International and local approaches to rural development

Key issues and questions: A review of the literature for the Drakenstein Municipality

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Background

The newly elected South African government has adopted a “renewed and focused attempt to facilitate and promote rural development” which all spheres of government are required to understand and orientate their programmes to correlate with this focus.

The Drakenstein Municipality has responded to this call and has developed a draft Rural Development Strategy with an associated implementation programme. To enable reflection on the strategy development process and the priorities it has identified, the Municipality has commissioned a comprehensive literature review on issues of rural development.

The structure of the review

This literature review is anchored by five questions:

- How has thinking about ‘development’ changed over time?
- What can we learn from the different approaches that characterise the international experience of rural development?
- What can we learn from how South Africa has approached rural development pre and post 1994?
- What are the key livelihood and employment opportunities for the rural poor?
- What are the key issues of relevance to the Drakenstein Municipality?

To address these questions we:

- Sketch changing global development paradigms;
- Map changing approaches and thinking about rural development priorities internationally;
- Review key issues and concepts associated with rural development theory and practice;
- Provide a critical history of rural development initiatives in South Africa;
- Identify the principle components of strategies designed to make rural development happen;
- Examine the fit between the key findings of the literature and the priorities of Drakenstein Municipality as expressed through its IDP and draft Rural Development Strategy document.

Contested global development paradigms

As we will examine the concept of development is not neutral but continues to be fundamentally contested.

*The primary purpose of the development text (like most others) is to convince, to persuade, that this (and not that) is the way the world actually is and ought to be amended. But ideas about development do not arise in an institutional or literary vacuum. They are rather assembled within a vast hierarchical apparatus of knowledge production and consumption sometimes known as...the ‘development industry’. This industry is itself implicated in the operation of networks and of power and domination that in the Twentieth Century have come to encompass the entire globe."*(Crush, 1995: 5)

The concept of ‘development’ gained particular prominence in the period following World War 2. Gustavo Esteva dates the appearance of the new ‘development era’ to 20th January 1949 when President Harry Truman took office as the post war US President and promised “a bold new programme... for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.” *(Esteva, 1993: 6)* This formalised a distinction between
‘developed countries’ and other poor countries – primarily in the South which were deemed to be ‘underdeveloped’.

Historically the discipline of development studies, in which rural development plays a key part, combines two elements: how to promote economic growth, and how to overcome poverty in the global South. (Bernstein, 2005)

The underlying assumption in Truman’s speech, and of the development policies and programmes which followed, was that the impoverished nations of the South should seek to emulate the industrial growth path of the North. This concept of “development cannot be separated from the idea that all people of the planet are moving along one single track towards some state of maturity exemplified by the nations ‘running in front’.”(Sachs, 1993: 3)

However in the post war period development ideologies were highly contested and overlaid with the geopolitics of the Cold War. Both the West and the East – advocating capitalism and communism respectively, competed to be the nations and systems ‘running in front’.

Two broad approaches to development theory vied for supremacy. These were:
• modernisation theory;
• theories associated with a Marxist critique of economy and society and advancement of socialist development.  

Modernisation theory
Modernisation theory originated with US economists and was promoted by the Bretton Woods Institutions² established after World War 2. The theory held that growth and capitalist led development was the solution to poverty. This development was premised on Western investment and underpinned by the transfer of technology. It envisaged an evolutionary development process for countries in the South which would mimic the economic growth path taken by the capitalist North. “Early economic development theory equated "development" with growth and industrialization. As a result, Latin American, Asian and African countries were seen mostly as "underdeveloped" countries, i.e. "primitive" versions of European nations that could, with time, "develop" the institutions and standards of living of Europe and North America.” (The New School, 1998) The most crude example of this approach is provided by Rostow who assumed that “‘traditional societies’ would eventually climb up the evolutionary ladder to enter the age of ‘high mass consumption.” (Rostow, 1960)

Early modernisation theorists focused almost entirely on economic growth and capital accumulation models and were largely dismissive of the socio-cultural values of societies in the South, characterising these as obstacles to development. Unsurprisingly the prescriptions of modernisation theory and its neo liberal successors have remained highly contested in the South.

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¹ It is beyond the scope of this review to provide detail on the many different theoretical schools which proliferated under these broad headings.
² The International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development established in 1945
Later economic theorists came to recognise that development was a social phenomenon that involved much more than increasing per capita output and involved eliminating poverty, unemployment and inequality as well. (Seers, 1989). However economic growth remained the founding assumption, although the focus shifted to how to better redistribute economic benefits.

In practice growth-led agricultural and industrial development, irrespective of its ideological packaging or historical era, has had significant social, economic and environmental costs when seen through a global lens. The promised ‘trickle down’ effect which was premised on economic and social benefits percolating down to the poor largely failed to materialise. (Weisbrot, Baker, Kraev, & Chen, 2001) Meanwhile environmental impacts of growth led models have been huge. In recent years improvements in technology and stricter environmental regulation in those countries which have the resources to afford investment in environmental protection measures have mitigated some of the worst effects, yet as we examine in more detail below fundamental problems remain.

**Marxist development theory**

Marxist development theorists critiqued the imperialist and neo imperialist roots of capitalist development which broadened structural inequalities both within and between countries while promoting Eurocentric values and bias. Economic theorists examining the relationships between the developed countries and the ‘third world’ developed the "structuralist" thesis, which highlighted the distinct structural problems of Third World economies and their dependent economic relations with the North. (For a period Third World countries attempted to counter this dependence through policy measures usually in the form of subsidies, import substitution and tariff protection .(The New School, 1998) )

However the Marxist race to develop was underpinned by the same growth and output driven economic model as the modernisation theory it dismissed. The key theoretical difference was how the resultant economic benefits should be owned and controlled. Overtime however these economic and political systems came to be characterised as ‘state capitalism’ – where the wage labour system continued but that the economic benefits (surplus value) became captured by the State and members of party and state bureaucracies.

As early as 1926 the Communist party of the then Soviet Union resolved to “catch up and overtake the level of industrial development of advanced capitalist countries in a relatively minimal historical period.” (Sakwa, 1998). In the process of trying to ‘catch up’ “Marxists, like structuralist economists more generally, developed and debated the case for development strategies based in public investment, planning and coordination.” (Bernstein, 2005:25)

In practice the combination of large scale industrial and agricultural projects, often dependent on old technology which were promoted in the socialist bloc contributed to massive environmental problems both locally and globally. This has been a major consequence of the rapid growth of the Chinese economy in the last two decades when its GDP has increased by over six times but at huge ecological and social costs. China has been characterised as choking on its own development. Overall it is clear that the full environmental price of this rapid economic development (no matter its ideological setting) is only just beginning to be understood (McNeill, 2000)

**More similarities than differences**

Ostensibly these two theoretical families and their associated approaches to development were premised on fundamentally different ideological positions which promised to result in qualitatively different social outcomes. In practice however their similarities have overwhelmed their differences, in that both paradigms
were deeply rooted in modernist assumptions (Graaf, 2001) and resulted in the pursuit of aggressive growth led development models under different guises.

In the post war period there was a global consensus that the state “had a central role in planning and managing economic and social development.” (Bernstein, 2005). As we will examine further below the role of the State in development has been debated since the 1980’s.

**Globalisation**

The rise of neo liberal policies and the process of economic structural adjustment in the 1980s sought to “roll back the State” This had its roots in neo-liberal critique of the state bureaucracies and economic regulation associated with structuralism which argued that government intervention in the economy actually prevented growth and development from taking place.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the global demise of the socialist bloc and the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist forms of economic and political organization in many parts of the world. This left neo-liberal economic policies largely unchallenged. These gained momentum with the formation of the World Trade Organisation in 1995 and its promotion of unrestricted free market economics.

This in turn expanded the economic reach and power of large transnational corporations (TNCs) which set out to “create a borderless world market where capital and goods (but not people!) could freely move about, driven only by the law of demand and supply. …Elites in both the North and South came to consider the freedom of markets the supreme value in politics” (Sachs, 2002: 12).

Globalisation has been described as a mass transfer of wealth from public and private and an extension of the processes of colonization, centralization and loss of self determination. “Real power has moved from local to state, from state to national, from national to international” precipitating a crisis in national representative democracy (Klein, 2002: 200)

This “market fundamentalism” quickly became the dominant economic ideology. Proponents shrugged off calls for state regulation, arguing that markets were “self correcting.” However this notion has been globally discredited by six international financial crises since 1980 culminating in the most recent global crisis peaking in 2008. This has triggered the most serious global recession since 1929 and has required massive government interventions to bail out private financial institutions in danger of bankruptcy. It has prompted renewed calls to review the international regulatory system and challenged the orthodoxy of unfettered ‘free trade’.

As George Soros has cautioned:

“Because of the failures of socialism, communism, we have come to believe in market fundamentalism, that markets are perfect; everything will be taken care of by markets. And markets are not perfect. And this time we have to recognize that, because we are facing a very serious economic disruption.”

(Soros & Woodruff, 2008)

**The sustainable development imperative**

The growth led globalisation paradigm has long been critiqued from social, economic and ecological sustainability perspectives. For several decades prior to the current crisis there has been mounting evidence that the development model of the North was “historically obsolete” (Sachs, 2002) as it was having huge and potentially irreversible environmental impacts. This gave rise to a new set of discourses on sustainable development.
A variety of definitions of sustainable development have emerged over time which lay emphasis on different elements. The Brundtland Report highlighted the need for inter-generational equity where “sustainable development meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

Other definitions place more emphasis on the relationship between equity and access to ecological resources emphasising a different approach to “economic growth that provides fairness and opportunity for all the world’s people, not just the privileged few, without further destroying the world’s finite natural resources and carrying capacity”. (Pronek & ul Haq, 1992)

The current UNDP definition of sustainable development is: “The process of enlarging people’s choices and freedoms so that they may lead a long, healthy and secure life, acquire knowledge, and have equal access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living without compromising the prospects of future generations” (UNDP 1998).

However the concept of sustainable development has been criticised for its vagueness and the way in which the term has been used by different actors to project very different meanings. As Sachs has cautioned, sustainable development is “a concept of monumental emptiness, carrying a vaguely positive connotation. Therefore, it is easily used as a vehicle for contradictory perspectives”. (Sachs, 2002: 14)

In the global debate generated by the Brundtland report and the 1992 Rio Earth Summit two broad approaches emerged as to how to attain more sustainable development. One approach asserted that continuing economic growth (be) made much more environmentally sensitive, while the other argued that the current growth centered models in combination with globalising trade are fundamentally unsustainable and inequitable requiring radical changes in economic organisation and global governance to correct. (Carley & Christie, 2000)

To date the first approach – attempting to make growth more environmentally sensitive has predominated. It has been argued that it is “politically expedient for everybody, the North, the South, and the ex-communist countries, not to question the development-as-growth philosophy. Both the South and the economies in transition could continue to phrase their demands for justice and recognition as demands for unlimited economic growth, without making crucial distinctions as to “what kind of growth?”; “for whose benefit?”; “growth in which direction?” .”(Sachs, 2002)

Since Rio, both developed and developing countries have continued to fight for their development interests, irrespective of the consequences for global systems. At Rio the US cautioned that its ‘national lifestyle’ was not up for negotiation. Oil producing nations in the Middle East and elsewhere resisted agreements restricting carbon emissions. Brazil argued that it should be able to continue to develop and exploit the Amazon basin as it saw fit. (McNeill, 2000)

A number of factors have propelled us into the current global recession and the mounting challenge of climate change:

- The continued dominance of the interests of global financial institutions and powerful TNCs which control more than 70% of world trade,
- an economic growth path dependent on non renewable fossil fuels
- the impotence of much global economic and environmental regulation in the face of these powerful interests.
During the last 50 years there has been a dramatic increase in disaster losses – many of which are weather related. Temperature records from around the world going back 150 years suggest that 19 of the 20 warmest years – measured in terms of average global temperature, which takes account of all available thermometer data - have occurred since 1980, and that four of these occurred in the past seven years. (New Scientist, 2005) Surface temperatures are expected to rise between 1.4º and 5.8ºC by 2100.

This has particular relevance for South Africa. In May 2005 the South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism warned that “climate change is everyone’s problem and that over the next fifty years it may well define the worst social, economic and environmental challenges ever faced.”

He cited research done by SANBI which indicates that:

Climate change could lead to provinces like Mpumalanga, Limpopo, the North West, KwaZulu-Natal and even Gauteng becoming malaria zones by 2050, with the number of South Africans ‘at high risk’ quadrupling by 2020 – at an added cost to the country of between 0,1% and 0,2% of GDP. Clean water resources will become more scarce, small-scale agriculture is also likely to be hard-hit with less rainfall in some regions and too much in others. Regional migration will accelerate, placing added burdens on urban centres. In short, climate change will intensify the worst effects of poverty through losses in biodiversity, agriculture, health, and almost every sector of society. In a developing country like South Africa this means that our poorest communities will also be worst hit by the impacts of climate change.

