access and ownership rights. The second set features issues that have arisen in the post-transfer periods. Some of these relate to decision-making conflicts over land management practices, especially among new owners with *collective rights*. In many instances these are linked to decisions and historical constraints on deriving livelihoods from newly acquired land resources, especially through potential business ideas and ventures. This discussion focusses on the second set of challenges, which are widely written about, to include a) the lack of access to financial resources to invest in building new or maintaining existing infrastructure on acquired properties, and b) the lack of useful administrative and business information as well as social networks to participate meaningfully in mainstream commercial agricultural value chains. In most economic literature, the latter set of challenges is referred to as *lack of market access*. Our study is concerned with these market issues as they relate typically to common-land small farmers in South Africa.

**Where and who:** The event will be in a hybrid-mode, led by Cyril Mbatha, who is the Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research and responded to by Binganidzo Muchara, who is a senior lecturer at the School of Business Leadership at Unisa.



**Prof. Nhlanhla Mbatha**  
Speaker

Prof. C.N. Mbatha is the Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University. He actively conducts research on natural resources management, including research on South Africa's land and water laws, environmental and agricultural trade issues in sub-Saharan Africa. He is co-leading a Science Cluster on Land and Investments in Africa (SCOLIA) for the Future Earth Africa Hub (FEAH). He worked at Unisa, where he was the founding Director of the Young African Leaders Initiative for Southern Africa, and acting Dean in the School of Business Leadership, Unisa, before joining the ISER in 2020.



**Dr Binganidzo Muchara**  
Discussant

Dr B. Muchara is a senior lecturer in the School of Business Leadership, Unisa. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics from UKZN. His research interests are in Water Resource Economics, Agribusiness and value chain analysis as well as water governance. He has led the WRC project on Water use in food value chains of indigenous crops with special focus on production and post-harvest handling of food products (WRC PROJECT NO. K5/2715/4). Prior to joining the business school, he worked in various capacities in the private sector (2002-2008), research and consulting services, in the field of economics, water resource management, value chain analysis and socio-economic surveys.

**When:** 1 August 2024 from 14h00 to 15h45 SAT

For online registration and attendance please scan the QR code:



For in-person attendance: The ISER Annex Building, 7 Prince Alfred Street, Rhodes University Campus

Email: [mzukisi.kuse@ru.ac.za](mailto:mzukisi.kuse@ru.ac.za) for any enquiries



**Dr Samuel Sadian**  
Chair

Dr S.D. Sadian is a research fellow at the Rhodes University's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). Dr Sadian's Doctoral thesis focussed on overcoming the conceptual and empirical shortcomings of neo-Marxist and other productivist approaches to modern social change in the humanities and social sciences. It portrayed 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.

### 3.3 ISER Working Papers

ISER Working Papers were designed a long time ago and we adopted them in 2020 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. In 2024 we discovered that the post-doc fellows are probably well suited to contribute quickly to working papers. The working papers get reviewed by experts at Rhodes University or outside if we cannot find an internal reviewer within the university.

Any case from the 2024 writing group platform both researchers and post doc fellows managed to produce at least four working papers which are also being improved upon for possible journal publication. The 2024 working papers are listed below.

- 1 **Mbatha, C.N.** 2024. Market Access for Communal Land Farmers in South Africa: A Complex Systems Case of the Eastern Cape Province and some Implications for Research and Extension Support. ISER Working Paper Series No, 1/2024. Rhodes University, Makhanda.
- 2 **Moloto, A. and Kara, R.** 2024. The usage of Drones for Crop Farming Efficiency: Lessons from tropical countries to Enhance Farming Practices in South Africa. ISER Working Paper Series No, 2/2024. Rhodes University, Makhanda.
- 3 **Mothupi, F. and Kara, R.** The Impact of Subsistence Agriculture on Household Food Security in the Eastern Cape: Insights from the 2023 General Household Survey. ISER Working Paper – 03/2024. Rhodes University, Makhanda
- 4 **Adeniyi, O. and Kara, R.** Women's inclusion in Agriculture: An analysis of relevant South African Policies. ISER Working Paper – 04/2024. Rhodes University, Makhanda

**Mothupi, F.M.** was working on a paper in December 2024 titled: Livestock markets and rural Eastern Cape: Challenges and Opportunities for Cattle Sellers and buyers at MNP Mobile Auctions for the 2025 series.

