

# Why the Transformative Governance Index matters

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## The context in which we live

- As a country we are in the midst of a complex transition from *apartheid* into a new order in which a great deal of policy development has taken place.
- We are needing to see these policy developments not simply as reforming the system but as part of a process of transitioning to a new set of institutional norms and commitments.
- Central to this practice is the setting of standards which embody the constitutional values of the country – dignity, equality and freedom – and which indicate how we can give expression to these values.



## The minimum required for a good life

The research question for and the very rationale of the TGI project is in response to the following formulation published by SPII:

The non- adoption of a 'minimum core' approach by the Constitutional Court, and the continued failure by the South African government to ratify the ICESCR has created a vacuum in respect of a *substantive interpretation of the normative content of the various SERs*. In the absence of established norms and standards, much of government's constitutional obligations remain poorly understood and defined. With the Constitutional Court repeatedly declaring itself unqualified to set up minimum core standards, the question remains whose responsibility is it? The lack of executive resolution and agreement on the normative content of specific rights does not prevent civil society from developing such frameworks and norms and standards (Dawson, 2014: 7).



## International obligations

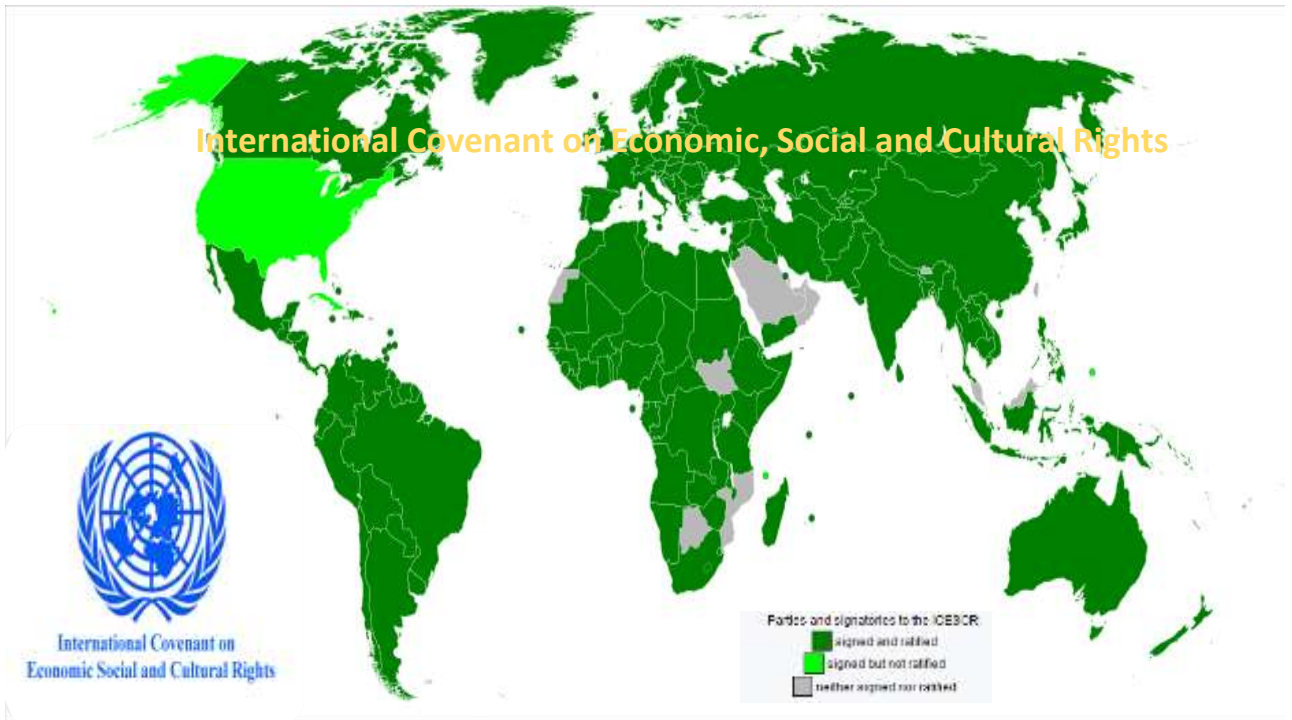
South Africa ratified the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2015). This requires South Africa to report to this Committee the progress that is being made to realise socio-economic rights. The wording of Article 11 is interesting (if patriarchal):

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and *to the continuous improvement of living conditions* (UN Human Rights 1967: 6).

This raises questions such as, when reporting: What is the baseline we work from? What is the minimum people are entitled to in order to improve their living conditions? And who is entitled to what?

We must grapple with these important questions.





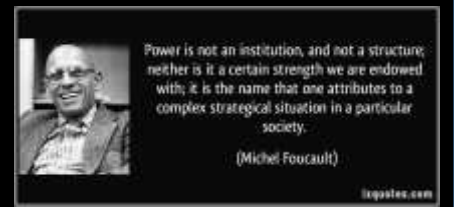
## Questions ...

- What is a transformative governance index and why does South Africa need one?
- How will such an index be inserted into governance frameworks at the national, provincial and local levels of government and in the private sector?
- How do we embed the aim of transformative constitutionalism into our work – the need to ensure that what is done reflects the rights in the Constitution and how they serve the interests of the poor?
- What is the relationship of the TGI to service delivery and how do TGI indicators differ from a government department's service delivery indicators?
- Who will monitor and evaluate the extent to which the TGI indicator targets are being met?



## Responding to power

- Ultimately the HSRC is a science council that must ensure that it contributes to the public good.
- We seem as a country to have lost our way when it comes to how we govern ourselves and how we articulate the way in which we want to be governed.
- In the Foucauldian sense we are all exposed to multiple exercises of power on a daily basis, and in order to live with this we need to ensure that whatever powers are exercised over us are tested against norms and are ethical.



## Partnerships and dialogues

We cannot find answers to all these these questions by ourselves. A critically important element of the development of a TGI is stakeholder engagement: *how* we go about developing indicators is as important as, and a measure of the validity and quality of, the indicators themselves.



To this end we have embarked upon a programme of engagement with a range of stakeholders, in the public, private, and volunteer sectors. Indeed, this engagement today reflects our commitment to collaborate with key role-players and stakeholders towards bringing about meaningful change in the lives of the poor and dispossessed.

## Working together for a better South Africa

In his inaugural State of the Nation address our new president used the words 'work together' four times – most poignantly in two utterances:

- Our task, as South Africans, is to seize this moment of hope and renewal, and to work together to ensure that it makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our people.
- Now is the time for all of us to work together, in honour of Nelson Mandela, to build a new, better South Africa for all



## Thuma Mina

I wanna be there when the people start to turn it around  
 When they triumph over poverty  
 I wanna be there when the people win the battle against AIDS  
 I wanna lend a hand  
 I wanna be there for the alcoholic  
 I wanna be there for the drug addict  
 I wanna be there for the victims of violence and abuse  
 I wanna lend a hand  
 Send me

[Chorus]  
 Thuma mina (thuma m'na)  
 Thuma mina (ezizweni)  
 Ndizoya ndithandaze

I wanna be there when the people win the battle against AIDS  
 I wanna lend a hand  
 I wanna be there for the victims of violence and abuse  
 I wanna lend a hand  
 Send me