The impacts of climate change are now at the top of the international development agenda adding to the challenges facing the world governments to ensure “a decent quality of life for a predicted population of 10 billion people in 2050, whilst reducing environment impacts to within system limits”.(Friends of the Earth, 2000)

**Summarising the paradigm shifts**

As can be seen above ‘development’ remains a fundamentally contested concept. In the period post World War 2 development became main streamed. Initially modernisation and Marxist economic and development theory appeared to be represent fundamentally different approaches. However these difference blurred over time as both were rooted in modernist assumptions. The social and ecological costs of these development models gave rise to the need for a different paradigm resting on sustainable development. However this concept has continued to lack theoretical and practical sharpness. Rampant globalisation based on market fundamentalism has triggered the current global economic crisis. The massive evidence of global poverty and accelerating inequality combined with an ecological crisis that is impacting on world climate calls for a need to fundamentally rethink growth and development. This is the global backdrop against which we have to locate our attempts to conceptualise rural development.

**Locating rural development in wider development discourse**

The history of rural development globally articulates closely with the different approaches to development briefly, and somewhat crudely, outlined above. Thus we have seen resource and technology intensive ‘green revolution’ approaches to agriculture located within the modernisation paradigm and large scale mechanised and irrigated collective agriculture associated with socialist economic planning and development which are largely indistinguishable from one another in practice – each with significant social and ecological consequences.

Rural development has to be located within a context of extremely rapid urbanisation and economic change, including powerful trends towards market fundamentalism and global economic integration driven by trade liberalisation. This has resulted in increased economic interdependence among nation states and reductions in
national economic sovereignty. At the same time, the disparity between rich and poor continues to grow, both within countries and between them.

In South Africa it has to be situated against the backdrop of an increasingly stressed natural environment characterised by:

- Unsustainable use of freshwater (50% wetlands transformed; 82% rivers threatened; 65% of the African population could be at risk of water stress by 2025)
- High levels of biodiversity loss - 16.5% terrestrial habitats transformed; 34% of South Africa’s terrestrial ecosystems threatened; more than 2,000 plant species threatened
- Intensification of industrial agriculture, proliferation of GM crops, pesticide and chemical fertiliser use
- High levels of air pollution
- A spiralling waste problem
- Intensification of floods and droughts (Wynberg, 2009)

Defining rural development

Rural development is a term which like ‘sustainable development’ is sufficiently vague to allow the user to let it mean what she or he wants it to mean. Nevertheless there are a number of definitions which have been developed over the years, the majority of which aim for simplicity:

“Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need.” Chambers (1983)

“A process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor”. Singh (1999)


However Van der Ploeg et al (2000) assert that definitions of rural development remain essentially contested:

“It is not possible to construct any comprehensive and generally accepted definition of rural development. The notion of rural development (emerges) through socio-political struggle and debate” (van der Ploeg et al., 2000: 1)

Evolving ideas and approaches to rural development internationally

The literature on rural development is characterised by a mix of theory and practice: “that is both ideas about how ‘development’ should or might occur, and real world efforts to put various aspects of development into practice.” (Potter, 2002: 61).

The vision and priorities for rural development closely reflect changing global development trends and relations of power and influence. Yet investment in and support for a broadly ‘pro-poor’ rural development can be a useful indicator reflecting the extent to which the governments and international institutions are serious about reducing poverty and inequality.

Cousins has highlighted how there has been constant debate about the relationship between the state and the market and between the productive and social sectors with respect to rural development. (Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009)
Histories of thinking about rural development often attempt to periodise different approaches and key ideas by decades. In part these reflect the preoccupations of the four UN development decades which commenced in the 1960s. Hence it is often said that the:

- **1960’s** are associated with modernisation approaches emphasising technology transfer
- **1970’s** are associated with large scale state development interventions and integrated rural development programmes
- **1980’s** are associated with market liberalisation and attempts to roll back the state
- **1990’s** are characterised as being strongly process focused with an emphasis on participation and empowerment within a context of diversifying rural livelihood opportunities. By end of 1990s a more balanced approach had started to emerge but there remains no agreement worldwide on how to get the right mix. (Ibid)
- **2000’s** have a focus poverty eradication, reinvigoration of small holder agriculture, sustainable farming systems and the location of producers within global value chains

However Ellis and Biggs caution that rural policies have not evolved in such a neat, linear and schematic manner and that “there are leads and lags in the transmission of new ideas across space and time.” (Ellis & Biggs, 2001)

The table below (adapted from a Ellis and Biggs) provides an annotated chronology of the changing thinking and approaches internationally to rural development.

### 1950’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Modernisation</td>
<td>Modernisation theory held that the small scale subsistence sector had little potential for improved productivity or growth. The development of agriculture could only be stimulated by investment in large scale monocrop estates and plantations. Large farms were perceived to be more efficient than small farms as a consequence of economies of scale. Rural development was implicitly associated with scaling up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dual economy</td>
<td>Dual economy models posited the parallel operations of a relatively advanced sector and a relatively backward sector alternatively characterised as capitalist and subsistence, formal and informal, modern and traditional. (Fields, 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community development</td>
<td>Community development approaches were dominant in this decade. These aimed to mobilise rural communities for development. They rested on the placement of multipurpose village level workers in rural communities to catalyse and co-ordinate local development initiatives. However at the time this approach was primarily fuelled by US foreign policy priorities and became regarded as an intervention to counter the spread of communism (Holdcroft, 1976). There has been renewed interest in this approach subsequently. The training and placement of Community Development Workers in South Africa is a contemporary example.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Perceptions that peasant producers were ‘lazy’ and required motivation</td>
<td>Much rural development thinking was premised on the notion of the need to change the work ethic of the small peasant whose ‘backward attitudes’ were regarded as the primary obstacle to rural development. This narrative has been a constant feature of South African development discourse – both pre and post 1994.</td>
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### 1960’s

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<td>• ‘Green Revolution” Technology transfer</td>
<td>This decade is characterised by high expectations of the promise of technology. Technology transfer focused on large scale, input intensive agriculture based on packages of higher yielding hybrid seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, mechanisation and post harvest technologies which came to be known as the Green Revolution. There are different perspectives on the success and sustainability of this ‘revolution’ as well concerns about its impact on smallholder farmers – many of whom were displaced by</td>
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### Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development

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<td>larger and more wealthy producers in the process. Ironically the Green Revolution had significant environment impacts including a dramatic rise in pesticide and chemical fertiliser use, salinisation of soils and pressure on groundwater resources. Patel et al observe that: “from 1970 to 1990 the amount of food available per person rose by 11 percent, and more than 150 million people were lifted from the ranks of the world's hungry. However they caution that “most of that rise was driven by transformations inside China. Subtract China from the picture and the heyday of the Green Revolution saw global hunger increase by 11 percent”. (Patel, Holt-Gimenez, &amp; Shattuck, 2009)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Agricultural extension,</td>
<td>The origins of agricultural extension were based in methods to try to get rural farmers to adopt new technologies and farming practices. In this period extension largely ignored local and indigenous knowledge, farming systems and tenure arrangements. It also targeted men overlooking that much agricultural work was done by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The contribution of agriculture to economic growth</td>
<td>During this decade there was a re-evaluation of the contribution of small scale agriculture to economic growth. A new perspective held that small scale agriculture could in fact be the engine for economic development in developing countries. An argument developed that there was an inverse relationship between farm size and economic efficiency and that in fact smaller farmers were more efficient than large farmers (Berry &amp; Cline, 1979) However advocates of both small and large farm focus remain deadlocked throughout this period and these differences in approach extend into the subsequent decades.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The changing perception of rural people as rational managers of risk and change</td>
<td>Research into farming systems changed the perception of rural people who had been characterised as ‘incurably lazy’ and resistant to change. Small farmers were now seen to be behaving in an economically rational way when they rejected improvements which they perceived to be too risky. This highlighted the need to properly assess and develop ways to manage and minimise risk as part of the process of innovation.</td>
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#### 1970’s

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<td>• Redistribution with growth,</td>
<td>A joint IDS/World Bank study in 1972 entitled Redistribution with Growth conceded that, “It is now clear that more than a decade of rapid growth in underdeveloped countries has been of little or no benefit to perhaps a third of their population.” It examined ways in which resources could be transferred from wealthy groups to poorer groups in society by means of:</td>
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<td>• Promotion of a basic needs approach,</td>
<td>Basic needs approaches to ‘Third World’ development gained ascendance as the new approach which represented “a shift of emphasis towards social services and transfer payments, designed to help the poor, and an extension of “new style” projects in nutrition, health and education”. (Streiten, 1984)</td>
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<td>• Large scale integrated rural development programmes,</td>
<td>The 1970’s was also characterised by large scale, complex, state led, top down, blueprint approaches to rural development. These placed emphasis on the development of interlocking national policies and institutions to guide and regulate development planning and support. However integrated rural development projects were often too complex and overwhelmed the management capacity of state institutions. Many became technocratic and remote from local people’s needs. Programmes became dependent on external expertise from donor countries for their design and management. Much of the money invested through aid programmes ended up being captured by Northern consultants and experts and not finding its way to meet needs on the ground. The effectiveness of such programmes was limited as a result and the approach became discredited. This approach however is making a comeback in South Africa where there is a risk of repeating the same mistakes.</td>
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Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development | Commentary
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State driven agricultural policies | Rural farmers got a lot of support through parastatals in the form of controlled floor prices and subsidised inputs which protected local producers and stimulated production.
Extension services during this period continued to be provided by government agencies, but now started to embrace new approaches which were more gender sensitive and which built on local knowledge.

Limits to growth – World Conservation Strategy | The limits to growth debate began in the 1970’s. This assumed that there were direct linkages between population growth, poverty and environmental degradation. The debate promoted ‘disaster narratives’ which cast the poor as destroying the environment while ignoring the disproportionately large, wasteful and unsustainable use of resources by industrialised countries. This gave rise to the World Conservation Strategy driven by the conservation concerns of ecologists which contributed to an era of largely coercive natural resource management strategies which prioritised protection of biodiversity, often at the expense of poor people and their needs.

Focus on the role of women in development. | The women in development approach (WID) approach had its roots in United Nations programmes of the 1970s which aimed to reverse the exclusion of women from development process. These promoted women’s projects with a view to increasing women’s productivity and income and their ability to manage their households.

1980’s

Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development | Commentary
---|---
The advent of World Bank led economic structural adjustment and market liberalisation. | The quadrupling of oil prices between 1973 and 1974 and further steep rises in 1979/1980 were the primary external factors in creating an international debt crisis. After the first oil shock developing countries were encouraged to take loans to pay their energy bills from financial institutions keen to capitalise on their vast reserves of petrodollars. The second oil shock forced countries to borrow again, this time to pay off their initial loans. This resulted in an exponential debt spiral where countries borrowings continued to escalate with no prospect of repayment. This coincided with the emergence of neo liberal economic policies and created the impetus for the emergence of structural adjustment programmes (SAP). “As of the late 1970s, the WB began to lend money conditional upon economic reforms referred to as the Washington Consensus, and other donors followed its lead soon after”. (Aubut, 2004) These reforms based on deregulation, liberalization and fiscal discipline, were designed to engineer a policy environment which would be conducive to market liberalisation, economic growth and development. SAPs advocated the progressive removal of price and wage controls and the reduction in government expenditure on social services. This had significant impacts on the rural economies and poor households in the South. Farmers lost access to input subsidies. Extension services which had been free were either cut back or provided by government agencies and consultancies which recovered a portion of their costs from their rural clients. People had to pay for education and health care. The progressive withdrawal of the state and a scaling down of financial and technical support to farmers created great hardships and certain countries like Malawi experienced famines as a result. (Devereux, 2009)

The shrinking state and the rise of international development NGOs. | In the context of a shrinking state, international development NGOs started to play a major role in countries of the South. At the United Nations, from 41 NGOs granted consultative status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1948, and 377 in 1968, the number of NGOs in consultative status has now expanded to over 1,550. The significant rise of non-state actors in development has its roots here and in the process of ‘neoliberal destatisation’ and accelerated globalisation associated with the rise of neo-liberalism in subsequent decades (McArthur, 2008)

Initial emphasis on participatory research methods in the form of Rapid Rural Appraisal. | During the late 1970’s and 1980’s there was an increasing focus on approaches and methods to enable outside professionals to better understand rural realities. This saw a shift to qualitative and participatory research methods and an increasing awareness of the value of indigenous technical knowledge. (ITK) (Robert Chambers, 1997)
Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development

