

DEGREES OF UNCERTAINTY:
STUDENTS AND THE
BRAIN DRAIN IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA

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SOUTHERN AFRICA

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SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROJECT
2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The brain drain has recently emerged as a major policy issue in Southern Africa. Although precise data on the extent of the skills exodus is lacking, all the countries of the region have expressed concern about the impact of an accelerating brain drain on economic growth and development and on the quality of service delivery in the public sector. The impact of the brain drain is being exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is debilitating and “killing off” large numbers of people in their most productive years. Rather than adopting “brain gain” strategies (importing skills to replace those departing) most SADC countries have preferred a “brain train” strategy. Their rationale is that training of sufficient numbers of citizens in new skills is the only way to ensure that the skills base is not depleted in the long run. In theory, this makes a great deal of sense. Home grown skilled people are more likely to be “loyal” and to remain when others might leave. But is this really so? The whole argument begins to look rather suspect if it can be shown that governments are, in fact, providing students not with skills to invest at home but passports to leave. In a globalizing world of increased skills mobility, the opportunities for using skills as a ticket to a better life elsewhere are growing. What are the implications if the next generation of skilled people are just as likely to leave as their predecessors? If new graduates are simply preparing to leave, governments will have to fundamentally rethink their strategies on skills retention

SAMP has conducted extensive research on the magnitude and impact of the brain drain from South Africa and several other SADC countries. One prominent ANC Minister reviewed the SAMP evidence for an accelerating brain drain and hypothesized to us that this was a temporary problem. He argued that today’s students were far more loyal to their country of birth and that as they came onto the labour market, they would be much less anxious to leave than their parents’ generation. SAMP agreed to test this assertion with a major, representative study of the attitudes of final-year students in six SADC countries. A large sample of almost 10 000 final-year students was interviewed in training institutions across the region (universities, technikons, teach training colleges, nursing training colleges and so on). The findings of this survey are presented here. The results should be a cause of great concern to governments and policy-makers.

In terms of general findings for the student body as a whole, the SAMP Potential Skills Base Survey (PSBS), administered in 2003, found the following:

- All students showed very high levels of patriotism and pride in

their identity as citizens of their own country. Over 80% said they were proud to be from their country and to be citizens. They were just as enthusiastic about passing these values on to their children.

- Equally striking was the high proportion of students who felt committed to the future development of their country. As many as 86% of students said their desire was to “help build” their country. A massive 92% said they felt a responsibility to contribute their talents and skills to the growth of their country.
- Offsetting this strong sense of national identity and commitment were real concerns about personal economic circumstances and the performance of national economies now and in the future. Only 2% of students were very satisfied with their personal economic circumstances and only a third thought these circumstances would be greatly improved five years hence. Students are very negative about current economic conditions in their country and only 10% felt that the state of their national economy would be much better five years hence.
- Less than 25% of all students felt that the cost of living, job availability, prospects for economic advancement, and level of taxation would get better or much better in the future. More students look forward to increased incomes and job security although here, too, the pessimists outweigh the optimists. On the health front, the vast majority felt the HIV/AIDS epidemic would get worse and only 35% thought that the availability of medical services would improve. Only 23% felt that their personal and family safety would improve in the future. Students in almost every country felt that government was not doing enough to create employment opportunities for new graduates

Students are thus extremely favourably disposed towards making a personal contribution to their country’s development and simultaneously extremely disillusioned about current and future personal and national economic prospects. Such is the degree of pessimism in the region’s training institutions, that the survey’s findings about potential emigration came as no real surprise:

- As many as 79% of students have thought about moving to another country. Only 17% had not considered it at all. Just over half (53%) felt it likely they would be gone five years after graduation. As many as 35% said there was a likelihood of it happening within six months of graduation.
- The proportion of final-year students who had actually taken active steps to leave was predictably much smaller. Nineteen per cent have applied or were in the process of applying for work

permits abroad. Eleven per cent were applying for permanent residence elsewhere and 11% for citizenship.

- If students do leave are they more likely to leave the region or relocate to another country within SADC? The most likely destination is North America (31%) followed by Southern Africa (29%) and Europe (29%). Southern Africa was the first choice of students from Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Europe was the first choice of South Africans. In other words, South African and Botswana students tend to look more outside the region while those from the other countries see a within-region destination as most desirable. Ironically, the two countries seen as most desirable are South Africa and Botswana.
- Salaries, cost of living, ability to find the job wanted and prospects for professional advancement were considered better or much better in the most likely destination. Other factors perceived to be better by a majority of students included better educational opportunities for children, medical services, upkeep of public amenities, availability of quality affordable products, and customer service.
- Do SADC students think they will leave for good? Around 25% said it was likely they would move for less than two years and 23% for more than two years. If nearly half of all new graduates are likely to leave their home country (and a quarter for longer than two years), this represents a significant long-term loss of new skills.
- The impact of the brain drain can be mitigated somewhat if emigrants retain strong social and economic ties with home. Less than 10% said they would give up their home, take all of their possessions or all of their assets out of the country. Similarly, very few were willing to give up their citizenship. Only 4% of students said they would never return once they had left. Over 60% said they would return at least once a year. Only 4% said they would not remit funds back home.

The emigration potential of SADC students on graduation is high and economic factors are paramount when students consider what to do in the future. The primary losers from the brain drain of new skills are likely to be Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho. The primary beneficiaries are likely to be North America and Europe and, within the region, South Africa and Botswana. South Africa, at the same time, is the most likely to lose home-trained skills. South Africa is likely to be both a victim and a beneficiary of the brain drain.

Although there is a remarkable degree of unanimity from country to country, some important differences did emerge. On just about every

measure of dissatisfaction, pessimism and desire to leave, Zimbabwean students scored significantly higher than students in other SADC states. They were extremely negative about their personal and national economic fortunes now and in the future. They showed the greatest desire to leave and the greatest likelihood of doing so. Yet, Zimbabwean students too expressed a willingness to put their skills to work in their own country. They just did not appear to see how this could happen. In terms of the other countries, Namibians were consistently most optimistic and Swazis most pessimistic.

Another difference of note concerns who pays for higher education. Obviously all governments invest heavily in higher education and training but the ways in which students support themselves varies considerably. Across the region, nearly half of all students were on government bursaries with the next highest category of support being personal/family funds (26% of students) and then bank loans (12%). The degree of government support varied from country to country with a high of 88% in Botswana to a low of 14% in South Africa. South African students are disproportionately funded by family and personal funds (44%) compared with a low of only 5% in Botswana. Only in Zimbabwe were the majority of students (36%) supported by banks or study loans.

