

# Strategies to overcome poverty and inequality: Towards Carnegie III

3 - 7 September 2012

## A call for participation

The University of Cape Town, with the support of the National Planning Commission, is co-ordinating a national conference to be held in the first week of September 2012, in order to stimulate deeper thinking about strategies to overcome poverty and inequality in South Africa. This is seen as the first stage of the third Carnegie inquiry in this country.

Anybody wishing to submit either an academic paper or some other presentation [such as a film or description of an NGO's work in a particular place] is invited to submit a synopsis [300-500 words] outlining the proposed topic to the conference co-ordinators not later than 16 June 2012. Background to the conference as well as further details regarding dates for the submission of final papers are spelt out below and on the conference website [www.carnegie3.org.za](http://www.carnegie3.org.za)

## Purpose of the conference

Inequality, like poverty, has many faces. The conference will seek to focus attention on understanding the lived experiences of inequality and the causes and dimensions of persistent inequality, and will consider policies and actions that are aimed at significantly reducing inequality and poverty in both the short- and long-term. This is a challenge that involves all South Africans, organised in many different ways.

Taking seriously the President's call for a 'national dialogue' about the future, and acknowledging the mandate of tertiary institutions to engage in socially responsive research, the purpose of the conference is to provide a platform for sharing and debate amongst academic researchers, government and practitioners. We look forward to welcoming participants from universities and NGOs; from Government at national, provincial and local levels; from trade unions, faith-based organisations and the business sector.

The conference will seek to move towards new ways of considering poverty and inequality, focusing less on describing the problems, and more on practical strategies to overcome them. This requires shifts in thinking, which the conference hopes to stimulate by combining a focus on academic and applied research with a set of demonstrations from the NGO, Business and Trade Union world.

## Towards a new paradigm for research and intervention

The conference builds squarely on previous descriptive, analytical and policy work around the country by different institutions (including government), numerous individuals and at various conferences in recent years. It will seek to bring together multiple discourses in a way that allows cross-pollination of information and ideas. It will further debates by focusing on practical strategies

to overcome poverty and inequality which mobilise the energies of people at all levels of society in creative and effective ways, and which address structural poverty and inequality and shifting power relations. Inter-disciplinary papers will be particularly welcome.

The NPC's National Development Plan presents a future vision and begins to outline a path to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The Plan is a starting point, but as the NPC acknowledges, it requires extensive engagement to deepen and refine the strategies, and a collaborative effort to achieve its goals.

The conference will seek to provide a platform for serious and deep debate about difficult policy choices that must be made in tackling these issues of poverty, inequality and the underlying facts of massive unemployment. Thus, for example:

- Should the government promote further urbanisation or seek to stimulate growth in rural areas?
- What would be the consequences of a widespread subsidy to the youth wage?
- Is increased tariff protection a feasible way of generating more jobs in the country? At what cost?
- What practical steps can be taken in the short run to meet the challenges of literacy & numeracy in so many of the country's primary schools?
- Plus a number of other difficult questions....

## Learning from experience.

The conference will combine formal presentations of new (including recently published) analytical research papers with panel discussions and presentations of on-the-ground innovation and interventions in practice. The aim is to ask questions about what works, what doesn't work, and why. In particular, the conference will aim to stimulate thinking around the lessons that local-level initiatives have to offer. We will seek to show-case initiatives which may provide insight into:

- Ways of mobilising and supporting the energies of people at all levels of society to reduce poverty and inequality.
- Opportunities for establishing closer synergies between government, business, trade unions and the NGO sector
- Strategies for replicating and scaling up initiatives that work.

## Themes

Whilst considering these practical innovations the conference will also seek to further debate and understanding about the structural underpinnings of both poverty and inequality in our society. The conference encompasses numerous and intersecting themes which are relevant to an understanding of inequality and ways to address it. Within each thematic area, we seek to understand and benchmark the current debates, and to explore the critical 'levers' to addressing blockages that perpetuate inequality. Applied research and analysis will be interspersed with descriptions and demonstrations of practical innovations at micro level, drawing on the experience of civil society actors.

The conference will be designed as far as possible to promote integrated examination of the dynamics of poverty and inequality and to develop integrated responses. In this first stage of the Carnegie Inquiry the key purpose of the Conference will be to take stock of existing knowledge and debates and to stimulate cross-pollination of ideas across institutional, thematic and geographic barriers in order to provide feed-back to the National Planning Commission. Further work of the conference in September 2012 will be to generate ideas and map out suggested priorities for research within the network of South African universities over the next two years as part of a longer Carnegie III process which, it is hoped, will culminate in a major conference two or three years from now.