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<td><strong>Focus on understanding the functioning of existing farming systems.</strong> Field research on mixed farming systems practiced by rural people highlighted their interdependence and complexity. This assisted in the provision of more appropriate support measures.</td>
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<td><strong>Gender and development</strong> Gender and development (GAD) emerged as an alternative to the WID approach in the previous decade. This sought to empower women and transform unequal gender and power relations that prevented equitable access to resources.</td>
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<td><strong>Interventions to promote drought mitigation and household food security.</strong> Drought was perceived to be the primary cause of African food insecurity in the early 1970’s (the Sahelian drought) and the mid 1980’s. Between 1980 and 1985, drought was estimated to have affected around 150 million people in Africa (FAO). A food crisis was experienced in several parts of the continent during the 1980s. Most of the solutions proposed were purely technological, stressing production rather than equitable distribution of food, where an abundance of food can and does exist alongside famine (Clover, 2003).</td>
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<td><strong>Policies and strategies to alleviate poverty</strong> Poverty alleviation measures focused on interventions which would reduce the impact of poverty on poor households.</td>
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<td><strong>Environment and sustainability</strong> The publication of the Brundtland report in 1987 reframed the emphasis from purely ecological dimensions environment to a more holistic, if vague concept of sustainable development. However received wisdom on supposed population – poverty-environmental degradation spirals remained difficult to shift.</td>
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**1990’s**

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<td><strong>Structural adjustment</strong> The 1990’s saw the peaking of SAPs with a particular focus on former communist bloc countries in ‘transition’. These programmes were increasingly associated with high social and environmental costs and have been criticised for turning “developing countries into amenable players in the globalising system of free trade and TNC dominated investment.”(Carley &amp; Christie, 2000: 107)</td>
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<td><strong>Good governance</strong> In combination with the post-Washington Consensus and the focus on institutions and public sector management in the 1990s, a new policy agenda was formulated focusing on a more selective allocation of aid based on the quality of governance. The WB characterised good governance as: “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development.” OECD countries prioritised four elements: the rule of law, public sector management, control of corruption, and reduction of military spending.</td>
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<td><strong>Micro credit</strong> The success of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh prompted a global reappraisal of approaches to microcredit for poverty reduction. Grameen Bank started from the premise of credit as a human right which could be extended only to members of groups, and for the purposes of enabling self employment as opposed to financing consumption. The lending programme targeted poor women, provided service to the users where they stayed, and depended on a collateral of trust and member responsibility. Extension of credit was always accompanied by involvement in voluntary or compulsory savings programmes. This model was taken up and adapted in a variety of different settings around the globe.(Grameen Foundation, 2009)</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty reduction</strong> Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced in 1999 by the World Bank and the IMF as a new framework (the successor to SAPs) to enhance domestic accountability for poverty reduction reform efforts; a means to enhance the coordination of development assistance between governments and development partners; and a precondition or access to debt relief and concessional financing from both institutions’ (World Bank)</td>
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<td><strong>Participatory rural appraisal</strong> Participatory approaches placed new emphasis on how rural people compare options, minimise risk, adapt practices and seek information (Garforth &amp; Harford, 1997). There was increasing recognition of local knowledge and agency through processes of participatory research and planning (Robert Chambers, 1997)</td>
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### Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development

| Actor oriented rural development | Actor oriented approaches were based on the mapping of relationships and flows of information to provide a basis for reflection, planning and action. They have their roots in anthropological and social network research techniques. (Biggs & Matsaert, 2004). There was a shift in emphasis to an ‘endogenous development paradigm’ which was premised on development originating from within a social system as opposed to modernisation with its emphasis on imported models and expertise. Actor oriented approaches emphasised the importance of participation, the empowerment of local actors and unlocking of local resources. (Nemes, 2005) |
| Stakeholder analysis | With an renewed focus on projects, rural development planners started to focus more on assumptions and risks which would impact on design and implementation. As part of the actor oriented development and participation paradigms was the recognition of different interests, institutions and local power relations. There was an increasing awareness that development projects could create winners and losers and have unintended consequences which impacted on the interests of particular stakeholders. |
| Environment and sustainability | There was increasing recognition of the contribution that environmental goods and services make to livelihoods of poor rural households and the rise of triple bottom line environmental accounting. Emphasis shifted to improved management of the ecosystems that produce these goods and services to increase household incomes of the poor. Community based natural resource management and co-management of environmental resources gained ascendance. However there was a realisation that this required a change in natural resource governance to improve access and control to key resources by the poor. This in turn required a focus on the development and strengthening of institutions. |

### 2000’s

The current decade has been characterised by flux and fragmentation in development thinking and rural development policy despite the overarching focus of attaining the Millennium Development Goals. This has been accompanied by increasing concern about the depoliticisation of issues inherent in policy development processes. It has been argued that rationalist models tend to depoliticise the issues which are the focus of policy through the use of neutral scientific language. ‘This masking of the political under the cloak of neutrality is a key feature of modern power’ (Shore and Wright, 1997 in Sutton, 1999). Strong critiques of the “rationalist model of a ...linear policy development sequence” have emerged which are characterised as “simplistic and reductionist”. (Dhunpath & Paterson, 2004: 126)

The start of the decade was marked by the dominance of broader livelihoods approaches which replaced a more conventional and narrow sectoral foci on small farmers, agriculture and the non farm economy. However people have experienced difficulties in practically applying livelihoods thinking to the design of rural development programmes and currently there appears to be a refocusing on the potential of agriculture and natural resources to make a contribution to economic growth and household livelihood security. This has been accompanied by an increasing emphasis on decentralisation and the principle of subsidiarity which holds that decisions need to be taken as close to the citizenry and the local level as possible.

There remains a tension between more transdisciplinary thinking and the reassertion of sector wide development approaches. Issues of good governance and decentralisation remain important, but at the same time there has been critique of what passes for participation and the lack of meaningful downward accountability in the decentralisation process.

Environmental issues, vulnerability reduction and disaster risk mitigation measures are increasingly taking centre stage as there is increasing recognition of the severity and speed of climate change and its impacts on the poor.
### Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development

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<td><strong>Critique of participation</strong></td>
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<td>option of participatory approaches by existing power structures. (Cooke &amp; Kathari, 2001)</td>
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<td><strong>Sector wide development approaches</strong></td>
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| **Revitalising small holder farming** | This is closely linked to MDG 1 above. Over the past thirty years agriculture’s share of foreign aid has dropped from 17% to 3% of total spend. The reinvigoration of smallholder agriculture, which is once again attaining prominence, assumes that improving the productivity of agriculture in general and the competitiveness of smallholders and marginalized groups in the expanding global, national and local markets in particular, as well as by creating employment among poor rural people and making food available to consumers everywhere, can make an meaningful impact on poverty. (McIntyre, Herren, Wakhungu, & Watson, 2009) However there are fundamentally differing approaches on how to do this. Patel et al caution that “Conventional wisdom suggests that if people are hungry, there must be a shortage of food, and all we need do is figure out how to grow more. This logic turns hunger into a symptom of a technological deficit, telling a story in which a little agricultural know-how can feed the world. But there’s a problem: the conventional wisdom is wrong. Food output per person is as high as it has ever been, suggesting that hunger isn’t a
Changing ideas informing approaches to rural development

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<th>Problem of production so much as one of distribution.”(Patel et al., 2009)</th>
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<td>Farming and food security debates take place against a backdrop of a threatened food deficit in rapidly growing economies like China which has led to a search for land to purchase on lease in the South for large scale industrial agriculture. According to IFPRI these land acquisitions have the potential to inject much needed investment into agriculture and rural areas in poor developing countries, but they also raise concerns about the impacts on poor local people, who risk losing access to and control over land on which they depend.(von Braun &amp; Meinzen-Dick, 2009) The energy crisis has also led to a search for land on which to grow crops intended for the production of biofuels. Rapidly rising international consumption of meat and associated changes in livestock farming methods have potential negative impacts on small scale livestock producers. At the same time the rise of biotechnology and particularly GMOs has been the site of a fierce debate. Supporters argue that genetic engineering is a key technology to address food insecurity and malnutrition. Opponents highlight potential impacts on the environment, and “a corporate takeover of traditional agriculture and the global food supply” (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2004) which will exacerbate poverty and hunger.</td>
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- ICTs for development

There has been a growing emphasis on the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for pro-poor development. Much of the debate has focused on the so called digital divide and overcoming the problems that the rural poor have in accessing information for innovation and improved competitiveness in the market place. Reviews of ICT projects in rural areas indicate measurable impacts from ICT projects focusing on price information and market access. (IICD, 2006) However they also caution that ICTs are no panacea for development problems and that projects which focus on technological solutions in isolation are doomed to failure in the same way that mechanisation and large scale infrastructure development schemes are associated with failure in development practice.(Ibid)

- Climate change

During this decade there has been a mounting awareness of the challenges posed by climate change and its impacts poor and vulnerable households. See the discussion on sustainable development above.

- Fair trade

The increasing dominance of global supermarket chains over the world food economy has been highlighted as one the main consequences of a globalising agriculture. Efforts have been made to secure niche markets for producers of particular commodities such as coffee and fruit. These initiatives aim to ensure a fair return to the producers. Fairtrade really took off in the late 1980’s with the launch of the first Fairtrade label in Holland marketing coffee from small growers in Mexico. This concept spread to other countries in Europe and North America in the 1990s before all the different labels were brought under Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) This was followed by the launch of an International Fairtrade Certification Mark in 2002. FLO then split into tow organisations – one to set standards and provide business support and the other which is an inspection and certification body.(Fairtrade Foundation, 2009)

Reflections on the Chronology

The chronology above highlights the breadth and diversity of elements associated with the rural development agenda. The chronology excludes changing approaches to rural service provision, primary health care, HIV/AIDS and malaria mitigation, education and transport – all key components of rural development initiatives. The inclusive, complex and crosscutting character of rural development is both the source of its strength and the fundamental challenge implicit in the design, implementation and monitoring of rural development programmes.

The concept has strength because of its ability to connect different sectors and disciplines, synthesise professional and local knowledge and make micro-macro linkages. However it presents significant obstacles in
that effective rural development initiatives and programmes depend heavily on shared institutional ownership and knowledge systems; and require programmatic alignment and harmonisation across different spatial scales which are notoriously difficult to manage and achieve.

### Development and rural areas in South Africa pre 1994

The history of rural development in South Africa is embedded in the larger narrative of colonial land dispossession and the implementation of apartheid policies of separate development. This means that there are at least three differentiated histories of rural development:

- One is the programme of massive state investment which grew and consolidated the white commercial farming sector after the dispossession of people previously living on that land.
- A second is the history of measures to regulate land use and production in the African reserves and ‘Bantustans’ which had become hugely overcrowded as a result of natural population growth and the forced removals of 3.5 million people from ‘white areas’.
- A third is the series of interventions to regulate Coloured rural areas created in terms of 1909 Mission Stations Act, 1963 Act and Coloured Rural Areas Act (Act 9 of 1987) which has particular relevance in the Western Cape.

These histories are intimately connected with one another. It is only in the period post 1994 with the advent of three spheres of governance and wall to wall municipalities that we are able to begin to discuss a national rural development strategy. However this is inevitably focused on addressing the deficits of poverty and inequality inherited from earlier historical eras and in part is focused on addressing the persistence of its social and economic impacts.

### Land dispossession

During the 19th Century South Africa had been in social turmoil resulting from different but interrelated factors including in the influx of British settlers in 1820 at Algoa Bay; the emigration of some 12,000 to 14,000 Boers from Cape Colony in South Africa between 1835 and the early 1840s; and the mfecane a series of forced migrations as a consequence Zulu and other Nguni wars, themselves partly a response to colonial penetration. This, combined with the mineral revolution irrevocably changed the demographic, social, and political configuration of Southern Africa.

The discovery of diamonds and gold lead directly to the South African war (1899 - 1902) as Britain moved to control the greatest known reserves of gold in the world. The war changed the face of the countryside destroying the livelihoods of many Boer and African farmers. The war created a growing divide between owners of large estates and small struggling family farms.

By the end of the 19th Century whites had alienated much of the land in South Africa. Three quarters of the land alienated was under private ownership. A significant portion of this land was held by companies which purchased it for purposes of speculation. For example in 1905 nearly 20% of farms in the Transvaal were owned by companies. After the war “prewar property relations were restored; African societies were policed and taxed more effectively, and the new constitution excluded Africans from political power. Policies proposed during reconstruction pointed toward racial segregation, which became the governing orthodoxy after 1910.”(Davenport, 1983)

Mining and the industrial revolution which followed, created a huge demand for cheap labour. In order to obtain this labour successive governments sought to transform households deriving independent livelihoods from the land into migrant wage labourers in the mining industrial and agricultural sectors.
Large landowners and mining interests lobbied to enable the passing of the 1913 Natives Land Act which delineated the ‘native reserves.’ Beinart estimates that only 20% of the land which Africans had effectively used was retained as Reserve areas. (Beinart, 1994)

While much of the land retained for reserves was better land, east of the 500mm rainfall line (which is one of the principle factors defining whether land is suitable for crop production), this land quickly became increasingly overcrowded and the natural resources were put under severe pressure resulting in severe erosion and desertification. High human and livestock populations have contributed to erosion an estimated 50 times higher than in commercial agriculture— itself prone to soil erosion. (Carnegie, Cooper, & Urquhart, 2001)

Following the South African Act of Union in 1910 the new government sought to develop policy on land and labour. On the one hand the Natives Land Act of 1913 sought to restrict African access to land to the Reserves in order to force people into the labour market. On the other it sought to limit African residence on white owned land to labour tenancy or wage labour, and thereby address the labour needs of emerging White commercial farmers.