Students were not averse, on the whole, to some form of cash or in-service payback for government grants and loans. Nor, significantly, was there great opposition to measures often mooted by governments to discourage new graduates from leaving e.g. national service or bonding. These kinds of measures are generally not going to cause people to leave in protest. The fact remains, though, that governments face an uphill struggle if they are going to keep students at home, capitalize on their desire to serve, and recoup their investment in skills development. Failing that, governments should be looking at taking advantage of the new global market in skills and importing skills trained elsewhere. In truth, they should probably be doing that already.

INTRODUCTION

In the new global economy, many developing countries are facing a serious loss of home-trained skills to their competitors.¹ The “brain drain” has become an issue of growing policy concern in the developing world.² In Southern Africa, too, the brain drain is having a major economic and social impact.³ In a region being adversely affected by poverty, food scarcity, unemployment, as well as HIV/AIDS, recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced people has become a major challenge.⁴ As well as impacting the existing skills base, the brain drain threatens the potential skills base in Southern Africa as students and new graduates consider the possibility of emigrating in search of greener pastures.

There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that even before graduation, students in many countries of SADC begin considering permanent or temporary emigration as an important if not indispensable career option. This is in sharp contrast to many other countries where new graduates feel that their best career option is to enter the local labour market as quickly as possible and begin a career trajectory which will see them rise to the top of their profession in their own country. The question is whether this image of a hugely dissatisfied student population in SADC is an accurate one. If it is, then governments must be aware that the “brain drain” actually starts before skills are moulded into final shape. If it is a myth, then governments can at least take solace from the fact that the next generation of skilled people is more likely to stick around than the current one.

While the SADC consists of thirteen sovereign states, it is also a regional grouping with common goals of economic integration and cooperation. In that sense, the loss of one brain from one country is a loss to all. The region’s continued economic growth is contingent upon the continued supply, retention and integration of new skills. The importance of skills supply has been made even more pressing by the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is killing off large numbers of skilled people in their most productive economic years.⁵ Most countries of the region (with the notable exception of Botswana) have not thought it necessary to date to develop a proactive policy to attract skills through immigration.⁶ That may soon change as the pressures of skills loss and skills death curb economic expansion. Already, South Africa is moving in the direction of a more open immigration policy, and other countries in SADC may soon be forced to do likewise.⁷

The brain drain in Southern Africa has at least three dimensions. First, within countries, there is a serious brain drain from the public to the private sector. This is particularly evident in the health sector

where public health systems are increasingly overburdened and understaffed.⁸ Second, there is an intra-country brain drain within the SADC. Here there are clear winners and losers. South Africa and Botswana, with the most vibrant economies within SADC, stand to gain the most from the “redistribution” of skills within SADC. Countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe have been equally clear losers. Third, there is the brain drain proper, where skilled people emigrate from the SADC region, either temporarily or permanently. The degree of permanence of emigration has an important influence on the overall economic impact of skills loss. The impact may be mitigated if brain drainers maintain links with home and send remittances home.⁹ The Zimbabwean economy, for example, is increasingly propped up by remittances received from Zimbabweans living abroad. On the other hand, not all brains drain permanently. Many who leave do eventually come back. But there are those who intend a temporary sojourn abroad and end up staying away permanently.

The cost to a country of losing a seasoned professional is clearly greater, in the short term, than a new graduate. There is no substitute for experience. Equally, it is vital that the countries of SADC build and maintain robust institutions of technical training and higher learning. Most countries invested heavily in skills development after independence and have adequate to excellent training facilities. South Africa is probably the regional leader with the greatest variety and strength of world-class training institutions.¹⁰ The challenge there has been to deracialize the potential skills pool following the collapse of apartheid. The truth is that the potential skills base of each country, and the region as a whole, is a vital component of long-term strategies for development and growth. If the skills base is unsettled and unhappy and inclined to leave with newly-minted certificates and degrees in hand, governments have a serious problem. Every government wants its trainees (many of whom it pays for itself) to be committed to their home country and to remain and build for the future. As this paper shows, SADC governments have a considerable challenge on their hands.

The present paper examines the question of the potential for emigration of the region’s skills-in-training (what we refer to as the potential skills base or PSB). Most studies of the brain drain ignore the aspirations and experiences of tomorrow’s skilled professionals. This is an important gap in the research and policy literature. There is a strong possibility, for example, that today’s students feel less threatened by political and economic transformation, and more optimistic and idealistic than their older, more weather-beaten forbears. On the other hand, students of today are far more conscious of living in a globalizing world. They know very well that their skills and training also constitute a

potential passport to personal and professional advancement elsewhere. By examining the attitudes and aspirations of the region's potential skills base, we are in a good position to know whether the brain drain is likely to continue, other things being equal. There is also a sense among governments that strategies to stem the brain drain must target the newly-trained, whether this be through bonding, national service, or curriculum reform. How are the targets of these actions likely to react? Will they make students less or, as some have claimed, more likely to leave?

This paper, based on a large representative SAMP survey of final-year students at training institutions across the region, addresses these and a number of other important questions. Each country faces its own unique challenges but it also shares many common elements with the other countries of the region. Do all countries face a similar brain drain problem? Does the emigration potential of tomorrow's skilled population vary from country to country? Do attitudes towards staying and leaving vary from country to country? Are all countries investing in skills development only to have those skills creamed off by others? Or are some likely to benefit from the losses of others through intra-regional migration? Which countries are likely to face the most serious skills crisis in the coming years? And what do the soon-to-graduate feel about their career prospects in their home country and how these might be improved?

The present paper seeks to provide regional organizations, governments and training institutions with a "snapshot" of the situation across as much of the SADC region as resources would allow. Institutions are obviously interested in the question of whether they are simply training up a pool of skills which will be constantly depleted by countries in search of skills that they have not themselves invested in training. Governments, who fund and subsidize much higher education in Southern Africa out of the public purse, want to know whether their investment in the skills of tomorrow is a sound strategy for future economic development.