For September 2012 major themes that need to be explored within the overarching framework of strategies to overcome poverty and inequality in South Africa include the following:

**Macro-economic policy**, with a hard look at the strengths and weaknesses of current policies from the perspective of poverty and inequality reduction. Plus debate about modifications and alternatives.

**Unemployment and labour issues**: the challenge of unemployment and strategies for creating work – including industrial and formal sector strategies, wage subsidies, EPWP & CWP; the dynamics of the informal sector and ways of extending rights and protection to informal workers. Informed debate about the role of labour regulations.

**Education**: The challenge of achieving meaningful access to education – including patterns of educational mobility, issues of pedagogy and support for teaching and learning, school resources and the role of schools as centres of community development. (The education stream will focus on five aspects of education: early learning; primary schooling; secondary schooling; FET & vocational skills training; with a fifth particular consideration of the transition from school, including access to tertiary education.)

**Legal frameworks**: the Constitution as a bedrock for addressing poverty and inequality; issues surrounding access to justice; implications of the Traditional Authorities Bill; & other pertinent legal considerations.

**Entrepreneurship and livelihood strategies**: challenges and constraints to entrepreneurship and to sustaining livelihoods and ways to overcome them; examples of innovation and implications for unemployment and inequality; opportunities for collaboration, and the role of finance institutions and corporate investors, government and institutions of learning.

**Social protection and welfare**: the role of social grants in addressing poverty and inequality; gaps in the social security system and their implications for inequality; the role of social welfare in mitigating the effects of poverty and inequality; constraints and innovative approaches to the provision of social welfare services.

**The family**: the effects of inequality on the shape of families and dynamics of household life, and ways of coping; the structural production of unequal childhoods; consequences of a changing world for families, households, neighbourhoods and communities (including issues of migration, work, marriage and care arrangements); family violence; critical services and interventions for young children and their caregivers.

**Public space, safety and violence:** geographies of apartheid and public space as both manifestation and cause of inequality; strategies to improve public space; spatial planning – urban upgrade and rural development; safe parks and places for children & youth; dynamics of crime and violence. [This theme might be divided into two: Public space; Safety & violence]

**Land & agriculture,** with a particular focus on new models of agriculture. There will also be space for consideration of key debate around land reform as part of the preparation for the major conferences on the Land Act being planned for 2013.

**Towns and cities:** issues of urban planning and service delivery; urban migration and its implications for urban inequalities; food security in the urban context; policy, planning and implementation – and the scope for innovative collaboration between public, private and civil society sectors, including the role of research institutions.

**Environment and resources:** from extractive to sustainable approaches to water and energy; innovative methods of waste management; the impact of resource management on human well-being; the dynamics of inequality in relation to climate change.

**Health issues:** intersecting burdens of disease and poverty; health services that meet the needs of the poor; how the NHI can address inequalities and benefit the poor; addressing inequality in the burden of TB, HIV/AIDS and maternal and child mortality.

**Migration:** the impact of immigration into South Africa as well as the consequences of internal regional flows (particularly urbanisation) is another area of focus in assessing strategies to overcome poverty and inequality.

**Other:** Whilst the above themes are central to the development of strategies to overcome poverty and inequality consideration will be given to other topics relevant to the overall theme.

Numbers will be limited due to space constraints, and priority will be given to those who write papers or prepare presentations about practical initiatives.

## Requirements for participation

- Synopses of proposed papers or presentations should be submitted no later than Saturday 16 June, via the conference website: [www.carnegie3.org.za](http://www.carnegie3.org.za)
  - These synopses will be assessed for overall “fit” into the conference as quickly as possible and contributors will be informed of provisional acceptance by Monday 25 June.
  - The first complete draft of papers must be submitted electronically not later than Tuesday 31 July when a multi-disciplinary team will work hard to read the papers within the following week in order to confirm final acceptance not later than 7 August
  - There will be opportunity for further revision, but final draft of the papers must be submitted electronically not later than midnight on Tuesday 21 August.
- There will be no registration fee, but attendance will be conditional upon final acceptance of a paper, or another appropriate format of presentation in the case of Government, NGOs, and other non-academic participants.

22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2012