The 1936 Native Trust and Land Act finally provided the basis for formalising and extending the size of the African reserve areas as recommended by the 1916 Beaumont Commission. As has been noted earlier it was recognised in the 1913 that the Reserves were already overcrowded and resource stressed. The growing crisis in the Reserves was one of the factors driving the passing of the 1936 Act, but more importantly the Act was to provide the justification for subsequent evictions of sharecroppers and cash tenants farming on White-owned land.

- The Act formalised the separation of White and Black rural areas laying the foundations of the apartheid homeland system
- The Act established the South African Native Trust (SANT), which purchased all reserve land not yet owned by the state, and had responsibility for administering African reserve areas. The SANT imposed systems of control over livestock, introduced the division of arable and grazing land, and enforced residential planning and villagisation (called ‘betterment’) under the guise of modernising African agricultural systems. Betterment schemes also lead to substantial dispossession and loss of land rights.
- Areas in White South Africa where Black people owned land were declared “Black spots”, enabling the state to implement measures to remove the owners of this land to the reserves.

The 1936 Land Act withdrew legal protection for these individually or group owned properties. By the end of the 1930s, the political economy of land and agriculture had been transformed in the interests of white capital, but it was not until the 1960’s and the 1970’s that the bulk of forced removals took place, which was also the era of so called Grand Apartheid.

A number of factors lead to massive evictions of tenants and surplus workers in the 1950s and 1960’s. These included the rapid mechanisation in the agricultural sector which sharply reduced the need of labour. The resulting ‘surplus’ of farm labour, tenants and farm occupiers became even bigger in the late 60s. Government aimed to eliminate the labour tenants, as they presented more independent forms of tenure and remove ‘surplus people’. (Henrard, 1995)

The resulting forced removals put increasing social and ecological pressure on the Bantustans, already overburdened with a disproportionate share of the population. Between 1960 and 1980 there was a massive population increase in the bantustans, rising from 4.5 million to 11 million people. For example the population of the Ciskei doubled between 1970 and 1982. At the same time individual landholdings within the Reserves declined sharply. In the Chata valley – Keiskammahoek land holdings fell by 75% between 1946-1981. By the beginning of the 1980’s about 60% of the African population was located in the bantustans. In the 1980’s
60,000 white commercial farming households owned 12 times as much land as the 14 million rural poor. (de Satge, 1998)

Within the commercial agricultural sector there has been an ongoing trend whereby smaller farmers are being forced out of agriculture. Average farm sizes have been increasing while land has become concentrated in fewer hands. This concentration has not been significantly diluted by land restitution or land redistribution in the post 1994 era.

Two agricultures?
South African has long been characterised as having two agricultures – which is as we discuss below is a somewhat problematic conceptualisation. The roots of the “two agricultures” thesis originates in the instruments used by the South African State to support white commercial farmers on the one hand and measures to regulate agricultural production and land-use management in the former reserves and homeland areas on the other.

Historical measures to strengthen the white commercial farming sector
A range of measures benefited white commercial farmers until these started to be phased out in the late 1980s ahead of the deregulation of the agricultural sector. These included:

- The 1939 Agricultural Co-operatives Act
- A comprehensive system of support, which was implemented largely by the Department of Agriculture and comprised research and extension, subsidies for a wide range of functions such as soil conservation works, boreholes, housing for farm workers, farm schools, fencing, disaster assistance etc.
- The provision of infrastructure such as electricity, roads, railways, telecommunications and irrigation water through other state departments and agencies (Eskom, Roads Authorities, Spoornet, Telkom, Department of Water Affairs, Irrigation and Conservation Boards).
- Financial assistance through the Agricultural Credit Board and the Land Bank, with credit provided at subsidised interest rates and on preferential terms to farmers who could not access credit from the commercial banks.

(Sustainable Development Consortium, 2007)

Given this favourable environment, agricultural production in South Africa exceeded both population increase and consumption requirements (although large numbers of black South Africans remained too poor to buy adequate food for their families). Between 1980 – 1989 South Africa became self sufficient in all major agricultural commodities. (Singini & van Rooyen, 1995)

Historical measures to regulate production and land use in the Reserves and the homelands
A variety of measures were promulgated many of which had the practical effect of undermining rural production and land based livelihoods.

In 1929 the Union government established a Native Agricultural and Lands Branch within the Department of Native Affairs. This had a tiny budget and focused on soil conservation and the regulation of livestock numbers.

- The South African Native Trust created in terms of the 1936 Land Act had responsibility for administering African reserve areas. The SANT imposed systems of control over livestock, introduced the division of
arable and grazing land and enforced residential planning and soil conservation measures. However most of
the state agricultural branch’s “attention was directed to the newly acquired white farmlands, with the hope
that these tracts could be preserved until resources for development became available.” (Butler, Rotberg, &
Adams, 1978)

- In 1939 Proclamation 31 enabled officials to declare a ‘betterment area’ and empowered them to count and
cull livestock where they saw fit.
- In 1945 the Department of Native Affairs published A New Era for Reclamation which set out the vision for
so called ‘betterment’ land use planning. This also promoted villagisation in the reserve areas.
- In 1950 the Tomlinson Commission set out to “conduct an exhaustive enquiry into and report on a
comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of Native areas”. It recommended the abolition of communal
tenure and allocation of land together with a comprehensive agricultural support programme to enable the
creation of a class of ‘contented Bantu farmers’ who would be able to earn an income of 120 pounds a year.
At the same time the Commission recorded that the Reserves could only support 51% of the population
recorded in the 1951 census. It proposed culling 55% of the livestock. The Commission calculated that a
family would require 52.5 morgen of land to make a gross annual income of 70 pounds.
- The Nationalist government, which had come to power in 1948, rejected the Tomlinson Commission
recommendations for depopulating the reserves and investing in agricultural development. They opted for
increased control measures such as betterment planning, while rapidly swelling the already overcrowded
homelands with people displaced through forced removals. (de Satge, 1988)

The homeland era
The 1970’s saw the re-emergence of the concept of ‘development’ but in a uniquely South African setting of so
called independent homelands. The primary objective of this new development agenda was to “legitimate the
illegitimate.” (Crush, 1995) The homeland era, which commenced with Transkei’s ‘independence’ in 1976,
opened the way for homeland extension services and the development of agricultural development parastatals
like TRACOR, AGRIVEN and Agriwane.

Three agencies were involved in setting and implementing agricultural policy in the homelands: homeland
government departments, the advisory services branch of the Department of Bantu Administration and
Development (BAD), and the Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC). Each of these had a different perspective.
Homeland governments set out to provide basic extension services –BAD focused on the implementation of
betterment while BIC favoured large scale projects like irrigation and rural mechanisation schemes. (Butler et
al., 1978).

An assessment of extension services in the run up to homeland era noted that “while 90,000 rich, educated
white farmers have 3,000 extension officers (plus enormous injections of easy credit, marketing facilities, and
guaranteed prices) 600,000 black farmers have less than 1,000 extension officers and these hopelessly
overstretched men (and their small budgets) have been concentrated on the irrigation schemes.” (Lipton,
1972)

The parastatal homeland development approach during the 1970s and early 1980’s revolved around centrally
managed showcase capital intensive projects. Smallholders or waged employees were settled on these schemes
which provided management, inputs, tillage and marketing services. However these schemes largely failed to
create independent farmers and many became hugely expensive, wasteful and inefficient.

DBSA farmer support programme
The Development Bank of Southern Africa which was established in 1983, introduced the Farmer Support
Programme (FSP) as an alternative to the large capital intensive schemes. The FSP focused on small farmers
in the homeland areas. The DBSA defined a farmer as anyone who used resources, either part time or full time
to produce agricultural goods. The programme set out to integrate the promotion of agricultural activities with other non farm related rural development activities.

However the overall FSP development objective was the “promotion of structural change away from subsistent agricultural production to commercial production by providing comprehensive agricultural support services and incentives to existing farmers.” (Van Rooyen, 1995). After a mid term evaluation this objective was redefined in 1989 to focus on providing farmer access to support services over a wide base. The FSP ran between 1987 and 1993. It focused on the supply of:

- inputs and capital to farmers;
- mechanisation services;
- marketing services;
- extension services, demonstration and research;
- training.

The programme estimated that it reached 55,000 people through 35 FSPs before it was overtaken by the demise of the homelands and their reintegration into the nine provinces emerging from the new democratic dispensation in 1994.

A review of extension, training and research services provided as part of the FSP (Hayward & Botha, 1995) identified a wide range of problems:

- Provision of poor quality extension support in most instances. The low effectiveness of services was not due to lack of field officers but rather to the low quality of their formal education and the lack of appropriate in service training to meet the job support needs.
- No meaningful contact between extension and research given that most research capability remained targeted at the commercial sector.
- Extension methods were outdated and had not adapted to changing international extension approaches
- Farmers were encouraged to use inputs at too high a level against their actual achievement pushing many into debt.
- Some 40 farmer training centres had been constructed in the former homelands while occupancy rates were 15 – 20%.
- Lack of co-ordination between Departments of Agriculture and Agricultural Corporations.

In the evaluation of the FSP in 1993 it was noted that FSP strategy in the future might be determined by the demands of a land reform programme. However in the subsequent reorientation of the DBSA’s priorities it appears to have largely abandoned farmer support in favour of building the capacity of local government.

Rural development in South Africa post 1994

Rural development thinking and the development of the local government sphere with its emphasis on integrated development planning have proceeded on two parallel tracks since 1994.
Although the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was premised on a wide ranging programme of rural development, the ability of the new democratic government to design and deliver such a programme was seriously constrained by a number of factors including:

- The complexity of the transition period in which the old homeland administrations were wound up and personnel integrated into new provincial governments.
- The creation of the third sphere of local government.
- The development of new policy and legislative frameworks.
- The design of new planning and development instruments.
- The development of sufficient capacity within rural local government and provincial administrations.
- The effective alignment of government programmes delivered via departmental silos.
- The political priorities of managing rapidly accelerating urbanisation and the provision of associated housing and services in urban areas.

This period has seen relatively limited investment and attention to rural development which partly accounts for the newly elected government’s reprioritisation of this as a development focus. In the section below we track the different strategies and programmes developed and comment on their implementation.

**Revisiting assumptions on rural urban linkages**

In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s many urban commentators were of the view that once restrictions on ‘normal’ urbanisation were lifted there would be rapid migration of whole families to the metropolitan areas and ‘artificially created rural settlements’ would wither away.

However urbanisation dynamics post 1994 appear to challenge the assumptions of the ‘normalisation thesis’. Todes (2000) observes that migration patterns are more complex than the normalisation thesis assumes. The assumption that resettlement areas or closer settlements would unravel and progressively vanish post apartheid is questionable.
“Declining levels of unemployment, crime and violence in cities are some of the factors limiting the extent to which ‘normalisation’ is occurring. In this context the securities, assets and social networks that people have built up in places are not easily abandoned.” (Todes, 2000.)

Todes concluded that the complex and messy reality of apartheid settlement patterns is likely to remain for some time. She notes that ‘a sole focus on metropolitan areas and other places with comparative or competitive advantage is problematic.’ She argues for ‘contextually appropriate interventions’ and for ‘policy to be sensitive to local social contexts.’ She highlights the need to move beyond the polarised and oversimplified positions that often characterise policy debates – urban v rural, core v periphery, people or place.

This is echoed by Dewar who expressed concerns about the artificial divisions between strategies dealing with urban and rural development noting that, “For too long, ‘urban development’ and ‘rural development’ have been polarised and pursued in almost total isolation” resulting in narrow and oversimplified conceptions of rural development being about agriculture and urban development being about the management of big cities (Dewar, 1994: 361-2)

Unfortunately to date policy making on urban and rural development have remained largely isolated from one another.

The rural development strategy of the Government of National Unity

The Rural Development Strategy (RDS) of the GNU grew out of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which, prior to the dissolution of the GNU, was being driven by the RDP office. Before 1994 there had been no coherent system of rural local government. The priority of the first rural development strategy in the democratic era was putting in place democratic institutions for rural local governance and development.

The Rural Development Strategy (RDS) proposed mechanisms by which rural people and their elected representatives on rural District Councils and Local Councils could begin to identify local development priorities.

The key goals of the strategy included:

- promoting good planning at all levels of government, based on good information about the rural areas
- developing a more diverse agriculture;
- promotion of market days in rural areas;
- improving access to water, sanitation and to fuel;
- accessible and democratic local government structures.