DEVELOPING SKILLS: A PROFILE

The SAMP Potential Skills Base Survey (PSBS) was conducted in six Southern African countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) in 2003 using the same questionnaire and methodology. The standardized questionnaire was adapted collaboratively from a previous SAMP skills base survey. Each SAMP partner institution compiled a list of final year students by faculty and training institution, obtained the necessary approvals to conduct the survey and travelled to the relevant institutions to collect the data. In South Africa a marketing company, MARKINOR, did the data collection. The sample size was designed to be proportional to the number of final year students by faculty and institution. In most cases it was not possible to get data from all classes or students selected, and the final dataset for each country was weighted according to the original sample design.

The final data base has information on almost 10,000 students including 1 201 from Botswana, 1 036 from Lesotho, 893 from Namibia, 4 532 from South Africa, 1 031 from Swaziland and 1 050 from Zimbabwe. The data base was created by combining the country files into a regional SPSS dataset. This SPSS dataset was used for the tables and analysis in this report; the unweighted number of respondents for each country is given in Table 1 and the weighted totals in Table 2. The country totals are similar for the remaining tables, only varying by question and country due to missing data; the 'n' value is therefore not included on those tables. Percentages in the tables are for columns enabling country comparisons.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 1 shows the basic demographics of the nearly 10,000 students interviewed during the PSBS in the six SADC countries. Since these students were essentially selected at random, the data provides a useful profile of the sex, age, race, language, marital status and socio-economic status of the region's current student population.

In terms of the gender breakdown, there were slightly more female respondents than males (52% compared to 48%). This is perhaps surprising given the patriarchal character of many Southern African societies and the gendered "division of labour" within many existing professions. This does suggest that women are now accessing post-secondary training at a much higher rate than in the past. South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho all had fewer male respondents than females, with Lesotho the lowest at 36%. This highly skewed gender distribution is consistent with Lesotho's migrant profile, where many males are

migrant workers primarily in South Africa. Zimbabwe, with 62% males, had the largest number of male respondents. The uneven distribution in Zimbabwe reflects the fact that traditionally males had more access to education than females; however, this is slowly changing.

In terms of the age profile, only Botswana had more respondents aged 24 years and above (39%) than below (62%). Most of those interviewed were below 24 years and South Africa had the most youthful PSB with 72% of the respondents aged below 24 years.

The black African population made up more than 90% of the students interviewed in all the countries with the exception of South Africa. There blacks only constituted 48% of the respondents. The fact that the proportion of black students interviewed is not nationally representative of the racial breakdown of the country is not a reflection of any sampling bias. Rather, it reflects the legacy of apartheid where white students still enjoy unequal access to quality secondary and all tertiary education. Thus, South Africa had an exceptionally high number of whites in the sample, making up 40%. The rest of the countries had less than 2% each. South Africa also had the highest percentage of students with English as a first language (27%).

South Africa had the lowest number of students who identified themselves as of lower socio-economic class status (16%), compared to Lesotho with 45%. The working and middle classes had more or less similar figures for the six countries averaging 25% and 34%, respectively. South Africa had the highest percentage in the upper-middle class band (21%) followed by Namibia with 6%. Lesotho had no students who self-identified as being in the upper-middle and upper classes. In South Africa, the wealthy and the privileged therefore still appear to have disproportionate access to higher education.

In terms of area of origin, more students come from rural than urban backgrounds. Across the region, 40% had homes located in rural communal areas, 19% in small towns, and only 15% in the cities. Swaziland had the highest number of students (60%) with homes located in the rural communal areas. The highest proportions of urban residents were in South Africa (75%), Zimbabwe (65%) and Lesotho (52%).

The majority of the students interviewed were single (83%). Lesotho had the highest percent of married people at 24%, almost double the average for the six nations as a whole. The separated, divorced, abandoned or widowed made up only 5% of the total. The number of dependents per person was lowest for those countries with the highest socio-economic status and highest for those with the lowest socio-economic status. South Africa had the highest number of respondents with no dependents (76%) whereas all of the respondents from Lesotho had dependents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Final-Year Students							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Sex of respondents							
Male	45.6	51.8	40.6	62.4	51.5	35.8	47.7
Female	54.4	48.2	59.4	37.6	48.5	64.2	52.3
Age of respondents							
23 years and less	71.8	62.0	38.5	58.8	52.6	59.2	59.0
24 years and more	28.2	38.0	61.5	41.2	47.4	40.8	49.0
Race of respondents							
Black	48.1	91.3	97.1	96.7	96.1	96.0	82.8
White	40.3	1.4	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.6	11.6
Coloured	6.9	7.2	1.5	2.3	2.4	2.3	4.1
Asian/Indian	4.7	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.1	1.5
Socio-economic status							
Lower class	15.8	34.7	37.4	29.6	33.6	44.7	30.5
Working class	23.0	28.5	21.8	30.9	26.2	23.9	25.4
Middle class	36.9	28.3	36.6	32.5	35.6	31.4	34.0
Upper middle class	20.6	5.9	3.3	5.0	3.7	0.0	8.2
Upper class	3.7	2.6	0.9	2.1	1.0	0.0	2.0
Location of home							
Rural communal area	21.6	47.2	49.2	32.5	60.0	48.2	40.4
Commercial farming area	3.8	4.7	3.2	2.2	6.0	-	3.9*
Small town	25.6	24.5	22.6	18.1	16.5	-	21.5*
Large town	13.4	9.9	6.2	9.1	5.0	-	8.7*
City	28.2	7.5	11.2	26.0	6.6	51.8	
Urban	15.9*						
Capital city	7.3	6.1	7.6	12.1	5.8	7.8*	
Marital status							
Married	8.2	5.3	11.5	18	10.4	24.1	12.3
Separated	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.4	0.6
Divorced	0.8	0.6	1.1	1.2	0.4	0.8	0.8
Abandoned	0.4	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.7	0.6
Widowed	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	1.8	0.4
Co-habiting/ living together	3.1	1.6	5.0	3.0	0.9	1.6	2.6
Single	86.6	91.1	81.6	76.1	87.3	69.5	82.6

Table 1 continued:							
Language spoken at home							
English	26.6	4.2	4.1	5.4	5.8	2.9	10.4
Afrikaans	26.9	7.9	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	8.4
Zulu	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	2.3
Xhosa	13.8	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.4	3.8
Sotho	9.3	0.0	0.9	1.5	0.1	96.6	17.2
Tswana	6.0	1.3	77.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	13.5
Tsonga/Shangaan and related	2.5	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.9
Venda	3.4	0.3	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.3
Swazi	1.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	89.0	0.0	12.9
Ndebele	0.4	0.2	0.4	10.2	0.0	0.1	1.7
Kalanga	0.2	0.0	12.8	1.1	0.1	0.0	2.2
Shona	0.4	0.2	0.1	77.7	0.0	0.0	11.3
Sena/Ndau related	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.3
Nama/Damara	0.3	9.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5
Oshiwambo	0.1	46.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8
Otjherero	0.1	7.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
Kwangari	0.1	9.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Lozi	0.1	10.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.6
Portuguese	0.2	1.7	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4
Other	1.5	0.9	1.1	0.4	1.6	0.0	1.0
Unweighted N	4532	893	1201	1050	1031	1036	9743
Totals vary by question due to missing data							
* Lesotho excluded from average since data was not collected by urban categories, only urban.							

