



SOCIAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION

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The question of how we understand the ties and bonds that mesh us all into the social fabric lies at the very heart of the work of the Social Cohesion and Integration (SCI) Research Programme. Now just over two years old, the Programme has special skills in biographical, social science and humanities research and has been highly productive in its short period of operation.

SCI has generated dozens of books, research monographs, chapters in books, journal articles and media coverage and has hosted several important, international conferences and symposia. The programme has a strong African interest and in March this year co-hosted an important meeting in Cairo with Egypt's Ain Shams University on the implications of genomic research for health in Africa.

The five central themes of the Programme are: **Social Fabric Studies**, which include a broad, multi-participant investigation into the functioning of social capital in South Africa; **Science and Society**; **Societies in Transition**; **Media and Transformation**; and **History, Heritage and Culture**.

The current staff complement consists of five researchers, three research interns, an editorial specialist and two administrative staff.

Current and recently completed projects

The book, *Every Step of the Way*, celebrating South African history, was commissioned by SCI on behalf of Education Minister Kader Asmal to mark the ten-year anniversary of democracy. It was published by the HSRC Press and launched in March 2004.



Biology and natural science teachers attending a week-long training course in Cape Town entitled Crossing Over, organised by SCL.

The principal objective of the **Israel, Palestine and South African Experience** project was to inform the peace process in the Middle East with the debates, strategies and experiences of the South African transition from apartheid to democracy. A conference was held at Arabella near Hermanus in May 2003 with top-ranking negotiators and politicians from Israel, Palestine and South Africa.

Phase one of the **Media and Diversity** project was completed in March with the finalisation and launch of a research monograph entitled: *The people's voice: The current state of local media in South Africa*. The report was commissioned in part by the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), which is currently considering a proposal for the second phase of the project.

The Africa Genome Initiative (AGI) works in partnership with other organisations with the following objectives:

- To promote the establishment of South African and African networks among all those engaged in genomic work in whatever capacity, whether scientific, technological, commercial or educational.

- To audit current African resources regarding involvement in the work of the Human Genome Project.
- To encourage the diffusion of up-to-date knowledge regarding the outcomes of the genomics evolution and scientific visual literacy among school learners and their teachers.
- To help strengthen the public's awareness and knowledge of the scientific and other implications of genomic research.

So far in 2004, an **international conference has been held in Egypt**. It was attended by 300 delegates from countries such as Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sudan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and South Africa. At this event 112 research papers were delivered and HSRC staff produced five editions of a daily conference newspaper, the *Daily Genome*.

Other developments are **the production of two books on current genomic debates**; the newly launched quarterly magazine, the *African Scientist*, has published two editions and is preparing a third; and negotiations with provincial curriculum



advisers are underway regarding the **extension of the pilot teacher-training project** devised and tested in 2003. At the Genome conference in Cairo, the Crossingover pilot programme was presented as a research paper entitled *Incorporating Science into Schools*.

The AGI has its own website at www.africagenome.co.za. The site is widely used for research and information.

The **Cohesion and Globalisation project**, with the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) as partner, addressed the problems and prospects of social cohesion under globalising conditions in South Africa. It culminated in a book entitled *What Holds Us Together*, which was published in November 2003.

The **South African Cultural Observatory** is the continuation of a project commissioned by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in August 2002. It is concerned with research that promotes arts and culture for economic benefit. The project collects information across the arts and culture sectors, but focuses specifically on six cultural industries, namely arts and craft, film, video and television, heritage, music, publishing and print media. A Cultural Observatory website will be launched in May 2004. It will house recent research relevant to arts and culture with a detailed "handbook" on intellectual property rights as they pertain to cultural industries.

The following research papers have been written:

- Intellectual Property for Cultural Industries;
- Five Industry Profiles namely on music, film and video, publishing and printing, heritage and arts and craft industry.

- There has been a request by the South African Museum Association to publish our paper *Protecting Our Cultural Capital* in the next edition of their journal, *SAMAB*.