Implementation priorities included improving services to farmers and entrepreneurs, building rural infrastructure, education, training and capacity building of rural people. The strategy proposed the employment of Community Development Facilitators trained in mediation, facilitation, participatory methods, project management, bookkeeping and gender issues to assist the poorest groups to get their needs considered during local negotiations around service delivery and infrastructure development. (Government of South Africa, 1995b). The Community Based Public Works Programme was established to provide work and skills development opportunities to the unemployed.

The RDS committed government to provide basic levels of infrastructure development with respect to provision of clean water, sanitation, access to schools and clinics, road development and energy provision. In practice the strategy was largely project driven and officials working for Rural District Councils and Rural
Local Councils were obliged “to learn the RDP business planning processes to ensure that rural dwellers benefit from the use of government funding,” noting that “it is up to rural people to make (the RDS) work for them.” (Ibid)

With respect to the revitalisation of smallholder agriculture Rural Development Strategy proposed that: “The main strategy is to create a national network of local service centres (LSCs) where a variety of services can be accessed. The LSCs in rural areas will receive subsidisation, and some activities in all LSCs may be subsidised to assist with targeting. Each will have a local control structure, and will need to prove accountability and transparency to maintain its accreditation. The LSCs will mostly assist entrepreneurs in obtaining access to hard skills training, for which they must pay, and will provide on-site ‘hand-holding’ to developing businesses for sustained periods.” (Ibid)

It advocated broadening access to agriculture through the following measures:

- Facilitation of farmer associations amongst previously disadvantaged farmers, and promotion of links to other voluntary associations such as cooperatives and input supply companies.
- Addressing the problems of the agricultural colleges, including reorientation of teaching methods and curriculum development.
- 'Nurturing the land': development of expertise, support and extension methodology around conservation.
- Reorientation training for agricultural training staff, including the development of new management systems, and reorientation of agricultural research.
- Development of a state guarantee scheme for agricultural finance, in place of direct state credit for farmers.
- Development of long term human resource development programme.
- Development of simple agricultural materials, including a workbook, concepts, glossary, and index of availability of a wide range of services.
- Development of a Farmer Training Programme, based on short flexible courses.
- A market awareness drive.
- Development of a master plan for technology development.
- Financial assistance pilot projects. (Government of South Africa, 1995a)

However the Rural Development Strategy was largely eclipsed when the RDP office was subsequently closed in March 1996. But it informed the development of the Rural Development Framework discussed below.

**Rural development framework (1997)**

Work on this framework originated in the RDP office before its closure. It was then handed on the Department of Land Affairs. The framework prioritised:

- development of local institutions;
- investment in basic infrastructure and social services;
- improving income and employment opportunities;
- broadening access to natural resources;
- establishing periodic markets;
- resource conservation;
- ensuring the safety and security of the rural population, especially that of women.

It observed that coordination of the different sectoral initiatives is essential at both national and provincial level if a rural development programme was to succeed. The framework document remains quite descriptive.
and somewhat mesmerised by the crosscutting nature of rural development activities and responsibilities which it outlines in somewhat confusing detail.

This discussion document was not confirmed as government rural development policy. After a three year interval Cabinet attempted to engage with rural development issues again this time under the auspices of the Presidency.


The ISRDP document was the product of this renewed focus and attempted to articulate a vision of “socially cohesive and stable communities with viable institutions, sustainable economies and universal access to social amenities, able to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable people who are equipped to contribute to growth and development” (Government of South Africa, 2000)

It explicitly set out to take on board what it purported to be the “key lessons of the international experience – that successful rural development needs to be implemented in a participatory and decentralised fashion in order to respond to the articulated priorities and observable opportunities at local level.” (Ibid)

The ISRDS has been described as “an elegantly simple idea”, in which local government co-ordinates sectoral departmental delivery in order to achieve in “more integrated (and responsive) development.” (Everatt, 2004)

The ISRDS identified local government as the key driver of the programme which set out to “co-ordinate existing departmental initiatives and programmes to achieve greater impact.” The ISRDS was promoted as a “framework in which they (municipalities) can become functioning developmental local governments.” (Government of South Africa, 2000: 19)

In reflecting on the successes and failures of the ISRDP it needs to be recognised that the launch of the programme coincided with the final phase of local government transition. Many nodes selected for the implementation of the ISRDP “were situated in newly created municipalities, and IDT officials found situations where the elected Mayor had either limited or no office space, staff or equipment.” (Everatt, 2004: 2) This meant that the success of the programme would hinge on the extent to which sectoral departments actively partnered with District and Local Municipalities to put in place practical support and institutional arrangements to align and integrate the programmes of sectoral departments to harness their complementarities and create added value.

The ISRDS defined rural development as “multidimensional and much broader than poverty alleviation through social programmes and transfers; it places emphasis on changing environments to enable poor people to earn more, invest in themselves and their communities and contribute towards the maintenance of key infrastructure.” (Government of South Africa, 2000: 19)

The strategy was focused on thirteen identified poverty nodes. Three pilot nodes were initially selected and then the programme was rolled out to a further 10 nodes. The programme was subsequently defined as promoting integrated service delivery through coordinated planning, resource allocation and implementation by government and external stakeholders as a way of fast tracking service delivery in order to improve the quality of life of the citizens in the nodal areas. (Mdaka, 2009)

The starting point of the ISRDS was that there has already been “significant delivery in rural development, but its impact has been limited because of the fragmented and uncoordinated approach to date”. (Ibid) The ISRDP set out to try and address the range of problems which had beset public investment programmes to date and which had resulted in “projects (that) are often characterised by poor co-ordination, poor consultation, weak participation, poor data and planning, weak institutional and regulatory mechanisms, slow delivery and weak sustainability”. (Government of South Africa, 2000: 15)
The ISRDS was structured in three phases:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>2001 - 2003</td>
<td>Pilot Phase and Pilot evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>2005 - 2009</td>
<td>Implementation &amp; MTR (Medium Term Review)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>2009 - 2014</td>
<td>Upgrade, full implementation and exit strategy for external agencies</td>
</tr>
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(Source: IDT: 2003)

The Independent Development Trust (IDT) was appointed to develop the ISRDP programme document, work with the municipalities in the designated nodes to ensure the integration of their projects within their IDPs and to prepare a nodal operational plan, while the DPLG was appointed co-ordinate and manage the programme and put in place an effective intergovernmental relations framework, and consult with the different sector departments to ensure the timeous transfer of funds. (Independent Development Trust, 2003)

The ISRP highlighted a number constraints to be addressed - namely that the line Ministries that funded the programmes within the nodal areas, also took responsibility for implementing them, while the District Councils did not have the mandate to co-ordinate the initiatives of the various Ministries. This meant that from the perspective of local communities resources “rained randomly from above.”(Government of South Africa, 2000)

The ISRP also set out “incorporate actions to integrate rural and urban areas and promote comprehensive regional development, not necessarily through the relocation or decentralisation of industry as has been attempted in the past but by strengthening rural-urban linkages”. (Ibid)

The programme was consciously designed with no budget to fund and implement projects. These were to be funded through the budgets of the relevant line departments aligned with the priorities of the Municipal IDP. Despite the emphasis on alignment and integration it appears that the programme never amounted to much more than a loose constellation of projects associated with ISRDP brand. Each of the thirteen poverty nodes identified a series of ‘anchor projects’ which became the focus of programme activity. For example in OR Tambo municipality a mixed bag of agricultural and craft related projects were identified:

- Goat and Beef Farming
- Emfundisweni Business and Skills centre
- Port St Johns & Arts Craft
- Viedgesville Development Cluster (wool improvement)
- Ngqeleni Agriculture Development Planning
- Revival of tea plantations

In the Central Karoo the focus was largely on infrastructural development:

- Water Provision and Housing
- Storm Water
- Main Sewer Pipeline
- Upgrade Municipal Building
• Main Street Upgrade  
• Flood Hiking Route  
• Multi-Purpose Centre  
• Lighting & Storm Water  
• Bus Route  
• Tourism Development,  
• Recycling  
• Arts & Crafts & Tourism route  
• Multi-Purpose Centre  
• Combi Court  
• Water Provision and Housing  

Despite an acknowledgement that “land reform was a critical part of the ISRDS” this appears conspicuously absent from the formulation of the programme design in the nodal areas with the exception of the Umzinyathi and Sekhukhune Districts where some reference is made to support for particular land reform projects. Farm workers appear to have been completely ignored as a constituency in the ISRDS, apart from an obligatory listing as a ‘stakeholder’ to be ‘mobilised.’

A total of 15 Ministers and Deputy Ministers were assigned responsibilities as political champions for the nodes to “manage the political processes between the spheres of government”. However this approach created a number of difficulties in the day to day administration of the programme:

• Ministers of equivalent seniority would not account to someone on the same level.  
• There were no mechanisms to enforce accountability for programme delivery.  
• Ministers did not work in an integrated way and rather focused on their sector responsibilities.  
• There was pressure from principals to report on tangible outcome e.g. jobs created which skewed programme management in a bid to meet required outcomes.  
• Some municipalities did not see the programme as part of their work.  
• There were few dedicated personnel to support programme implementation.  
• Indicators for monitoring and evaluation were not designed at the outset.  
• The programme lacked clear measurable objectives.  
• Overall despite the high profile political champions the programme was poorly communicated. (Mdaka, 2009)

The programme envisaged that departments would commit to co-ordinated planning and that performance contracts would secure an “integrated basket of services” from the various line departments and other participating stakeholders. However the commitment of a department to a municipal government in a node did not constitute a legal obligation. (Ibid)

This highlights the persistent challenge of making co-operative governance work. A review of Phase 1 of the programme highlighted that “different departments and agencies have provided a range of capacity building initiatives to the nodes, but – ironically, given the purpose of the ISRDP – have failed to co-ordinate their work. The result has been a lot of money thrown at nodes, without being guided by a very clear plan that specifies what capacities are needed.” (Everatt, 2004). The same review also highlights that “one of the main problems is the limited participation in the IDP process by the national sphere.”

For example it was only in 2007 that the Department of Land Affairs introduced area based plans designed to integrate land reform into IDPs. The practical roll out of the ABP process remains slow. In many municipalities where ABPs have been completed, there has been a gap between preparation of the plans, often
involving intensive processes of engagement with stakeholders at local municipal scale and their funding and implementation by the Department with the support of Provincial Agriculture and other role players. This has lead to disillusion and participation fatigue at local level.

In a recent review of lessons learnt the following issues were highlighted:

- Programme intervention at District scale can obscure the diverse realities within the local municipalities and result in a ‘one size fits all’ planning approach.
- There remains a need to properly identify and capitalise on linkages and corridors between localities with common characteristics and complementary opportunities.
- The majority of projects involved infrastructure development with multiyear funding requirements. There was minimal if any involvement of the community in implementation of such projects. People often could not see “how such interventions would address their immediate and pressing basic needs”.
- Government departments set out to support local government rather than actively partnering with it. Departments continued to implement projects in sectors that they were responsible for in silos.
- The role of provincial MECs in supporting the ISRDS was not properly spelt out. Their involvement was not obligatory.
- The ISRDP did not always take into account the priorities of provinces which had independently developed their own rural development strategies like KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape (Mdaka, 2009).

What is striking about the ISRDS is the gap between the ideas in the strategy document itself and the content of the programme which has been delivered. There also appears to be a substantial disconnect between the ideas and approaches set out in earlier strategy documents and the ISRDP. Both the earlier strategy documents and the ISRDS have emphasised the importance of integration but this has proved highly elusive in practice. This has been despite the promulgation of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005) and Guidelines for the management of Joint Programmes.

Commentators have cautioned that isolated interventions are unlikely to have any sustained impact: “Providing either land, a road, funding for SMMEs, or agricultural support in isolation will not make a significant difference to the general levels of rural capacity. Such isolated efforts will therefore be wasted. (Delius & Schirmer, 2001). Unfortunately this statement could characterise the legacy of the ISRDP and of most rural development initiatives to date.

Linking land reform, agriculture and rural development

There have been a number of initiatives, both theoretical and practical to try and make more explicit links between land reform, agriculture, the non farm rural economy and rural development. These have been characterised by their complexity, questions of what to include and what to leave out and how to design institutional arrangements that can work, given the persistence of fragmented governance and rigid standardised processes and procedures.

TIPS

At about the same time as the launch of the ISRDP the Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat (TIPS) published a paper entitled Towards a workable rural development strategy. This argued that “land reform and agricultural development are both important and worthwhile initiatives in making some difference, and tackling the inequities perpetrated by apartheid, but agriculture cannot be the central pillar of a workable rural development programme”. It proposed that “land reform and agricultural development policies must be part of a more comprehensive, integrated rural development policy”.

This highlighted the fundamental concern of how to “develop effective targeting strategies that do not involve cumbersome and expensive bureaucracies.” In this respect the strategy advocates the promotion of
organisations which represent the voices and interests of rural people as a key component contributing to the success of rural development.