TRAINING PROFILE

Most of the respondents (95%) were full-time students (Table 2). Those expecting to obtain certificates or diplomas and Bachelor's Degrees constituted 46% and 42% of the sample, respectively. South Africa had the highest number of respondents expecting to obtain Master's degrees and other qualifications.

Across the region, nearly half of all students were on government bursaries with the next highest category of support being personal/family funds (26% of students) and then bank loans (12%). The degree of government support varied from country to country with a high of 88% in Botswana to a low of 14% in South Africa. South African students

are disproportionately funded by family and personal funds (44%) compared with a low of only 5% in Botswana. Only in Zimbabwe were the majority of students (36%) supported by banks or study loans.

Most government bursaries involve some kind of “payback.” There were some differences from country to country but, on the whole, governments do not wish students to see their education as a “free ride” at the taxpayer’s expense. Only 7% of students across the region said they were “required” to remain in their country after graduation, while 31% said they were required to work in the public sector. Less than half of the students on bursaries or scholarships are required to work in the public service in their countries after completing their studies. South Africa (12% of holders) and Zimbabwe (14%) place the least onerous obligation on new graduates and Botswana (53%) and Lesotho (49%) the heaviest. The three countries with the lowest rate of public obligation (South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe) were also those with the greatest number of students supported by families or personal funds.

The respondents were drawn from a wide variety of training institutions including universities and technical colleges, and nursing, agricultural and teacher training colleges. Faculties of Education and Social Sciences/Humanities/Arts and teacher training colleges comprised about 40% of the respondents. A significant proportion of the respondents were from Technical Colleges/Technicons (18%) and Faculties of Commerce (9%). The remainder were from other faculties including Engineering, Science, Medicine/Pharmacy, Law, Computer Science and Agriculture and other colleges. This analysis treats the sample as a whole although the sample size for some professions is sufficiently large to permit further analysis of emigration potential in particular sectors (health, teaching, commerce etc.).

THOUGHTS OF HOME

In assessing the emigration potential of today’s student cohort, it is important to begin by asking what sorts of attitude they have towards “home.” A sense of belonging, participation and opportunity is a powerful antidote to any errant longing for other pastures. A majority of students (56%) strongly agreed that they were proud to be from their particular country (Table 3). The highest level of pride was in Botswana (78%) followed by Lesotho (74%) and Namibia (72%). Zimbabwe, with 32%, had the lowest. As we will see throughout this paper, Zimbabwean students differ significantly on a number of key issues. This, of course, is largely attributable to the political problems and the resultant economic meltdown that the country has been experiencing, characterised by massive unemployment (70%) and hyper-

Table 2: Potential Skills Training Profile							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Enrolment status							
Full-time	91.5	95.9	95.3	98.5	96.8	92.3	94.6
Part-time	8.5	4.1	4.7	1.5	3.2	7.7	5.4
Qualification							
Certificate/Diploma	37.2	55.5	46.1	39.4	53.3	54.1	46.2
Bachelor's Degree	38.2	43.9	40.5	55.3	35.5	45.0	42.4
Master's Degree	9.3	0.0	5.2	4.7	0.3	0.7	4.1
Doctorate Degree	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Honours	4.5	0.3	8.2	0.0	10.9	0.2	4.1
Other	10.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.9
Sources of support for studies							
Government scholarship (no payback required)	3.7	5.3	13.7	3.3	9.4	6.3	6.4
Government bursary (some payback required)	13.0	32.7	74.3	21.5	69.8	78.9	43.0
University scholarship (no payback required)	6.1	0.7	1.3	1.5	0.4	0.7	2.3
University bursary (some payback required)	5.0	1.2	1.3	0.9	0.8	1.6	2.2
Technicon bursary (no payback required)	1.0	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.5
Technicon bursary (some payback required)	5.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.0	1.8
Personal/family funds	43.5	34.3	5.1	33.0	14.6	9.1	26.1
Private scholarship	6.1	9.5	1.5	3.0	2.5	1.0	4.2
Bank/study loan	13.7	14.9	1.2	36.4	0.5	0.6	12.5
Other	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.7
Don't know	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.3
Conditions of bursary/scholarship							
Require you to remain in the country after completing your studies	2.2	5.6	5.8	4.7	9.7	17.4	7.5

Table 2 continued:							
Require you to work in the public sector in your country	12.2	33.1	52.9	14.0	26.6	49.2	31.0
Require you to work in the private sector in your country	6.9	11.2	2.9	4.8	1.3	3.6	5.2
None of the above	60.4	40.4	22.9	63.1	29.7	29.3	41.4
Don't know	18.4	9.7	15.5	13.4	32.7	0.5	15.0
Faculty							
University: Faculty of Engineering	4.6	0.8	8.5	4.8	0.6	0.3	3.5
University: Faculty of Medicine/ Pharmacy	6.4	3.7	0.0	9.8	0.0	0.3	3.7
University: Faculty of Science	4.7	13.0	4.0	10.5	3.3	2.2	6.1
University: Faculty of Arts/Social Science/Humanities	9.4	7.3	18.8	21.7	11.2	18.1	13.8
University: Faculty of Law	3.7	1.4	0.0	4.2	3.7	4.3	3.0
University: Faculty of Commerce – Business	12.1	6.5	18.2	3.5	12.9	1.2	9.4
University: Faculty of Computer Science/IT	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.6
University: Faculty of Agriculture	2.0	3.0	4.6	0.4	10.5	4.5	3.9
University: Faculty of Engineering	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
University: Other	2.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	6.7	0.5	1.8
University: Faculty of Education	14.5	29.6	10.0	6.7	12.1	19.3	15.3
Technical College/ Technicon: Technical Subjects	12.2	10.8	0.0	8.5	10.2	9.4	9.0
Technical College/ Technicon: Commerce/Admin	12.5	8.2	2.0	8.7	6.4	15.7	9.3
Technical College/ Technicon: IT/Computers	6.5	0.7	0.0	10.3	0.1	0.4	3.4
Technical College/ Technicon: Medical Dental	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1

Table 2 continued:							
Technical College/ Technicon: Other	0.8	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.0	0.9
Teacher Training College	0.0	10.7	22.1	10.0	15.5	18.2	11.2
Nursing Training College	2.8	0.0	11.7	0.1	3.5	2.5	3.4
Agricultural Training College	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.6	0.5
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.1
Weighted N Totals	2172	1196	1200	1199	1195	1176	8138

inflation averaging 500% during the past twelve months. With the exception of Zimbabwe then, students across the region are proud to belong to their home country.