In 2025 the writing group will resume in March 2025. We hope for similar or better results for next year..

## CHAPTER 4

### CURRENT PROJECTS INCLUDING THE FEAHLC

#### 4.1 Introduction

The ISER's projects and activities have multiple focus areas. They are research-related, community support-related, public seminar or webinar-related, focused on skills development or training, or communications and branding, etc. Nevertheless, it is mainly the research projects that generate income for the institute and the university. Other projects, such as the 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: Democracy @30**

**Aim:** To assess the perceptions of residents of Rhini regarding their experiences of living under democracy and their hopes for a better life in future.

##### **Progress Report 2024**

In March 2024, seven focus groups were conducted across older and newer neighbourhoods of Rhini in Makhanda East for the HSRC's *Democracy @ 30* project. Rhini discussants were asked about living in their neighbourhood, experiences of living under democracy, and their hopes for a better life in future. In December 2024, a community meeting was convened with Rhini residents and community leaders to discuss the findings. **Ben Roberts** visited Makhanda in March and December to work on the project with **Valerie Møller** and **Dalindyebo Zani**, who organised and facilitated the focus groups and the community meeting held on 10 December 2024.



Happy Democracy @ 30 researchers Ben, Dali, and Valerie after the community meeting held at the Rhini Indoor Sports Centre in Makhanda on 10 December 2024.

### **Project 2: WWF Project**

Title: ***Future proofing the grass-fed beef value chain (GFBVC): A case study in the Matatiele area of the uMzimvubu Water Source Area in the Eastern Cape province, 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.

### **Progress Report 2024**

The project was closed in 2024 with a final summary report submitted on 28 February 2024.

### **Project 3: The Land and Investment Sustainability Science Cluster (LISC) in Africa**

**Aims:** To create a big community of *researchers and stakeholders* with strongly established programmes that are generating useful *research and policy-relevant outputs* feeding into the various platforms of Future Earth, including communities, governments, and international policy organisations **to advance Sustainability Science on land in Africa.**

#### **Progress Report 2024**

In 2024 the Cluster got involved in a number of exciting activities. The team held meetings almost every month to execute tasks against the work planned for 2024. These are discussed below.

1. In January/February 2024, the team discussed and adopted the Terms of Reference and the theoretical orientation or approach for our work. We set up communications platforms on MS Teams, WhatsApp, and email list for members.
2. In May 2024, the team met on the sidelines during the SRI Africa Satellite event in Durban and presented to the FEAH community its work and plans.
3. In June and July 2024, the team finalised MoUs for allocation and distribution of funds following guidelines outlined in the Inception Concept Note of February 2024.
4. In spite of the delays in the transfer of funds throughout the region because of requirements in international money transfers and financial transactions, the RSA team used the allocated budgets for all bookings of the first face-to-face visit of the team to the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The visit took place in September 2024 and enabled community stakeholder engagements with NGOs, community members/residents, RSA government officials, private sector auctioneers, academics, etc.
5. To save on costs, the visit was organised in such a way that it included seminar discussions on the first and last days, with the long drive visits across the country conducted in the three days in the middle of the week of 9 September 2024.
6. During the workshops the team also forged a collaboration with the Journal of Contemporary African Studies (JCAS) to contribute a special section or issue to the journal. Writing for the special issue is currently underway. The theme of the issue is “Recent land management policies and impacts on livelihoods of marginal communities: lessons across Africa”
7. During the RSA workshop at Rhodes University, the team also reiterated its commitment to re/design short learning programmes for capacity development for scholarship and policy engagement and to contribute towards the mission of the FEAH and its LC.
8. In October 2024, the Cluster further contributed to the induction of members of the different Africa Regional Nodes during a workshop held at Rhodes University and hosted by the FEAHLC and its partners.

9. The team has participated in three different funding applications, including ISC, NRF-Twinning, and Belmont Forum. As well as applications for other support, including the Resilience Alliance regional networks.

### **Budget activity report for 2024**

The total budget is R1.1 million. See the summary below.

2023 funds not utilised	R 350 000,00
2024 funds received	R 371000,00
Budget for 2024	R 721 000,00
Less actual expenses processed successfully	R -124963,68
Less committed expenses not finalised	R -422 697,97
<b>Balance Brought Forward for 2025</b>	<b>R 173 338,35</b>

A further R393 260.00 will be received in 2025.