Settlement and Implementation Support Strategy for Land and Agrarian Reform

The linkage between land reform and rural development has been taken up in much greater detail by the Sustainable Development Consortium who developed the Settlement and Implementation Support Strategy (SIS) for Land and Agrarian Reform on behalf of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights in the then Department of Land Affairs. This strategy is arguably one of the most comprehensive developed in South Africa post 1994 and has direct relevance for rural development programming. (Sustainable Development Consortium, 2007)

The approach taken by the strategy acknowledges the need for land reform and agricultural development to be located firmly within municipal IDPs and to form part of a broader rural development thrust.

Assessing the land reform status quo

SIS drew on research studies that have tried to quantify the land demand of landless South Africans which indicate that on the whole people require relatively small land parcels for grazing and crop production. It noted that despite this demand, there has been negligible investment in support of small scale farming systems and an ongoing reluctance to consider the subdivision of agricultural land to enable the growth of a smallholder sector. It cautioned that even given a substantial rural population and deepening levels of chronic poverty, land based livelihood activities currently contribute very little to household livelihood security in comparison with social grants and remittances.

It noted that most integrated development plans (IDPs) remain silent on land reform. The strategy explored options for the sustainable provision of a suite of appropriate settlement and implementation support services to ensure that owners and occupiers of land have secure rights, can manage risk and are able to derive livelihood benefits from their land assets.

It highlighted the absence of reliable baseline data with which to assess the impacts of the land reform programme and accurately determine its social, economic, institutional and ecological sustainability. It pointed to ongoing weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems and the selection of appropriate indicators to monitor programme impact.

It observed how across both the Restitution and Redistribution programmes post transfer support had largely failed to materialise. While development and business plans had been drawn up for many projects very few had been implemented. The combination of standardised planning and project design coupled with inappropriate assumptions about group based production had underpinned the failure of many projects to meet their stated objectives.

The SIS strategy was based on in depth research studies and departmental reviews which highlighted:

- Poor intergovernmental relations limiting the co-ordination of effective support.
- Lack of shared accountability and interdepartmental key performance indicators.
- Insufficient productive potential of the land to support those settled on it.
- Inadequate attention paid to the establishment of sustainable human settlements.
- Fragmented support for natural resource management, ensuring access to water resources and managing environmental risk.
- Poorly assessed project feasibility complicated by contested understandings of ‘viability’.
- Inappropriate business planning paradigms which frequently privilege the continuity of production of the previous land owner and assumed group based production models.
• A failure to assess the assets, capabilities, risk thresholds and stated needs of individual households.
  acquiring land and ensure individual access to productive resources in parallel with the development of
  small enterprises and joint ventures.
• A disconnect between economic planning, land rights and benefit sharing arrangements.
• Declining agricultural output year on year on land acquired through land reform.
• Low levels of benefit being derived from productive activities.

The strategy warned that without urgent and significant investment in settlement and implementation
support services, existing post settlement support capacity will be overwhelmed as the pace of the land reform
picks up, which could place the entire land reform programme at risk of expensive failure.

It provided an in depth review of the international experience which highlighted the need for a strong central
government able to effectively decentralise support services as part of a ‘transversal process’ which integrates
sectoral support into territorial, area based programmes.

**Key elements in the proposed SIS framework**
The strategy proposed:

• Reframing land reform as a joint programme of government with the active involvement of land reform
  participants, civil society and the private sector.
• Measures to secure effective alignment of government actors in different spheres using the draft Guidelines
  for the Management of Joint Programmes recently gazetted (Notice 492 of 2007) in terms of the
  Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (No. 13 of 2005).
• Utilising area based plans to locate planning and support needs within a clear spatial and fiscal framework
  within municipal IDPs.
• Measures to determine, secure and manage land rights and ensure ongoing land rights management
  support from the state.
• Measures to provide appropriate project based training and learning, and strengthen capacity and
  institutional development.
• Measures to improve access to social development benefits – health care, education, reasonable levels of
  service and mitigate impacts of HIV/AIDS.
• Measures to ensure integrated natural resource management and sustainable human settlements.
• Comprehensive front end services to enhance individual household livelihoods, develop enterprises, ensure
  access to finance, technical and business support.

It argued that these and other functions should be facilitated and enabled by the formation of dedicated
Settlement and Implementation Support (SIS) entities, at local and district municipal scales interacting with
local associations representing the interests of land reform beneficiaries and rural people.

The SIS strategy aimed to implode the ‘silos’ which currently characterise the delivery of government services
and placed a premium on securing effective institutional and spatial co-ordination. It distinguished between:

• The provision of front end support services to people with access to land.
• Mechanisms to practically co-ordinate support at municipal and provincial scales.
• The provision of National back office support to create an enabling environment for land reform and by
  implication rural development.

It noted that people acquiring and already occupying land must be able to clearly determine and manage their
land and resource rights to enable equitable access and ensure that key social development can be met.
The strategy set out ways to secure substantial improvements in the social, economic and environmental quality of existing and future planned human settlements associated with land reform projects including:

- improving access to environmentally sound basic services;
- undertaking processes of township establishment where feasible to facilitate municipal responsibility for ongoing service delivery and maintenance;
- developing district service plans within municipal IDPs to ensure servicing of remote settlements where township establishment is not feasible and ring fencing funds for this purpose;
- supporting the establishment and training of community based service entities to deliver and maintain essential services in areas where township establishment is not possible.

At the same time the strategy set out to ensure that land reform (and by implication agriculture and rural development initiatives) actively embraced the sustainable development imperatives contained in the National Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 1985). It emphasised that economic and socio-political systems are reliant on the health of supporting ecosystem services.

The strategy notes that individual projects and area based planning approaches necessarily involve all aspects of environmental management. This includes the management of water resources and wetlands, grazing and arable land, forests and woodlands, biodiversity and threatened species, mineral resources, protected areas, fire, drought and flood risk. Key elements of this strategy component include:

- alignment of the various provincial and national departments responsible for different aspects of environmental management to enable the development of integrated environmental management strategies at local level;
- a much greater emphasis on risk identification and management within project and area planning processes particularly with respect to drought, flood, fire and other hazards, including the medium term effects of climate change.

SIS proposed a new livelihoods and enterprise planning paradigm that simultaneously:

- identifies measures to improve individual household livelihoods and expand their asset base;
- addresses small scale individual and group enterprise development;
- supports large scale capital and management intensive joint venture and partnership arrangements.

It proposed that partnerships between specialised development agencies, organised agriculture, commodity organisations and private sector consortia would be better positioned to provide the sophisticated business management and technical support services required for larger scale ventures.

Drawing on the concept of value chain analysis SIS proposed ways to link different projects together within an area to secure inputs and maximize competitive advantage through joint marketing initiatives. The strategy emphasised the importance of local market scoping studies and the provision of ongoing market intelligence to ensure that producers can assess the relative returns and risks associated with different production options.

The strategy proposed a new approach to the sourcing of planning and implementation support services. Currently government issues short term tenders to commission plans of various types. Once the plans have been prepared the service provider is paid and has no further responsibility for implementation. The strategy argues that this approach is of limited benefit and should be replaced by longer term performance related service contracts where service providers and consortia take responsibility for planning, implementation and
skills transfer for a cluster of projects within an area. This will have the effect of stimulating the growth of new businesses which can provide technical and business support services, mentoring and on-the-job training. It will also improve the quality and realism of the plans produced as project failure would impact on the ability to secure further work.

Although the SIS strategy was officially launched by the then Minister of Land Affairs, who appealed to all involved in land reform “not to interpret the SIS strategy as ‘yet another concept’ but as the science of land reform, because it is a product of our past and current occurrences.” there is little evidence that the SIS strategy has enabled a more integrated approach to land reform which locates it as part of a broader programme of rural development.

Elements of the strategy did inform the design of the Land and Agrarian Reform Project – a joint project of the Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs. However it appears that LARP has now been eclipsed by the new focus on rural development and the priority of poverty in the former communal areas.

Guidelines for Delivering Effective Settlement and Implementation Support for Land Reform in the Western Cape

The SIS strategy was translated into a set of Guidelines tailored specifically for the needs of the Western Cape. This project was initiated by the Restitution Steering Committee, convened by the Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing in 2008.

The Guidelines development process highlighted the fragile nature of intergovernmental relations in the Province where political contestation has made co-operative governance extremely difficult.

The Guidelines (Phuhlisani Solutions, 2008) highlight the multifaceted nature of the land reform programme which encompasses urban and rural restitution, the acquisition and redistribution of land through different grant mechanisms, acquisition of municipal commonage, negotiation of share equity agreements, implementation of the Extension of Security of Tenure Act, implementation of the Land Titles Adjustment Act, processes for securing tenure in the former Coloured Rural Areas and on church land, area based planning, farmer support and development. They locate land reform within area based plans integrated into municipal IDPs. They highlight the potential of land reform to constitute a core component of a broader rural development strategy.

The Guidelines note that land reform (and by implication rural development) take place in a highly urbanised province which is experiencing the fastest annual population growth rate in the country partly due to in-migration. They note that the shadow of rapid urbanisation is the urbanisation of poverty, but highlight that this is offset by high poverty rates amongst agricultural households.

In the Western Cape particular regional economies are much more dependent on agriculture, forestry and fishing than the contribution of these sectors to the economy of the province as a whole would suggest. Agricultural land prices in the province are disproportionately higher than in any other area of the country, accelerating at more than 10% per annum.

At the same time there is increasing recognition of the vulnerability of the agricultural and rural economy to the projected impacts of climate change. Already the demand for water in the province is growing at 3% per annum and is fast outstripping supply. Agriculture currently uses 60% of the water in the province and it is projected that agricultural water use needs are likely to increase sharply with rising temperatures.

The Guidelines attempted to provincialise the National SIS strategy and provide practical mechanisms for implementation. However to date contested intergovernmental relations within the Province appear to have stalled their uptake and implementation.
New agricultural policy

In the 1995 White Paper on Agriculture defined a farmer, irrespective of his/her race, gender or scale of production, as a land user who engages productively in agriculture, either on a full-time or on part-time basis and regardless of whether agriculture forms the principal source of income.

It critiqued the conventional transfer of technology approach to extension and argued for a holistic system. It observed that in the conventional transfer of technology systems the extension worker passes on scientific information to the farmer. This approach has the limitation that the imparted information may not be relevant to the farmers’ conditions, or may only partially address farmers’ needs. In a holistic system, researchers, extension workers and farmers are partners seeking solutions to problems facing farmers. This envisaged that “researchers would spend more time in the farmers’ field, and liaise with farmers far more often than in the conventional model” and acknowledge that that “farmers already have useful knowledge, especially of their own conditions and constraints.” It also called for recognition of the “greater vulnerability of resource-poor farmers to risk.” The White Paper called for a significant, rapid reorientation of research from commercial agriculture, to a new focus on “basic research in the context of resource-poor farmers”. (Department of Agriculture, 1995)

It noted that “previously, the Government had two parallel extension services—one for commercial agriculture and another in the self-governing territories. Extension and training have not really been effective in the self-governing territories for a number of reasons, including an attempt to model extension services on the system used in commercial farming, and inadequate training and support for extension officers.” (Ibid)

It called for an integrated extension service and a new model of participatory extension, in which the extension worker is trained to act as a facilitator to replace the present transfer-of-technology model. It argued that “a well-integrated retraining and reorientation programme needs to be formulated if the capacity of small-scale farming is to be enhanced through appropriate support services.” (Ibid) In practice however there remained a divide between extension officers who previously serviced commercial farmers and those who had been formerly associated with the homeland system.

The white paper highlighted the need for gendered policy and extension services and the need for food security amongst South Africa’s rapidly urbanising population. The extent to which the White Paper has been informed the thrust of agricultural support services is questionable. Ruth Hall (2009) argues forcefully that:

“The blame for the dismal track record of production on redistributed farms must fall largely on the national and provincial departments of agriculture, which have simply failed to come to the party. Despite the introduction of some agricultural support and funds for land reform beneficiaries in recent years, the agriculture departments have remained biased in favour of commercial farming.”