Citizenship is also important for most students, with 82% agreeing that being a citizen of their country is an important part of personal identity. This feeling of patriotism was strongest in Botswana (86%) and weakest in Swaziland (59%). The success of the post-apartheid state's project of inclusive nation-building is reflected in the fact that 70% of South African students view their citizenship as an important part of their personal identity. As many as 78% of respondents also want their children to think of themselves as belonging to their country. Again, sentiment was strongest in Botswana and weakest in Swaziland. The anomalous situation in Swaziland must, in part, be a function of the well-attested disaffection of the country's educated elite with the monarchy and its system of patronage in government.¹¹

Loyalty to country extends beyond personal identity and a sense of belonging. Students across the region were asked about their desire to "help build" their country. The response was overwhelmingly positive with 86% in general agreement. The level of commitment was strongest in Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia. Those who felt a strong desire to help build their country also felt it was their duty to contribute their talents and skills to the growth of their country. A massive 92% agreed that this was their responsibility. Again, the country breakdown was very similar with greatest levels of commitment in the same three countries. Even in Zimbabwe, students articulated a strong commitment to building their country (80%) and using their talents and skills to contribute to the growth of the country (78%). A perceived inability to contribute in this way would only add to the sense of frustration.

The data presented so far suggests that across SADC, students have (a) a strong sense of loyalty to their own country, (b) a keen sense of

the importance of citizenship to their personal identity and (c) an almost idealistic commitment to putting their skills and talents to work in the service of their country. The only discordant note was sounded by the surprisingly large number of students (61%) who agreed with the statement that it does not matter what citizenship one holds as long as one has a “good quality of life.” In other words, there are circumstances in which “quality of life” factors may trump loyalty to the home country, identity as a citizen and commitment to staying to work and build. This is an important finding for it suggests that nationalism, loyalty and youthful idealism on their own may not be sufficient to keep skills in a country.

Table 3: Belonging, Identity and Commitment							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
It makes you proud to be from your country							
Strongly agree	49.9	72.0	77.8	32.2	35.8	74.3	56.1
Agree	33.2	20.2	13.8	26.4	34.1	17.8	25.4
Being a citizen of your country is a very important part of how you see yourself							
Strongly agree	31.5	48.6	61.4	28.5	22.2	53.2	39.8
Agree	39.0	35.6	25.0	32.3	37.3	29.2	33.8
You would want your children to think of themselves as people from your country							
Strongly agree	41.5	60.1	66.2	34.3	28.6	55.8	47.0
Agree	34.0	25.5	22.5	35.8	39.7	27.4	31.2
It really does not matter where you are a citizen as long as you have a good quality of life							
Strongly agree	30.3	29.2	29.8	37.6	37.8	36.4	33.1
Agree	32.1	27.9	28.9	26.3	28.9	22.8	28.4
You have a strong desire to help build your country							
Strongly agree	42.1	66.0	68.6	44.0	43.3	72.1	54.2
Agree	36.7	28.4	26.7	35.5	41.2	20.8	32.2
It is your duty to contribute your talents and skills to the growth of your country							
Strongly agree	39.5	67.4	67.8	40.2	43.9	70.4	52.9
Agree	33.1	25.9	25.2	37.6	41.2	22.1	31.1
Only two top categories reported							

Questions about pride, citizenship and children’s identity were compared with a previous SAMP survey which asked the same questions in the same countries and was representative of national urban populations. The averages of those in agreement were between 8% and 16% lower for the student populations. Students are, it seems, somewhat less patriotic than ordinary citizens.¹²

Pursuing this line of argument, it is important to determine if students are satisfied with the “quality of life” in their home countries. In stark contrast to the positive sentiments about belonging, identity and commitment, perceptions of economic conditions are extremely gloomy. Table 4 reveals extremely low levels of satisfaction with both personal and general economic conditions in all the countries surveyed. Only 2% of students were very satisfied with their personal economic condition, a figure which may be artificially depressed by the fact that most students do struggle to make ends meet. Certainly, there is greater optimism about the future amongst some. Nearly a third thought their personal economic circumstances would be greatly improved five years hence. Optimism was uniform across the region, with the exception of Zimbabwe. Clearly, students there do not expect an early exit from the current morass.

Table 4: Satisfaction and Expectations about Economic Conditions							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Satisfaction about current personal economic condition							
Very satisfied	2.4	4.4	2.3	0.7	1.3	2.3	2.2
Satisfied	22.3	21.2	14.9	2.4	6.5	9.1	14.0
Expectation of personal economic condition five years from now							
Much better	47.2	27.3	22.1	14.6	23.5	27.3	29.6
Better	34.8	50.1	47.0	19.8	39.4	40.0	38.0
Satisfaction about current economic conditions in your country							
Very satisfied	1.0	5.2	4.5	0.3	0.5	1.4	2.0
Satisfied	16.2	26.8	33.0	0.5	3.4	5.5	14.5
Expectation about economic condition in your country five years from now							
Much better	9.3	21.8	11.7	4.8	2.6	9.3	9.8
Better	36.0	36.8	30.2	15.4	11.1	28.5	27.6
Is the government doing enough to create employment opportunities for graduates							
Too much	1.1	5.4	3.4	0.7	0.4	10.9	3.3
Enough	11.6	16.8	15.6	4.1	1.8	80.2	20.3
Only two top categories reported							

A better question to pose to students, perhaps, is about their perception of the current state and future prospects of the national economy. However, the pessimism was as deep here as it was about personal economic conditions and futures. And students are much less optimistic about the country’s future than their own future (which is explicable because many do not see their personal future lying in their own

country). Only 10% of all students felt that the state of their national economy would be much better five years hence. Swazis were even more pessimistic than Zimbabweans. Only Namibian students bucked the trend and were actually relatively positive about the longer-term economic prospects for their country.