Members of the Land and Investments Science Cluster on a field trip to Matatiele 08 - 13 September 2024



Workshop at the ISER of the Land and Investments Science Cluster Rhodes University in September 2024

#### Project 4: Future Earth Africa Hub Learning Centre (FEAHLIC)

Title: *Advancing Sustainability Science in Africa: The Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre*



**Aim:** To advance Sustainability Science in Africa using Transdisciplinarity

#### **Background**

**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. Board members were provided with a copy of the annual report on the FEAHLIC, which was submitted to the NRF. The report contains budget summaries from both Rhodes University and University of Pretoria.

**Executive summary on the consolidated (Rhodes University and University of Pretoria) FEAHLC report:**

The Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLC), co-hosted by Rhodes University and the University of Pretoria, is a transformative initiative dedicated to advancing sustainability science and interdisciplinary research across Africa. Established to lead the continent's sustainability science agenda, the Centre focuses on building research capacity, fostering collaborative networks, and ensuring Africa's perspectives are integral to global sustainability discussions. In 2024, the FEAHLC made remarkable progress in its mission through strategic planning, capacity-building initiatives, and international collaboration.

**Key Achievements in 2024**

**Governance and Operations:** The Centre strengthened its leadership by appointing Dr Daniel Nyanganyura as Director and Dr Faten Attig-Bahar as Deputy Director. The Steering Committee was expanded to include representatives from five newly established Regional Nodes, ensuring broader continental representation. Additionally, the process to establish an Advisory Board was initiated, with its operationalisation expected in 2025. Monthly Steering Committee meetings were held to oversee progress and address challenges, ensuring strategic alignment with the Centre's goals.

**Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations:** FEAHLC conducted learning visits to Future Earth Hubs in Sweden, the United States, and Japan, fostering international partnerships focused on climate science, capacity building, and research innovation. Collaborations with the International Science, Technology, and Innovation Centre (ISTIC) resulted in co-organised capacity-building workshops and sustainability science forums. The Centre also engaged with UN agencies, including the UN Economic Commission for Africa, to integrate African perspectives into global sustainability initiatives.

**Capacity Building:** A Capacity Building Training Workshop was organised for early- and mid-career researchers, focusing on transdisciplinary research and proposal writing. The Centre also supported youth engagement through initiatives like the "Waste to Wonders" student chapter and the Mandela Day "Plastic Patrol" clean-up event, which mobilised communities and promoted environmental awareness.

**Research and Innovation:** The Centre launched Sustainability Science Clusters, focusing on critical themes such as African Youth Futures, Land and Investment, Politics of Sustainability, and Sustainable Water Futures. These clusters published peer-reviewed articles and think pieces on topics like transgressive learning, regenerative futures, and environmental education. Funding applications were submitted to the Belmont Forum and Intra-Africa Program to support research and student mobility.

**Science Engagement and Policy Influence:** FEAHLC participated in major conferences, including the Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress (SRI) and Science Forum South Africa, showcasing Africa's contributions to sustainability science. The Centre also engaged in policy dialogues with stakeholders, including waste pickers, recyclers, and government officials, to promote sustainable waste management practices and bridge the gap between research and policy.

**Regional Nodes and Inclusivity:** Regional Nodes were established and operationalised in all the sub-regions of the African continent, enhancing the Centre's reach and impact across the continent. The Centre promoted inclusive communities by integrating research, capacity building, and

community-driven initiatives, ensuring that diverse voices, including youth and marginalised groups, were represented in sustainability science activities.

### Challenges

Despite its achievements, the Centre faced several challenges in 2024. Funding constraints limited the scaling of initiatives and long-term sustainability. The establishment of the Advisory Board was delayed to ensure broader regional representation. Additionally, communication barriers sometimes hindered the resonance of academic discourses with grassroots youth networks, necessitating more inclusive communication strategies.

### Key Lessons Learned

The Centre’s work in 2024 underscored the importance of slow scholarship, prioritising depth over speed to achieve meaningful engagement and impact. Building authentic relationships with stakeholders required humility, patience, and mutual respect. A collaborative approach, engaging diverse stakeholders, enriched the Centre’s work and ensured its relevance to African contexts.