Rethinking the two agricultures thesis

Given South Africa’s history it is not surprising that a dominant narrative emerged which proposes that there are ‘two agricultures’ in South Africa. This is consistent with the emergence of the discourse on the Second Economy which we discuss further below. However the two agricultures narrative oversimplifies a much more complex reality as it counterposes large scale capital and management intensive commercial agriculture with low input smallholder and subsistence systems. It has been argued that this rendering has lost much of its explanatory power as it presents the extremes at either end of a production continuum. In the process it overlooks the diversity of the agricultural systems, subsectors and scales of production which lie between. It also fails to take into account upstream input, supply and service opportunities and downstream processing and value adding opportunities associated with agriculture. (Ibid)

Over the last 20 years, there has been accelerating deregulation and liberalisation of the agricultural sector. In 2002 StatsSA reported that there were 45 818 active commercial farming units in South Africa which reflected
a decrease of 12,162 farming units since the 1993 census. Distribution of income is highly skewed between these units. Currently 20% percent of commercial farms produce 80% of the total value of production. Of the total of 45,818 farming units only 2,330 had an annual income of more than R4 million, while 23,428 had an annual income of less than R300 000. Within the 2,330 high earning units there are 8 agribusiness companies with a turnover of more than a billion rand a year. (Hall, 2007)

Overall the sector has undergone rapid restructuring. Between 1988 and 1998 employment on farms declined by 20% - a loss of 140,000 regular jobs. (Simbi & Aliber, 2000) During this period it has been argued that the shedding of permanent workers was “in large measure being driven by ‘non-economic considerations.’ Retrenchments and evictions were driven more by concerns in the agricultural sector about land reform and impacts of future legislation”. (Simbi & Aliber, 2000: 4)

However subsequently it appears that market conditions and a mounting cost/price squeeze have contributed to further job shedding. Changes in land use from agriculture to game farming and private reserves have also contributed to job shedding while overall casualisation of the labour force has increased from 33% - 49% between 1996 – 2002.

The number of paid workers employed by the formal agricultural sector decreased by 152,445 (13.9 percent) between 1993 (1,093,265) and 2002 (940,820). The commercial agricultural sector paid R6,216 million in salaries and wages for the year to February 2002. This represents 11.7 percent of the gross farming income generated by the agricultural sector in that financial year, and 13.8 percent of total expenditure for the same period. (Statistics South Africa, 2005)

However it is important to note that these trends are not uniform throughout the sector. For example the wine industry has been transformed from a domestically focused sector into a rapidly expanding export industry. While the rest of the agricultural sector has shed large numbers of jobs, employment in the wine industry has stayed largely constant and has even expanded. (Tregurtha, 2005) However consistent with trends across the sector the nature of employment has changed with the increasing use of labour bureau’s and the increasing casualisation of labour.

The value of policy transfers to South African agricultural producers, as measured by the OECD Producer Support Estimate (PSE), equalled 5% of gross farm receipts on average in 2000–03 compared to 31% in the European Union. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006) In 2001 state spending on agriculture amounted to 2.5 billion – a decline of 45% from 1998. (Vink & Kirsten, 2003)

While in South Africa government support for agriculture has been substantially reduced, farmers in the European Union and the United States have benefited from increased state support. There has been a 15% rise in agricultural subsidies to producers in the developed world between the late 1980s and 2004, while South Africa’s general economic tariffs were reduced from 28% to 7.1%. (Ambert & Hornby, 2006) The average import tariff level was lowered by one-third between 1994 and 1999. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006)

In 2005, the Chairman of the South African Agricultural Machinery Association noted that South Africa was able to impose a 72% import tariff on wheat and 50% on maize in terms of prevailing World Trade Organisation (WTO) tariff and trade agreements. However South African tariffs for these crops were pitched at 2% and 13% respectively. (South African Agricultural Machinery Association, 2005)

High input farming systems, rapidly escalating fuel, fertiliser and input prices, exacerbated by dramatically reduced state support for agriculture have combined to force out many smaller producers and narrow the margins for those who remain outside the 20% top set.
These factors also make life very difficult for new entrants to agriculture and land reform beneficiaries, let alone those who remain largely invisible in the small holder and survivalist sectors.

“These are found in a wide range of locations, including “deep rural” areas of the former homelands, in townships and cities, and on commercial farms, and consists mainly of production of staple foods for household consumption. Relatively few products find their way into local or other markets. Production may take place in gardens, demarcated fields or on open rangelands. It is highly differentiated by race, class and gender, with large numbers of very poor black women producing purely for household consumption and a small “élite”, mainly men, producing on a much greater scale. Many smallholders would not consider themselves to be “farmers” in the conventional sense. Few records of production and trade are kept by either producers or external agencies, and the value and volume of smallholder production that appears in the literature is probably only a fraction of the actual output”. (Cousins & Lahiff, 2005)

The need for a more nuanced understanding of agriculture and rural livelihoods

With the deregulation of agriculture, the complexity of the South African agricultural economy and the insertion of a land reform programme there is a need for a new approach which engages more effectively with the new social, economic and political landscape as well as the mounting ecological challenges facing the different domains within the agricultural sector.

This is best conceptualised as a continuum which maps this diversity and which provide which also capture potential for innovation. Global discussions on the future of agriculture increasingly focus on an ‘innovation continuum’ or an ‘agri-innovation chain’ which examines the full range of products and services in the agriculture and food processing value chain ranging from the development of inputs for production, flowing through all aspects of production, and on to processing and marketing to consumption. (Agriculture & Agrifood Canada, 2008; World Bank, 2006)

In between the top end, dominated by large scale capital and technology intensive agribusiness, and the informal micro producers at the other end of the agricultural continuum, lies a complex mix of agricultural activity which includes industrial dairy, poultry, pigs and beef feed lots, plantation and orchard agriculture, viticulture, family owned mixed farms, extensive large and small stock production, participants in outgrower schemes of different kinds, small-scale producers in the growing organic sector and smallholder producers who are characterised as the “missing middle”. (Hall, 2009)

Land reform beneficiaries are to be found across this continuum, while those producers which operate in the margins in the former homelands and within the townships and informal settlements on the rapidly expanding urban areas remain largely excluded from agricultural support other than through standardised packages intended to enhance household food security.

Retraining extension staff

One of the components of the RDP was the Broadening Access to Agriculture Thrust (BATAT) which argued for called for the strengthening of both the curriculum and standard of the available training in agriculture and the opening up of agricultural training and opportunities for all. The actual process of developing the agriculture education and training (AET) strategy started in 2002.

The National Education and Training Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (Department of Agriculture, 2005) highlights the multiple and serious challenges which must be overcome before there is a well trained cadre of extension staff in South Africa.

In 2005 the national corps of public extension staff was approximately 2800. The ratio of extension staff to commercial and subsistence farmers was estimated as follows:
Commercial farmers: 1: 21
Subsistence farmers: 1: 857
Combined: 1: 878

The strategy observed that these ratios are not particularly high by global standards and that it was not the numbers of extension staff which was the critical factor but rather their capacity to deliver. The report also highlighted other factors impacting on the effectiveness of extension services including:

- distance between farmers;
- the extent of the geographic areas covered by extension workers;
- low levels of client literacy;
- the limited practical functioning of local farmer groups and associations.

With respect to the recruitment of young people for careers in agriculture the strategy noted that agriculture has a negative image as a career choice in the eyes of the youth. It is seen as the "work" of the poor and the elderly and not as something that could be profitable. The strategy noted that Agriculture has been removed from the curriculum at primary school level and that where agriculture is offered at secondary school level (NQF levels 2-4) it delivers poorly.

High schools offering agriculture are often poorly equipped and lack qualified teachers. “Failure rates are high, and there is often a punitive association with studying agriculture in the previously disadvantaged areas of the country.” (Ibid) Formal agricultural training and education is very poorly controlled, both in terms of curriculum content and qualifications of educators, while the informal is to a large extent untested in terms of quality. Unsurprisingly a large number of learners who have diplomas and degrees in agriculture are, for a variety of reasons, unable to find jobs.

Due to low student numbers and other factors, some Colleges of Agriculture are shifting their focus from educating Extension Practitioners to training farmers.

In 2005 there were some eleven (11) Colleges of Agriculture, six (6) Universities of Technology and nine (9) universities offering various tertiary AET programmes that were nationally accredited. Secondary AET is provided by approximately 1500 secondary schools.

Overall much agricultural education and training focuses largely on primary production rather than focusing on farming as a business. The strategy highlighted the crucial need for general agricultural economic skills, as well as those related to agricultural business, farm planning, farm management, enterprise management, marketing, finance, credit and risk management, and human resources management.

The strategy argues for the concept of agricultural extension to be expanded to provide agricultural extension workers with capacity and the skills to assist communities to deal with the effects of rural change, the impact of HIV/AIDS on the rural economic base, and the growing vulnerability of household livelihood systems.

The strategy proposed the creation of a National Agricultural Education and Training Forum as the initial implementation agent. This was launched on 20th November 2006 by the Minister of Agriculture. In 2007 provincial forums were launched in certain provinces including the Western Cape and Eastern Cape. However there is likely to be a long lead time before this initiative gets results.

However a number of initiatives are under way in different provinces often with foreign donor support. In the Eastern Cape farmer support centres are planed which will utilise farmer to farmer extension methods. The
Cape Agricultural Programme on Rural Innovations (CAPRI) Programme funded by the Dutch Government has trained Extension Officers on Social facilitation Skills.

Assessing extension effectiveness

In the period post 1994 the Department of Agriculture was restructured and new provincial Departments of Agriculture were established. Some commentators have argued that “these provincial departments display many of the weaknesses of the former homeland Departments in their inability to maintain support services to farmers,” with the result that most commercial farmers have switched to privately provided services. (Vink & Kirsten, 2003)

It seems that there remain fundamental questions about the appropriate role of extension support. Many extension officers appear to have become project managers “and are spending almost 90% of the time, planning, developing business plans, collecting quotations, receiving equipment, writing status reports, and expenditure reports just to name a few. The question that must be asked, “is this extension’s role?” (Last, 2006). Last also sounds a warning about the inflexibility of project designs and the fact that project budgets and enterprise sophistication are often mismatched with participant’s management and technical capacities.

At the same time new departments lack adequate extension and support services available to assist new smallholder farmers. This remains a current problem which was acknowledged by the former Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs. She noted that a benchmarked extension profiling study undertaken by ITCA exposed that South Africa has approximately one-third of the required number of extension officers to meet its development targets and that 80% of the current extension staff are not adequately trained.

Developing an appropriate extension approach

According to the University of Pretoria who were commissioned by the Department of Agriculture to develop an appropriate approach to extension, 63% of farmers judged that their extension worker had no advice of value to offer, while 37% percent conceded that they sometimes have information of some value. (Duvel, 2003)

The report recommended that there needed to be dedicated support provided to extension staff which should include the establishment of an Extension Knowledge Information and Research Centre which should be outsourced to, or performed in partnership with existing institutes. It highlighted that “a major problem in the Department of Agriculture is the frequent restructuring, usually with every change in leadership or senior management. This is invariably associated with high costs, delay and interruption of delivery programmes and usually represents mere ad hoc reforms rather than the pursuit of measured, comprehensive and long-term restructuring”. (Duvel, 2003: 11)

The report noted that given the low qualification and competence of extension workers, an extensive and structured support programme should be developed and implemented (Duvel, 2003:21) The report also recommended that a national M & E Program should be regarded as “non-negotiable and receive the highest priority”. (Ibid)

The report recommended a Participatory Programmed Extension Approach (PPEA) for South Africa consisting of five linked programmes:

- extension planning and projects;
- extension linkage and coordination;
- knowledge and support;
- education and training;
- monitoring and evaluation.
The state of the extension service
A detailed report entitled “The state of extension and advisory service within the agricultural Public Service: A Need for Recovery” (Department of Agriculture, 2008) provides a sober assessment of the state of the nation’s extension services. This report flows from the Extension indaba held earlier in the year. The section below summarises key information from the report.

The report noted that the “capacity of provinces to deliver quality extension services to farmers varies and to some it is already suffocating”. Extension and advisory services personnel are expected to work with a wide range of clients flowing from subsistence to large scale commercial.

Extension staff employed per province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCE</th>
<th>BASE LINE</th>
<th>PLAN FOR 2008/09</th>
<th>EXPECTED NO. OF PERSONNEL BY MARCH 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu Natal</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2152</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>2541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Mankazana, 2008)

Extension support to land reform
The failure to provide adequate settlement and implementation support which includes extension services has long been recognised as an issue. The evidence from the National Settlement and Implementation Support Strategy for Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa (Sustainable Development Consortium, 2007) confirmed the low level of support provided on the majority of projects, which given the state of the extension service discussed above should not come as a surprise.

In a review of projects in the North-West province (Kirsten & Machethe, 2005) it was found that Projects received limited advice and support from the PDoA. The Department provided ‘advice’ to 47% of projects and ‘support’ to 5%, whilst 49% indicated that they had not received any help from the Department.
A more detailed study of 43 projects revealed a significant decline in land under dryland cultivation year on year. Many projects with irrigation potential had problems with infrastructure that made this asset impossible to utilise. Forty-nine percent of projects were producing no marketable produce. Only 7% indicated that they had standing contracts for the marketing of their produce. The vast majority of project members (72% of projects) have not received any training in marketing matters, while (87%) felt that there is a need for skills development in this area.

In a review of rural restitution projects CASE found that technical assistance on the 179 projects reviewed was totally inadequate and that very often the government officials did not have appropriate skills to provide the necessary technical assistance. (CASE, 2005)

Given that current frameworks seek to integrate land and agrarian reform as key components of rural development (see below) the failure to conceptualise and provide adequate support services remains a key obstacle to be overcome.

