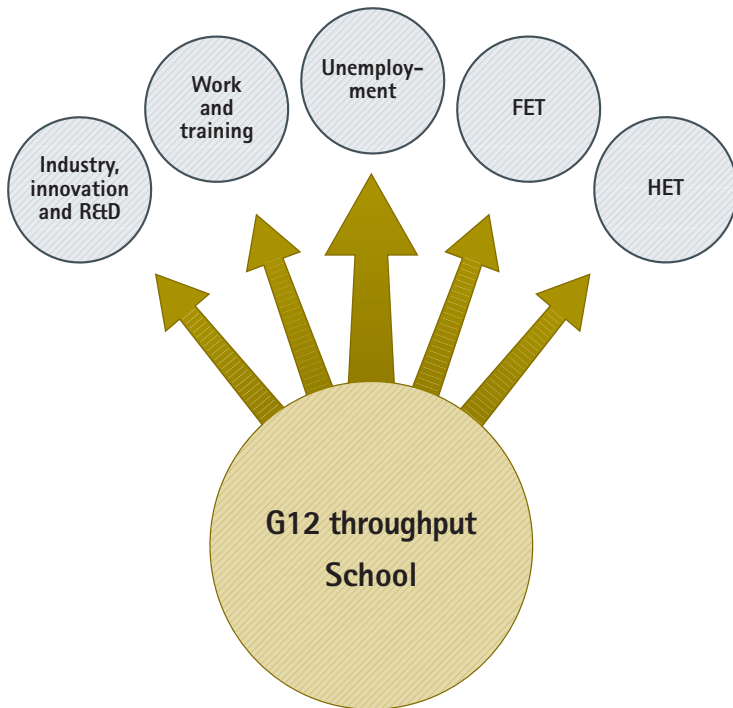




# HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

SETAs are understood to be key intermediary structures – between Government, private and public organisations – that must co-ordinate, regulate and incentivise investment in training



- Key themes:**
- 1 Articulation
  - 2 Throughput and graduate destinations
  - 3 Industry-ET linkages
  - 4 Youth labour market
  - 5 Training
  - 6 Skill needs of economy

The Research Programme on Human Resources Development (HRD) was started in May 2001. Its prime focus is the study of the pathways of learners from school into further and higher education and the world of work. The Programme currently employs 18 people.

**The launch of the *HRD Review 2003: Education, Employment and Skills***

A key component of the work of the Research Programme on Human Resources Development (HRD) in 2003/04 was the completion of projects funded by the Department of Science and Technology through a generous ring-fenced grant of R5 million per annum over the past three years. This first phase came to a very successful conclusion in March 2004 with the launch of four substantive research outputs. These include a set of three inter-related books and one website. They are:

- *Human Resources Development Review 2003: Education, Employment and Skills in South Africa*, a 28-chapter, 750-page volume which provides comprehensive analyses of key education and training, labour market and macroeconomic indicators of human resources development in South Africa.
- *An Overview of South African Human Resources Development: The Importance of 'Joined up' Policy Coordination and Implementation*, an interpretative overview of the key trends in HRD in the post-apartheid period in the form of a monograph, by Andre Kraak.
- *The Shifting Understandings of 'Skill' in South Africa:*

Figure B: The HRD programme



*Overcoming the Historical Imprint of a Low Skills Regime*, a policy text by Simon McGrath et al. It engages critically with South Africa's current skills development strategy in order to analyse the prospects for a successful up-skilling of a population whose paths of learning and work have been profoundly shaped by the imprint of apartheid.

- The HRD Data Warehouse website (<http://hrdwarehouse.hsrc.ac.za>), a comprehensive web-based cross-sectoral Data Warehouse oriented largely towards the provision of an improved information and analysis infrastructure to support Government decision-making in the arena of HRD.

The launch of these four products in March 2004 received substantial press coverage with over 70 newspaper articles and 30 radio interviews and citations. There has also been significant interest in the website which provides free access to all our research products and databases.

#### Other publications

The past financial year also witnessed the release of a further three books and two monographs.

- *Curriculum Responsiveness in FET Colleges* by Jeanne Gamble identifies salient themes in curriculum change in Further Education and Training (FET) colleges.

Particular attention is paid to lessons learned and problems experienced in other countries that are applicable to the current South African context.

- A book by Glenda Kruss *Chasing Credentials and Mobility: Private Higher Education in South Africa*, contributes constructively to an often emotive debate on private higher education in South Africa by developing a systematic picture of different forms of private provision. It draws on an empirical qualitative study of 15 private higher education institutions. Two distinct private sub-sectors are discerned. One sub-sector functions primarily to ensure "mobility" to meet a demand among historically and newly privileged students for education that is perceived to be "better" than that offered by the public sector. The second sub-sector functions primarily to offer specialised "credentials", to meet a demand among non-traditional students for education that is perceived to be "different" from that offered by the public sector. The distinction between the private and the public, between potential complementarity and competition, is thus conceptualised in a more diversified, nuanced manner than hitherto.
- A book by Simon McGrath (HSRC) and Kenneth King



(Edinburgh University), *Knowledge-based Aid: Whose Knowledge for Whose Development?* is the first detailed attempt to analyse the new World Bank discourse and practice to be “the knowledge bank”, as stated in 1996 by the World Bank President, James Wolfensohn. A new discourse of knowledge-based aid has since spread rapidly across the development field. Through an examination of four agencies – the World Bank, the British Department for International Development, the Japan International Co-operation Agency and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency – it explores what this new approach to aid means in both theory and practice. It argues that too much of the emphasis of knowledge-based aid has been on developing capacity within agencies rather than addressing the expressed needs of southern partners.