In all of the countries, most students felt that government was not doing enough to create employment opportunities for new graduates. Swazi and Zimbabwean students were particularly critical. South African students also feel that government could do a lot more. The exception was Lesotho where 80% felt that government was doing enough. This finding must in part be a function of the government's policy towards foreign investment in the textile industry, which has seen significant growth recently.

Table 5 takes a broader approach to perceptions of future prospects. In terms of various economic measures, sentiment varied little from country to country. Less than 25% of all students felt that the cost of living, job availability, prospects for economic advancement, and level of taxation would get better or much better in the future. Only in Namibia were students more optimistic. More students look forward to increased incomes and job security although here, too, the pessimists outweigh the optimists. On the health front, the vast majority felt the HIV/AIDS epidemic would get worse and only 35% thought that the availability of medical services would improve.

Amongst the general skilled population, personal safety and security issues loom large. Students are just as concerned. Only 23% felt that their personal and family safety would improve in the future. And only a third felt positive about the future prospects for their children in the country. Across all of these measures, there was some variation from country to country but again, it is only Namibian students who seemed to be genuinely optimistic about the future. Swazis were particularly downcast about the country's economic prospects.

To this point, we have established that the potential skills base of Southern Africa is extremely loyal and committed to making a difference. Unfortunately, the same students (with the exception of Namibians) are also extremely negative about social and economic conditions and prospects in their country. Will loyalty and national commitment outweigh poor quality of life and prospects?

Table 5: Expectations About the Future							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Get better or much better							
Cost of living	19.8	42.6	19.8	19.7	9.9	23.7	22.2
Ability to find the job I want	20.3	36.3	13.3	20.0	9.1	27.8	20.9
Prospects for professional advancement	29.8	51.2	25.5	27.6	21.7	33.9	31.3
HIV/AIDS situation	11.7	19.7	20.2	11.3	4.2	15.9	13.2
The security of your job	21.5	38.9	24.3	20.9	11.9	39.0	25.4
Your level of income	46.3	57.9	43.5	25.3	30.8	28.1	39.7
Ability to find a house you want to live in	28.4	46.1	21.6	14.2	21.0	29.9	27.0
Ability to find a good school for your children	32.2	56.6	35.6	20.5	31.8	44.2	36.3
Ability to find medical services for family and children	29.9	58.1	37.2	18.1	28.8	38.4	34.4
A level of fair taxation	17.3	21.7	10.5	11.9	5.6	19.3	14.8
Your personal safety	17.6	40.4	22.0	17.5	12.6	33.0	23.0
Your family's safety	18.0	41.4	22.3	17.5	12.9	34.0	23.4
The future of your children in the home country	31.2	45.5	35.2	18.8	17.6	36.7	32.3
Quality upkeep of public amenities (eg parks, beaches, toilets etc.)	25.8	51.5	36.4	13.2	23.0	23.8	28.5
Availability of quality affordable products	26.0	44.0	37.6	16.2	19.1	28.6	28.2
Customer service	31.0	51.7	37.4	17.4	24.0	30.7	31.9
Each question is independent; columns do not total 100%							

LEAVING HOME

Is leaving part of the mental universe of post-graduation possibilities for Southern African students? For a significant number of students, it is. Some 45% have given a great deal of thought to moving to another country, while another 34% have given it some thought (Table 6). Only 17% said they had not considered it at all. Zimbabwean students have given the most thought to leaving (92% some/great deal of thought), followed by Swazis (85%), South Africans (81%), Basotho (79%), Namibians (69%) and BaTswana (67%). Namibians (at 27%) have given the possibility least thought of all.

	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Consideration of moving abroad							
A great deal	40.0	28.9	33.3	71.2	55.8	43.8	44.8
Some	41.4	40.4	33.7	20.8	29.4	34.4	34.4
None at all	15.7	26.6	27.4	6.0	11.1	17.9	17.2
Don't know	2.9	4.1	5.7	1.9	3.7	4.0	3.6

Thinking about leaving does not mean it will automatically happen. Students were therefore next asked about the likelihood of their leaving. Just over half (53%) felt it likely they would be gone five years after graduation (Table 7). As many as 35% said there was a likelihood of it happening within six months of graduation. Zimbabweans are the most likely to move from their home country at each time period, followed by Swazis, Basotho and South Africans. The question, of course, is how realistic students are being in their assessment of likelihood. But if student assessment of their own future situation is in any way accurate, every country in the region faces the prospect of a dramatic skills loss of new graduates in the next 5 years.

	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Likelihood of moving: likely or very likely							
Six months after graduation	36.5	28.5	21.0	56.2	31.3	37.1	35.5
Two years after graduation	48.2	47.4	39.8	70.0	55.3	55.1	52.1
Five years after graduation	47.6	58.1	49.8	59.5	58.7	50.3	53.2
Each question is independent; columns do not total 100%							

While perceived likelihoods are high, the proportion of final-year students who had actually taken active steps to leave was predictably much smaller. Nineteen per cent have applied or were in the process of applying for work permits abroad (Table 8). Eleven per cent were applying for permanent residence elsewhere and 11% for citizenship. Again there is not a great deal of variation from country-to-country with the exception of Zimbabwe (with 27% applying for work permits and 15% for permanent residence in other countries).

In comparative terms, South Africa and Zimbabwe are often cited as the two countries facing the greatest exodus of skills. The data for student intentions confirms the Zimbabwean prognosis. But it suggests too that South Africa is no better (or worse) off than other countries of the region. All face a similar depletion of the skills base. Of course, in absolute terms the numbers are much larger in South Africa. But then the South African economy may be much more able to cope with the loss than, say, the enclave economies of countries like Lesotho and Swaziland.