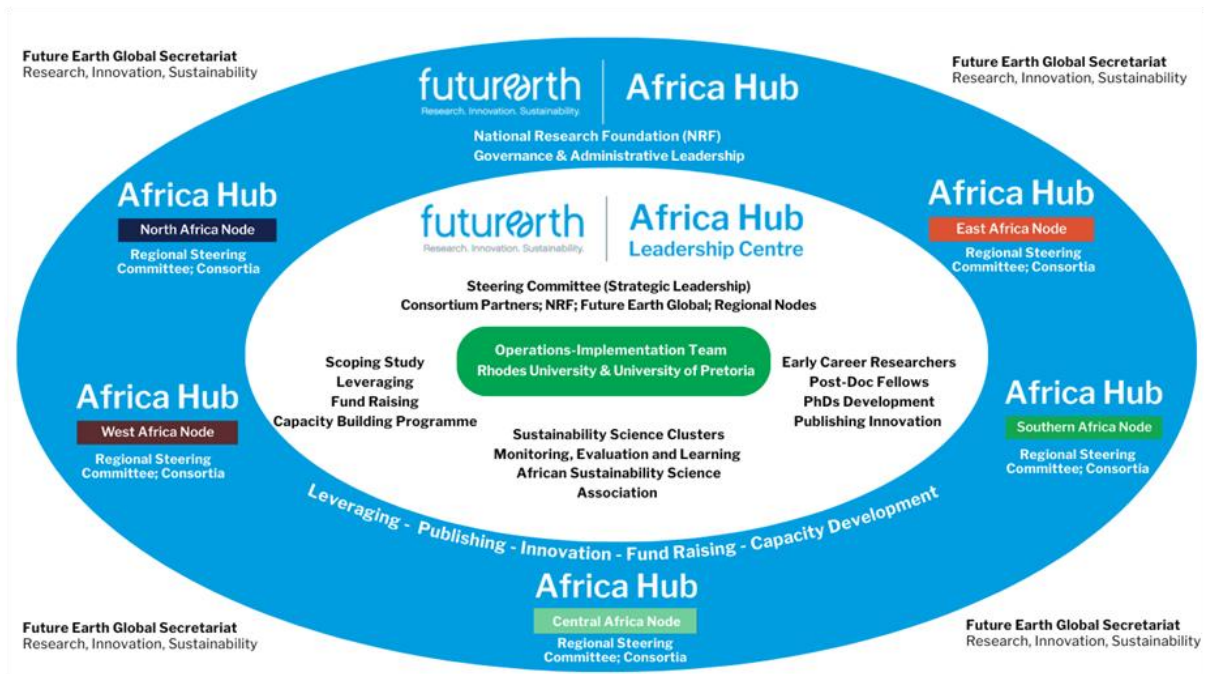


Figure 2: The activities of the FEAHLC



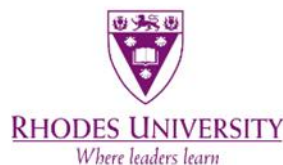
Delegates at the Sustainability Research and Innovation (SRI) Africa Satellite Congress 2024. Durban

#### 4.3 Pipeline research projects

**Project 1: Belmont Forum - Africa Regional Call Sustainable Food Systems with the Land and Investments Science Cluster partnership in Africa.**

**Aim:** To coordinate stakeholders from across the continent in efforts to reduce vulnerability and promote sustainable use of land resources.

**Progress:** Application underway, closing date 4 March 2025.



## **Project 2: 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 2025
- b. Cost – Benefit Analysis: Short Learning Programme in 2025
- c. Honours Degree in Research Policy – possibly 2025
- d. Masters and PhDs in Research Policy – as soon as possible

### **Progress Report 2024:**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with an initial term of two (2) years, was signed between Rhodes University and Vanguard Economics on 20 March 2024. Despite the interest shown by the public, not enough participants registered for the course to be offered in a financially viable way in Rwanda. The Board advised us not to proceed if this meant subsidising the course from ISER resources.

We are currently working on finding agreement on affordable and acceptable course prices by all involved.

## **Project 3: Skills for a green economy with the ELRC funded by UNESCO**

**Aim:** To design best skilling programmes for the articulation of young people through formal training platforms for a green economy.

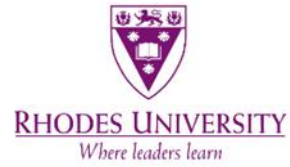
**Progress Report:** This project is at the conceptualisation stage.