- Michael Cosser *et al.* produced a monograph, *Technical College Responsiveness: Learner Destinations and Labour Market Environments in South Africa*, which is the culmination of research that sought to determine the responsiveness of technical colleges within the emergent FET landscape. Three studies form the backbone of the research: a tracer study of technical college students; an employer satisfaction survey; and institutional profiles of three newly merged colleges. The monograph will be of interest to all who are involved in FET, whether as policy-makers, practitioners or students.
- *Government Incentivisation of Higher Education-industry Partnerships in South Africa: An Audit of THRIP and the Innovation Fund*, is the first monograph in a series on *Working partnerships: higher education, industry and innovation*. It aims to explore the ways in which

higher education and industry have formed research partnerships to promote innovation in biotechnology, information and communication technology (ICT) and new materials development in response to global trends and national policy imperatives. The monograph suggests that the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) and Innovation Fund-incentivised partnerships, appear to have rested on a formula where mutual benefit is obtainable, and represent exemplars of how higher education-industry partnerships can be used to develop science, technology and innovation in South Africa.

### Future developments

The HRD flagship project enters a second phase of its development over the next three years. Key deliverables in this phase include:

- The production of a triennial series of national **HRD Overviews** with the second edition (*HRD Review 2006*) due in December 2006.
- Consolidation and expansion of the **HRD Data Warehouse**: All data fields will need to be updated on an annual basis and the website serviced and maintained. **A consortium of partners** within the HSRC as well as external research centres will be invited to join the project and share knowledge resources via the website.
- The production of several **provincial HRD profiles**, based on commissioned research requests from the provinces themselves. An HRD Strategy for the Eastern Cape has already been completed.
- The production of several **sectoral studies** that highlight the skill needs of key economic sectors in the South African economy. External financial support will be sought to fund this component over the next three years.



- Understanding HRD issues through **an analysis of the professions in South Africa** (for example, doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, etc.) and particularly focusing on labour market dynamics and the changing curriculum characteristics of professional education.
- **Enterprise studies** which will examine employer demands for skill and the utilisation of skill and technology at the micro or enterprise level.
- **Industry and higher education:** This area will continue the study of linkages between industry and higher education.
- **Throughput studies:** An examination of the destination paths of graduates from schools and universities into the labour market, work and/or unemployment.

Each of these new insights – provincial, sectoral, professional and enterprise – will reflect the high degree of skill variability between and within each of these differing analytical domains. As differing analytical 'cuts', they all contribute unique "jigsaw puzzle" pieces which when read together will constitute a more nuanced and more detailed "bigger picture" of HRD in South Africa. The *HRD Review 2006* will foreground and synthesise the results of these studies.

#### Client reports

The research programme completed three important client reports in the past financial year. These include:

#### A national survey of enterprise training

The research programme on HRD is currently involved in a large-scale survey of private enterprises to establish the intensity and nature of training in South African workplaces. The survey is commissioned by the Department of Labour and funded by the European Union. It will assist Government in assessing the impact of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) that seeks to develop the skills of the South African workforce and to utilise the workplace as an active learning environment. In doing so, the research will reveal training patterns at the level of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). SETAs are understood to be key intermediary structures – between Government, private and public organisations – that must co-ordinate, regulate and incentivise investment in training. This project serves as an example of how the HRD research programme is supporting strategic government research and information needs in the domain of training in the workplace.

#### Eastern Cape Provincial HRD Strategy

In the fourth quarter of 2003, the Research Programme undertook a large-scale desk-top study for the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) in which it profiled HRD for the province. The study was broad-ranging, considering HRD from four macro perspectives: the socio-economic context

in which HRD is located; the supply side of HRD; the demand side of HRD; and the institutional and regulatory mechanisms for HRD. The study informed the drafting of an HRD Strategy for the Eastern Cape – one of the key components of the province's *Provincial Growth and Development Plan*. As such, it was undertaken on behalf of ECSECC for the Eastern Cape Government itself.

Assistance in the development of a Sector Skills Plan for the Education, Training and Development Practitioner (ETDP) SETA

A report entitled *Data Trends: Towards a Sector Skills Plan 2005–2009* was produced for the ETDP SETA in March 2004. It is a 104-page document aimed at assisting the ETDP SETA with a systematic information and planning foundation for the drawing up of its Sector Skills Plan (SSP) for 2005–2009. The report provides a detailed profile of the education sector's demand and supply of skills, its skills development priorities and future skills requirements.

#### New projects in 2004/05

##### Student retention and labour market destinations study

In the coming financial year, the Research Programme will be conducting a large-scale study investigating the factors affecting student choice, retention, throughput and destination in six higher education institutions: the University of Fort Hare, the University of the North, the University of Stellenbosch, the University of the Witwatersrand, Pretoria Technikon (now, with Technikon Northern Gauteng and Technikon North-West, the Tshwane University of Technology) and Peninsula Technikon. The study will use two surveys and a series of interviews to understand, on the one hand, why students leave higher education institutions without achieving a qualification and, on the other, what makes graduates employable. Students who graduated from the six institutions in 2002 with a three- or four-year qualification – that is, a three-year Bachelors degree, a Professional Bachelors degree, a postgraduate certificate or diploma, an Honours degree, a National Diploma, or a Baccalaureus Technologiae (BTech) – will be targeted in the graduate destination survey. Partnering the Research Programme in the project will be the Council on Higher Education, the six institutions, and two other Research Programmes in the HSRC (Employment and Economic Policy, and Surveys, Analysis, Modelling and Mapping).

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