	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Applied for a work permit in MLD							
Yes	7.1	7.6	3.1	8.1	4.9	8.6	6.6
In the process of applying	7.8	15.3	11.4	19.3	11.9	14.7	12.7
Applied for a permanent resident permit in MLD							
Yes	3.7	3.5	1.5	4.7	3.0	5.0	3.6
In the process of applying	3.4	8.3	5.7	10.3	7.3	10.5	7.1
Applied for citizenship in MLD							
Yes	4.9	4.4	1.5	4.3	4.9	6.1	4.4
In the process of applying	3.0	6.5	4.0	10.2	8.8	10.9	6.7
Only two categories are reported here							

Students who are thinking of leaving will have given some thought to where they want to go. The important question here is whether they would prefer to move within the region or to leave altogether. Table 9 compares their perceptions of their own country in comparison to others in terms of whether they would do better in another specified region or country. Almost three-quarters of the entire sample felt that they would do better in Europe (76%), North America (75%), and

Australia/New Zealand (73%). Within the region, only South Africa (73%) and Botswana (56%) scored well. Students in Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland generally rated South Africa as a destination even more highly than they did Europe and North America. Zimbabweans rated Botswana very highly too. Students in South Africa and Namibia felt that they would be better off in Europe and North America and did not rate other countries in the region at all positively. Zimbabwe is seen throughout the region as the worst alternative place to live, a sad commentary on the negative image that country now carries amongst ordinary educated people within SADC.

Although most SADC students see industrialised countries as places where they could do better, those from countries with weak economies (Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho) have a high regard for other African countries like South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. Preferences are greater for African countries with stronger economies. Respondents from countries with strong economies such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia have the least interest in other African countries.

If every student acted on these preferences, there would be a massive skills exodus to Europe and North America and a significant internal brain drain to South Africa and, to a lesser extent, Botswana. Zimbabweans, in particular, would be moving to Botswana and South Africa in large numbers to ply their skills. In point of fact, there are no surprises at all in these figures. They simply suggest, in a general sort of way, that existing brain drain patterns are likely to be reinforced in the behaviour of the next generation of skilled people.

Because perceptions of difference do not translate automatically into decisions to move, SAMP has used the concept of the FPC (First Preferred Country) and MLD (Most Likely Destination). In other words, if a student was to leave where would they be most likely to go? There is little discernible difference between FPC and MLD, suggesting that they are essentially measuring the same thing. Table 10 shows that the MLD for all students is North America (31%) followed by Southern Africa (29%) and Europe (29%). Southern Africa was the first choice of people from Lesotho (61%), Swaziland (44%), Zimbabwe (39%) and Namibia (37%). Europe was the first choice of 44% of South Africans. If students in South Africa and Botswana are going to stay within the region, they have virtually no desire to leave their own countries. Again, there are important inter-country differences. South African and Botswana students tend to look more outside the region while those from the other countries see a within-region destination as most desirable. Ironically, the two countries seen as most desirable are South Africa and Botswana.

Table 9: Comparison of Other Countries with Home							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Person like you could do better or much better in the following countries							
Botswana	31.7	38.0	N/A	89.6	64.5	78.8	56.2
Lesotho	14.9	26.8	22.6	55.1	21.7	N/A	26.2
Mozambique	13.8	16.8	9.5	58.8	16.9	15.7	21.3
Namibia	21.2	N/A	18.3	69.7	29.5	25.4	31.2
Swaziland	14.6	28.6	16.1	55.9	N/A	32.3	27.2
Zimbabwe	9.0	15.3	6.1	N/A	14.6	18.7	12.1
South Africa	N/A	71.1	44.9	91.1	81.5	77.5	73.3
Angola	11.8	28.0	9.8	41.4	14.5	21.5	20.0
Malawi	9.8	19.1	8.0	38.4	13.1	16.0	16.5
Zambia	10.6	18.1	7.5	36.0	18.3	19.1	17.3
East Africa	10.6	20.4	10.6	39.2	19.4	21.4	19.1
West Africa	10.7	25.3	11.6	42.4	21.5	22.2	20.9
Central Africa	11.0	20.7	9.6	40.1	18.2	24.0	19.4
North Africa	15.9	29.9	16.8	52.3	36.1	31.4	28.5
Europe	72.1	75.6	78.5	92.0	79.5	69.6	75.7
North America	71.3	72.4	68.6	90.8	77.1	70.3	74.6
Australia/New Zealand	73.4	68.1	65.6	93.1	70.5	66.1	73.0
Asia/China	47.1	49.9	38.4	73.6	55.5	52.0	52.3
Each question is independent; columns do not total 100%							

Whether a new graduate actually leaves home for their MLD is obviously influenced by a complex interplay of general and personal push and pull factors. Common push factors include conditions in the home country such as lack of adequately-remunerated employment. Pull factors are the attractive conditions in the MLD such as availability of higher paying jobs. Almost half of the respondents thought that getting a job in the MLD would be easy/very easy and almost as many thought that they would be able to get a job in their field (Table 11).

Salaries, the cost of living, ability to find the job wanted and prospects for professional advancement were all considered better/much better in the MLD by over half the students (Table 12). The highest percentage was reported by Zimbabweans (between about 80% and 90%) and lowest by Namibians (between 36% and 52%). Other factors perceived to be better in the MLD by a majority of students included better educational opportunities for children, medical services, upkeep of public amenities, availability of quality affordable products, and

Table 10: Preferred Countries of Destination							
South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average	
First preferred country (FPC)							
Southern Africa	7.2	42.4	0.6	36.1	44.5	59.7	28.8
Elsewhere in Africa	0.5	3.2	0.2	0.3	0.8	1.0	0.9
Europe	43.5	27.9	1.1	29.1	28.8	19.3	27.5
North America	28.0	18.3	95.1	23.8	17.8	13.0	31.6
Australia/New Zealand	16.3	5.3	0.0	9.4	5.1	4.2	8.0
Asia	4.5	2.8	2.9	1.4	3.1	2.8	3.1
Most likely destination (MLD)							
Southern Africa	7.3	36.5	0.5	38.8	44.1	61.0	28.6
Elsewhere in Africa	0.7	2.3	0.1	0.6	0.3	1.5	0.9
Europe	44.8	31.3	1.3	28.2	31.6	19.8	28.7
North America	25.0	21.6	95.3	22.3	16.3	11.4	30.7
Australia/New Zealand	18.2	5.5	0.0	8.0	4.2	3.0	8.0
Asia	4.0	2.8	2.8	2.1	3.4	3.3	3.2

Table 11: Leaving Home for the MLD							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Very easy/easy (%)							
To leave the country	43.0	43.4	36.2	35.8	37.0	39.8	39.7
To get a job	53.5	38.2	36.6	65.8	43.8	45.6	48.1
To get a job in your field	40.4	53.3	67.7	38.4	20.5	38.4	42.8
Each question is independent; columns do not total 100%							

customer service. Comparing the responses for different countries suggests that Zimbabweans and South Africans have the most positive perception of their MLD. While Zimbabweans are particularly attuned to the economic benefits in their MLD, South Africans focus more on safety and security issues.