## **4.4 Operational projects in 2024**

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

#### **Aims**

1. ISER Archive Redux – finding the ISER's missing publications
2. ISER Archives – Restoration to website
3. ISER Archives – Physical collation and cataloguing of the publications available
4. ISER Archives – Digitisation of papers currently missing from the archives
5. ISER Archives – Restoration of the physical archives to the ISER Archive room



### **Progress Report 2024:**

In 2024, Mr Kgabane Lengane (our Master's student) was given a short term assignment to redesign and repack the Archives room. He returned the files and books that were left in offices of the main ISER building to the archives room and came up with a budget for student friendly furniture.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONTINUOUS RESEARCH NETWORKS, PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

#### 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.

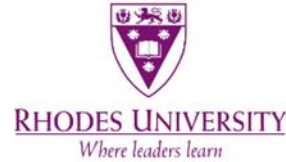
#### *Reflection*

*The Science Cluster on Land in Africa, supported by the Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre (FEAHLIC), has become an important engine of building partnerships, networks and contacts across Africa.*

#### 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:

1. The Institute of Water Research (IWR)
2. The Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC) and its SARCHI Chair of Global Change and Social Learning Systems
3. Rhodes Business School
4. Department of Political and International Studies
5. Department of Economics and Economic History
6. Department of History
7. Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
8. The School of Languages
9. Department of Sociology
10. Department of Environmental Science
11. School of Journalism and Media Studies



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

1. University of Johannesburg: Faculty of Humanities
2. Nelson Mandela University: Faculty of Humanities
3. University of Pretoria, Wits University, University of Limpopo and University of Fort Hare (Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre)
4. University of Cape town, DataFirst
5. World Wide Fund for Nature, South Africa
6. Water Research Commission
7. The National Research Foundation (Future Earth Africa Hub Leadership Centre)
8. Provincial Government ECSECC Eastern Cape Province
9. University of South Africa: DVC for Research and Innovation
10. Vanguard Economics in Rwanda
11. Kwame Nkrumah University of Technology (Ghana)
12. Cape Coast University (Ghana)
13. Kenyatta University in Kenya
14. University of Nairobi
15. Mzumbe University in Morogoro (Tanzania)
16. Human Science Research Council

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

1. Environmental and Rural Solutions (ERS) in Matatiele Eastern Cape Province, South Africa
2. Pathways Institute led by Mr Mazibuko Jara

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

The ISER continues to establish collaborative partnerships for conducting research on the continent, especially around issues of land resources management, cross border trade, education (capacity development), etc. We now have formal partnerships with MOUs in the DVC office in Ghana (West Africa) and East Africa (Kenya). This was out 2023 stated target for 2024. The Science Cluster on Land work was useful for this development.

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

#### 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.

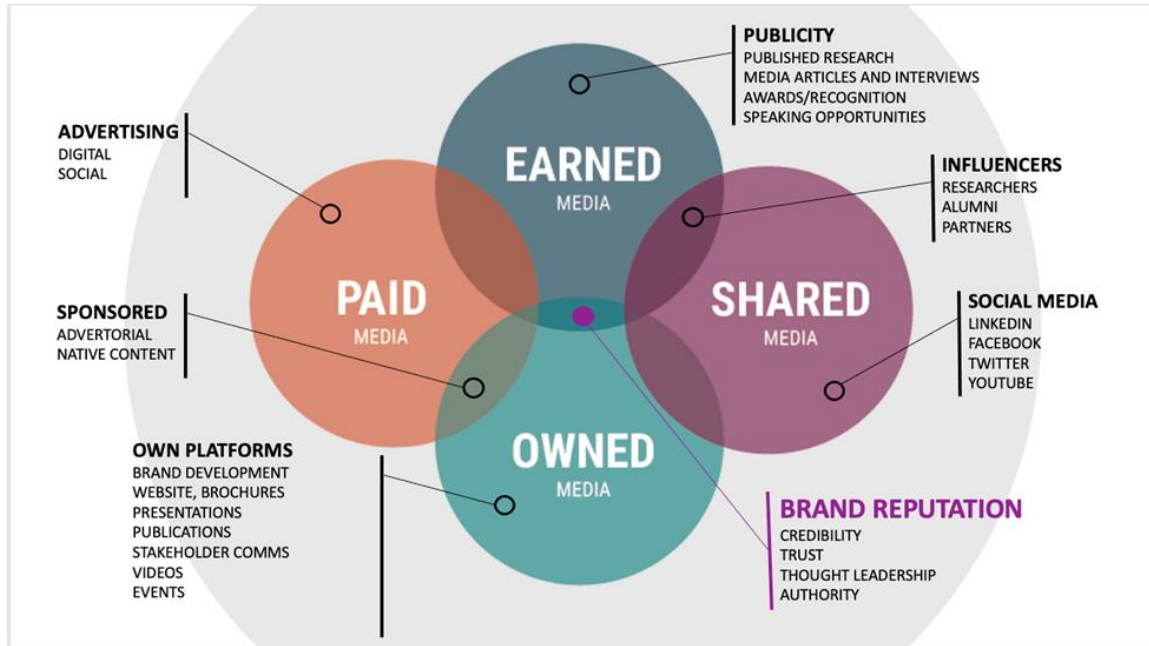
The broad communications and marketing objectives are to, a) attract donor funding to support research projects, b) attract new researchers and students from across the continent, and c) to leverage research so it can be practically applied and drive change.