The **Living Treasures project** commissions and publishes the biographies of South Africans who have gained global notoriety for their work in the fields of culture, the arts, music and sport. The project was recently awarded a R340 000 contract from the Department of Education to produce booklets and posters commemorating six of South Africa's Living Treasures.

The publications were delivered to 6 000 Further Education and Training (FET) schools as part of the Freedom Day celebrations. Work on the next six booklets and posters, including musician Hugh Masekela, singer Sibongile Khumalo and cricketer Paul Adams, is now underway. These will be distributed to 6 000 FET schools on Heritage Day 2004.

The South African-Flemish **Community Arts Centre project** aims at the development of policy- and capacity-building of community arts centres in KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Limpopo. Progress has been made with the promotion of take-over of the arts centres from provinces by the municipalities. The arts centres have been assisted in needs analysis for service delivery and the planning of local arts programmes. A consolidated report has been produced for stakeholders and for guiding the activities.

Following on from the workshop between Israelis, Palestinians and South Africans on the developments in the former two countries, a partnership has been agreed with Idasa to conduct a study of **societies in transition** in a number of countries. Initial discussions with the Department of Foreign



Affairs have also taken place and they have expressed an interest in the project. The study will consider the factors that have contributed to the success or failure of transitions to democracy in developing countries. The focus of the study will be the southern African region, South America and Asia. A book of the proceedings of the Arabella workshop – held in 2003 – is currently being edited.

A panel of editors, chaired by the Editor of *The Star*, Moegsien Williams, has selected the contributors to the *Media Handbook of Excellence* and chapters have been commissioned. The book, which will serve as a moral and technical compass for entry-level journalists, is due to be published in the latter half of 2004.

A proposal to launch an enquiry into **road safety issues, violence, crime and safety** has been presented to the ministry.

The Social Fabric Study is essentially research into what has been termed social capital. It considers the relationship between the social networks, informed by trust, that enable reciprocity on the one hand and social cohesion, social dialogue, social investment, social activism and development on the other. This project has essentially been conceptual to date. DAC has recently agreed to contribute to funding the study. The unit is in negotiations with DAC to finalise this support. Discussions have also been held within the HSRC to look at collaboration on the project. The project is a partnership with the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Inyathelo, Nedlac and the Provincial Development Council (PDC). There is a comparative aspect to the study that considers the southern African region.

Occasioned by the find of remains of former inhabitants of the city of Cape Town at Prestwich Street, the **Reintegrating the City project** is a collaboration between the HSRC and the Prestwich Place Steering Committee. The find has stimulated discussion on patterns of land use, ownership, forced removals and the issue of slavery. The study will seek to consider what policies can be put in place to ensure a balance between memory, social justice and development. The project has been sent out to potential funders in government and the private sector.

The **Artist Signatures project** aims to raise the status of South African art by compiling a digital register of South African artists and their work. The register will also contain information on copyright as well as debates and practices concerning the monetary value of the works. Research for this project will begin in May 2004.

A project on **stigma and disease** commenced in early 2004. A paper "Aids stigma in historical context: Literature review" was due to be presented at the Second Conference on HIV/AIDS Research hosted by the HSRC in Cape Town in May.

A paper, *The subtle power of intangible heritage* was pub-



lished in the HSRC occasional paper series.

The **Biography and Society project**, which culminates in the publication of a book about distinguished South African social scientists and which commemorates their contribution to world scholarship, is due to be implemented in 2004.

Future developments

SCI is currently in the process of appointing a new Executive Director. Professor Wilmot James, the founding head of the SCI Research Programme, is moving on to a senior position in Government.

A number of important developments are currently in SCI's pipeline. These include the first phase of a Social Capital and Social Justice project, commissioned by DAC, the launch of the South African Cultural Observatory, a resource of culture-based information and analysis, and a research project on Social Stigma and its impact on the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Several media projects are pending, including research into the impact of commercialisation on the media, and the production of a handbook of media excellence.

The unit will also be involved in preparations for the third African Genome Initiative conference in 2005 which will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, and which will be focusing on vaccines.

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