The second economy strategy

The strategy was developed within the Presidency and emerged out of ASGISA which prioritised strategies to address the ‘second economy’. The strategy makes it clear however that there is only one economy which can be conceptualised as a continuum with the developed formal economy at one end and the unemployed and the marginalised at the other. (The Second Economy Strategy Project, 2009) The inheritance and continuing prevalence of structural inequality creates two parallel worlds: “One modern, smart, professional, efficient, and globally oriented; the other neglected, messy unskilled, downtrodden, and thriving on crime and violence.” (Terreblanche, 2002 : 425 - 426)

The key challenge at the heart of most government and private sector initiatives targeting the second economy is that “they are not designed to impact at the scale required to make a difference at a societal level – many have targets of below 50,000 people, with few actually reaching this level.” (The Second Economy Strategy Project, 2009) The strategy argues for a different approach to programme design and delivery “so as to achieve a more systemic, societal-level impact.”

Speaking at a recent Rural Development Think Tank, Josephilda Nhlapo and Neva Makgetla argued that to date:

“There has been a tendency to focus on ‘projects’ that leave economic patterns unchanged. This is the key weakness identified by the Second Economy Strategy Project. Rural poverty is not just a legacy: it is being re-made – reconstituted as a result of persistent systemic problems. This requires a role for the state in shaping markets and enterprise development. We have to do something about the real economy: industrial policy, trade policy, in order to have an impact on conditions in rural areas.”

(Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009)

The strategy questions the traditional approaches to stimulating development through micro enterprise development and argues that small scale manufacturers and producers cannot compete with mass produced branded goods which have penetrated through retail networks to the most remote areas of the country.

It identifies some opportunities for the production of fresh produce but notes that these “tend to be relatively small in scale unless they’re part of more formal value chains.” (The Second Economy Strategy Project, 2009) These factors restrict South Africa’s informal sector to a reliance on small scale retail activity, on the fringe of the core economy where growth and expansion are structurally limited.

Given this highly constrained economic context the strategy identifies two clear cross-cutting priorities:
• investment in childhood nutrition and early childhood development.
• provision of grants and access to basic services which have had the greatest impacts on poverty and inequality.

In rural settings the emphasis should be on “gaps in coverage, such as access to basic services in rural areas and informal settlements, and access to affordable public transport.” Support for self employment requires “more focus on the ‘patient support’ required to turn ‘start-ups’ into ‘stay-ups’, and more caution in promoting self-employment as a solution for all.”

The strategy argues that measures to “develop a smallholder sector and strengthen subsistence agriculture face many challenges and start off a low base: but their potential impact on poverty and on rural employment makes this investment - and the associated risk - imperative.”

Developing a smallholder sector requires institutional support that enables economies of scale, and facilitates access to appropriate business services and markets. The strategy argues that clarification of tenure arrangements in the former Bantustans can assist in the increased utilisation of available arable land. It highlights measures similar to the SIS strategy discussed while also prioritising:

• new technologies for water harvesting and low volume irrigation;
• access to value chains and markets;
• expanded and improved quality of jobs, living and working conditions in the commercial farming sector;
• speedy resolution of outstanding land claims;
• human capital development;
• provision of basic services in rural areas;
• carbon trading opportunities;
• targeted use of the new Community work programme which prioritises useful work at local level determined by local planning for a.

The strategy also identifies the need to strengthen association, organisation and co-operation by marginalised economic actors including producers, commodity groups, street traders and consumers because in certain contexts (eg agro-processing,) access to wider markets may require co-ordination and co-operation between small producers in order to create economies of scale, or to reach the necessary volume and quality requirements. This creates opportunities for forms of business association and co-operative development. (The Presidency - Republic of South Africa, 2009)

However Nhlapo and Magetla point out that reallocation of resources will be needed if we are serious about promoting rural development. (Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009) Per capita budget figures for provincial agriculture allocations have risen markedly in recent years. However it is still only about 5% of the total budget which is insufficient to get major changes in rural development.

Significant rural urban disparities exist. Municipalities without their own revenue (in former homelands) have nothing to spend. Per capita spending ranges from R250 per person/yr in former homeland municipalities to about R4000 pp/yr in major urban centres. (Ibid)

The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme

The restructuring of government after the 2009 elections resulted in a separation of Land Affairs and Agriculture which had been two departments under one Minister since 1994. In their place were created two new Ministries: the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests
and Fisheries each with their own Ministers. At the same water and environmental affairs were twinned in a new Ministry.

This reshuffle was presented by the President as evidence of his commitment to honour the ANC’s manifesto for the 2009 national elections which featured ‘rural development, food security and land reform’ as one of its top five priorities. (Hall, 2009)

The recently announced CRDP hinges on a three-pronged strategy:

- coordinated and integrated broad-based agrarian transformation;
- an improved land reform programme;
- strategic investments in economic and social infrastructure.
  (Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2009)

Some of the objectives of the agrarian transformation strategy include but are not limited to:

- facilitating the establishment of business initiatives, rural and agro-industries, cooperatives, cultural initiatives and vibrant local markets;
- empowerment of rural communities to be self-reliant and able to take charge of their destiny;
- development of a mitigation and adaptation strategies to reduce vulnerabilities with special reference to climate change, erosion, flooding and other natural disasters;
- use of appropriate technologies, modern approaches and indigenous knowledge systems;
- increased production and sustainable use of natural resources;
- livestock farming and related value chain development (exploring all possible species for food and economic activity);
- cropping and related value chain development (exploring all possible species, especially indigenous plants, for food and economic activity);
- strengthening rural livelihoods for vibrant local economic development;
- food security, dignity and improved quality of life for each rural household. (Ibid)

Rural development focuses on, but is not limited to:

- the establishment of rural business, agro-industries, co-operatives, etc;
- the empowerment of rural people and communities;
- the revitalization of old, and creation of new economic, social, and information and communication infrastructure, public amenities and facilities in villages and small rural towns;
- social mobilization to enable rural communities to take initiatives;
- establishment of savings clubs and cooperatives for economic activities, wealth creation and productive use of assets;
- access to resourced clinics;
- non-farm activities for strengthening of rural livelihoods;
- leadership training, social facilitation and conscientisation for CRDP and socio-economic independence.

The CRDP sets out to integrate land reform into the broader rural development agenda while simultaneously improving the different elements of the programme. As with previous strategies the CRDP lays emphasis on co-ordination. The complexity of this is partly captured in the diagram below.
A number of concerns have been expressed about the new institutional arrangements. It has been argued that the separation of Agriculture and Land reform and the ‘bifurcation’ of state policy which pursues the transformation of commercial agriculture through BEE and other mechanisms to deracialise ownership but which “leaves patterns of production and employment – and ultimately the impact on the economy unchanged.” (Hall, 2009)

Given the crosscutting nature of rural development and the complexity of the co-ordination requirements other commentators are concerned that the shift of co-ordination responsibility from the Presidency to a new and relatively junior department will make this task impossible to achieve. At the same time there are concerns that the separation of Agriculture from Land Reform and Rural development could leave “support to
the remainder of less ‘viable’ land reform farms (from a market-oriented point of view) ... to an under-
resource Rural Development and Land Reform Ministry”. (Greenberg, 2009)

Currently the MRDLR has chosen to select eight pilots to test and refine its approach which will run for an a
minimum of two years. The intention is to scale up from the pilot sites to other sites nationally but linked to
the overall planning frameworks within a province.

The CRDP currently faces a number of serious additional constraints:

- Currently there is no money allocated to the programme with the exception of R505 million which the
  DRDLR has reprioritized from its current budget for the design and pilot stage.
- There is a very limited human resource base within MRDLR to give effect to the programme.

There will need to be significant changes in the political and practical prioritisation given to land reform and
rural development if the CRDP is to avoid the trap of what the ISRDP referred to as ‘Potemkin Villages’ – the
creation of show case projects which succeed precisely because they are pilots and attract disproportionate
levels of capacity, support and finance as a result.

The approach and priority given to rural development will be an indicator of the extent to which government is
serious about restructuring agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The approach can perpetuate the two
economies paradigm where “MAFF will deal with ‘wealth’ and ‘growth’ with respect to commercial agriculture
while MRDLR assumes responsibility for alleviating conditions in the former Bantustans which become
synonymous with ‘the rural areas’.

Overarching questions

This review has distilled thirty key questions from the literature which can serve as a checklist for a rural
development strategy design process:

1. What can we learn from previous rural development failures?
2. What is the vision for rural development?
3. Who is rural development for?
4. What is the vision for the future of agriculture – in the former Bantustans and outside of it?
5. What are the core strategic choices that the state must make about the future of the rural economy
given that rural development strategy is being developed in a context of a fiscal squeeze and a shortage of
human capital?
6. Who is the driver of the rural development programme?
7. What needs to be done to create an enabling policy environment nationally, provincially and locally?
8. How to best integrate rural development strategy with national economic and social development plans?
9. How is rural development to be financed?
10. How do we assess the impact of investment in health, education, roads, energy and delivery of basis
    services in promoting rural development?
11. How much emphasis should there be on agriculture and how much on the rural non-farm economy?
12. Should the national approach be to facilitate or slow urban migration?
13. How far should strategy be spatially focused and prioritised? What can be done to secure the best
    impacts in remote and peri-urban rural areas?
14. How to acknowledge differentiation between
Households which are **stepping up**: These are surplus producers well connected to markets. The strategy here is to invest in them and support them directly. Mobilise into producer coops and so on. But at the same time we have to recognise that they are a minority of households.

Households which are **stepping out**: These semi- or sub-subsistence households which are diversifying their households. In order to support them effectively we need to understand the rural non-farm economy, opportunities for self-employment and petty trading, rural-urban linkages etc.

Households which are **hanging in**: These are very poor, skipped generation households. Their objective is survival. They are not going to ‘graduate’. They require social protection and social grants. Social grants create independence and enable people to make choices. Direct cash transfers are proving to be much better than food aid with a higher return on investment. They support local markets and economies. (Devereux in Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009)

15. What are the most appropriate approaches to mobilisation which build on a more nuanced understanding of ‘community’ and ‘participation’?

16. How to best meet a diverse range of support needs including improved working and living conditions for farm workers and dwellers, meeting the household food security needs of people in the survivalist sector, growing small producers and supporting land reform beneficiaries; identifying and investing in the “missing middle” that lies between people on the margins and the large, capital and management intensive agricultures focused on large scale production and export growth?

17. How must extension and research services adapt to address these different needs?

18. What are the key interventions in the rural non-farm economy?

19. How to evaluate the limits of ecological systems and develop adaption strategies to mitigate environmental and climate change?

20. How to assess the employment opportunities in agriculture, agro-processing, tourism, public service, public works in rural areas and identify what can be done to enhance and diversify these?

21. How to best support and strengthen local government to perform rural development related functions?

22. How to develop an effective mechanism for horizontal alignment of all the various initiatives and strategies which had been developed which are of relevance to rural development? “If you are going to coordinate, how are you going to do it differently from how it has been done for the past 15 years?” (Manona in Phuhlisani and PLAAS, 2009)

23. What rural institutions need to be in place to support rural development?

24. To what extent is agricultural development the best way to reduce rural poverty?

25. How to identify up and downstream livelihood opportunities and engage with the seasonality of agricultural work in certain agricultural sectors?

26. How to create an accessible knowledge base for rural development and a learning process which enables structured reflection on planned interventions?

27. What is the suite of support services required to stimulate rural development and how can they be provided sustainably?

28. Who is to provide these services?

29. What do we need to further research?

30. How do we best learn from research and practice and use these learning to promote constructive policy dialogue?

**Conclusion**
This review has attempted to summarise a vast literature spanning theory international and local development history, policy and practice in a very short period of time. Inevitably there will be gaps and omissions. Hopefully the review will assist the Drakenstein Municipality in reflecting on its draft rural development strategy.

There remains a huge gap between the numerous strategies and framework documents developed by different state and non-state development actors and the national and local capacity to align them and effect their implementation. Strategy documents tend to generate lists of questions, priorities and potential interventions. Turning these lists into locally meaningful programmes requires active participation of those whose lives are affected, coupled with new ways of transdisciplinary learning and adaptive management which enable different specialists and discipline engage with ordinary people and each other to mutually learn and plan.

Collaborative adaptive management paradigms are emerging which starts from the basic premise that the inherent ecological, economic, social and institutional uncertainties in complex decision-making, makes it impossible to immediately identify the "best" options and alternatives. These only emerge out of a more experimental approach of ‘learning as you go’, which is as much concerned about understanding the people’s changing needs and the evolving operational context and the systems which unpin it, as it is about meeting traditional programme goals. (Pierce Colfer et al., 2004).

It is suggested that collaborative and adaptive management approaches will best assist in making sense of the complex task of determining local priorities and investment choices which will result in meaningful rural development in the Drakenstein municipal area.

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Department of Agriculture. (2008). *The state of extension and advisory service within the agricultural Public Service: A need for recovery*.