#### 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

During 2024, media engagement was not of first concern, considering the commitments by the ISER to focus on improving research outputs and engaging with stakeholders and communities associated with the work done by / for the FEAHLC.

Date	URL	Source Name	Title	Reach	AVE	Estimated Views
2024-10-24	<a href="https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/fridaybriefing/nhlanhla-cyril-mbatha-trump-vs-harris-can-sa-navigate-gloomy-trade-landscape-beyond-us-outcome-20241024">https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/fridaybriefing/nhlanhla-cyril-mbatha-trump-vs-harris-can-sa-navigate-gloomy-trade-landscape-beyond-us-outcome-20241024</a>	News24	Nhlanhla Cyril Mbatha   Trump vs Harris: Can SA navigate gloomy trade landscape beyond US outcome?	4460542	41260,01	6172

2024-10-25	<a href="https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/fridaybriefing/friday-briefing-a-nail-biting-election-what-us-election-could-mean-for-trade-diplomacy-in-africa-20241025-2">https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/fridaybriefing/friday-briefing-a-nail-biting-election-what-us-election-could-mean-for-trade-diplomacy-in-africa-20241025-2</a>	News24	FRIDAY BRIEFING   A nail-biting election: What US election could mean for trade, diplomacy in Africa	4460542	41260,01	6172
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### 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

## 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. It is also a great pleasure to report the appointment of a Deputy Chief Editor for the JCAS in 2024, Prof. Bhaso Ndzendze, based at the University of Johannesburg. The JCAS and the FEALHC also joined hands and co-hosted a training session for emerging scholars during the SRI 2024 Africa Satellite congress.

In her year-end report, Prof. Motsemme discussed the achievements attained during 2024.

The year 2024 has been a productive one for the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies (JCAS)*. The journal has continued to enjoy wide acclaim and stature across numerous disciplines and is a key reference point for those working on broad questions of African society, culture, politics and economy. The journal's impact factor, an indicator of citations for works published in the journal stands at 0.9, while its subscriptions span every continent and all major higher education institutions in the world. 2024 saw the publication of the standard four JCAS issues, with one being a special issue focused on 'Moral Economies of Distribution in Africa' led by Tijo Salverda (Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg), Cristiano Lanzano (The Nordic Africa Institute), and Jörg Wiegartz (University of Leeds and University of Johannesburg) and featuring ten research articles, spanning different countries, including Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

A further special issue led by sociologist Malehoko Tshoedi will follow in early 2025 focusing on the meaning of thirty years of democracy in South Africa.

The editorial team has also secured two special issues to follow in 2026, with a focus on the legacy of Ben Magubane (led by Jimi Adesina) and on state surveillance in Africa (led by Sarah Chiumbu and Jane Duncan). We will also be working with emerging researchers to produce a special issue/section, driven by the cohort itself, for the purposes of capacity development in the social sciences. In 2025, we will also be looking to review the viability of different article types, such as review essays, roundtables, technical reports, and interviews, as well as an international advisory board.

*According to the annual Taylor & Francis publishing report, 216 submissions had been received by mid-November 2024, compared to 227 for the whole of 2023. Final decisions were made on 111 manuscripts by November 2023, with a final acceptance rate of 25%. The top submitting countries were Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, and the United States.*