The most important reasons given for emigrating to the MLD are given in Table 13. The three most important reasons are fairly consistent across the six nations: level of income, ability to find a job, and cost of living. The only respondents to rank the cost of living first were Zimbabweans. Economic and employment reasons clearly dominate the thinking of students when it comes to thinking about emigration.

Table 12: Conditions in the MLD							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Better or much better in MLD							
Cost of living	41.8	35.7	41.5	90.7	54.9	56.3	52.0
Ability to find the job I want	55.6	37.1	38.8	80.5	66.9	57.2	56.1
Prospects for professional advancement	59.6	51.6	54.9	81.8	80.1	62.7	64.5
HIV/AIDS situation	63.0	41.9	52.6	57.1	40.9	34.3	52.8
The security of your job	53.9	36.6	29.6	71.0	55.7	48.5	50.0
Your level of income	78.8	63.3	68.0	92.9	89.9	81.3	79.2
Ability to find a house you want to live in	36.9	33.6	43.0	70.7	65.0	56.8	49.2
Ability to find a good school for your children	50.7	51.3	56.0	71.5	70.0	64.2	59.4
Ability to find medical services for family and children	55.8	47.4	53.4	85.0	73.7	68.6	63.0
A level of fair taxation	40.9	26.3	24.8	79.2	43.1	33.4	41.3
Your personal safety	66.4	32.3	25.5	69.2	41.4	37.0	48.1
Your family's safety	66.2	30.0	23.2	67.4	39.4	34.9	46.7
The future of your children in your home country	47.3	34.4	37.1	68.4	50.9	50.6	48.1
Quality upkeep of public amenities (eg parks, beaches, toilets etc.)	65.8	55.0	59.7	78.7	74.3	67.6	66.7
Availability of quality affordable products	57.0	56.7	64.7	89.6	72.6	73.5	67.5
Customer service	53.5	49.4	54.8	80.9	62.9	59.1	59.3
Each question is independent; columns do not total 100%							

Table 13: Most Important Reasons to go to MLD							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Most important reasons to go to MLD							
Cost of living	7.4	9.7	10.8	25.2	8.5	10.2	11.6
Ability to find the job I want	13.2	8.9	9.8	16.2	17.5	13.0	13.2
Prospects for professional advancement	6.6	12.5	14.6	10.8	15.4	9.1	10.8
HIV/AIDS situation	5.5	7.9	4.3	0.6	1.3	0.0	3.5
The security of your job	5.7	3.8	4.2	3.0	6.6	5.0	4.8
Your level of income	17.8	14.3	21.5	18.0	23.5	17.7	18.6
Ability to find a house you want to live in	1.6	2.8	2.3	2.0	2.2	4.6	2.5
Ability to find a good school for your children	2.7	8.6	6.4	1.1	5.0	9.1	5.1
Ability to find medical services for family and children	1.9	3.9	5.4	3.3	4.3	5.4	3.8
A level of fair taxation	4.2	2.3	2.0	2.7	3.4	2.7	3.0
Your personal safety	10.7	3.9	3.0	4.7	2.6	3.2	5.4
Your family's safety	12.7	3.6	2.4	2.3	2.4	4.8	5.7
The future of your children in your home country	5.7	4.9	4.0	3.0	3.6	5.8	4.7
Quality upkeep of public amenities (eg parks, beaches, toilets etc.)	1.5	2.3	2.3	0.5	0.6	2.6	1.6
Availability of quality affordable products	2.0	6.9	5.3	6.1	2.4	4.0	4.2
Customer service	0.8	3.8	1.7	0.5	0.5	2.7	1.6
Combined totals for first, second and third most important reasons; percents are of total responses by country							

Thus far, we have shown that the emigration potential of SADC students is high and that economic factors are paramount when considering what to do in the future. The primary losers from the brain drain of new skills are likely to be Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho. The primary beneficiaries are likely to be North America and Europe and, within the region, South Africa and Botswana. South Africa, at the same time, is the likely to lose home-trained skills. Like countries such as Canada, South Africa is likely to be both a victim and a beneficiary of the brain drain.

GOING FOR GOOD?

Another important issue is the permanence of skills emigration. Do SADC students with itchy feet think they will leave for good? Around 30% of students said they wanted to move to their MLD for less than two years (40% more than two years) (Table 14). Slightly fewer (25% and 23%) said it was likely that they would do so. In other words, more students say that they want to stay away for longer than two years than say it was likely they would actually do so. Still, the figures are high. If nearly half of all new graduates are likely to leave their home country (and a quarter for longer than two years), this represents a significant long-term loss of skills.

Respondents were then asked how long they would stay away. Any move of up to five years duration can in some sense be seen as “temporary” (perhaps a desire to get further training or to earn more money at the outset of one’s career). Anything over 5 years can justifiably be seen as permanent. As Table 14 also shows, students leaving their home country would not see the move as short term (11% a year or less). Forty seven percent said their departure would be for a period of 1-5 years. Significantly, though, as many as a third saw the move as likely to be permanent. There are two groups of countries: South Africans (19%), Namibians (22%) and BaTswana (26%) are all less likely to go permanently; Zimbabweans (50%), Swazis (40%) and Basotho (40%) are more likely to do so.

Another measure of permanence relates not to length but to desired category of residence. In general, the desire to acquire permanent residence and citizenship in the MLD is relatively strong (Table 15). In other words, the answers to this question tend to confirm the strength of commitment to permanent emigration amongst a significant minority of students. Just over half of the respondents in Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho expressed a desire to acquire permanent residence in their MLD. However, in Namibia and Botswana only a third expressed similar interest. Similarly, more Zimbabweans and Swazis said they

Table 14: Length of stay in the MLD							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Extent of desire to move to MLD for less than two years							
Great extent	39.3	27.6	27.8	28.6	26.0	22.6	30.1
Some extent	39.8	40.7	40.7	38.2	40.7	37.6	39.6
Extent of desire to move to MLD for longer than two years							
Great extent	27.9	30.4	37.4	62.2	52.2	45.6	40.9
Some extent	35.8	30.8	35.9	22.5	28.9	25.5	30.5
Likelihood of moving to MLD for less than two years							
Very likely	27.2	17.7	16.0	20.8	15.6	51.3	25.3
Likely	42.3	42.4	39.6	40.3	44.7	0.0	35.6
Likelihood of moving to MLD for longer than two years							
Very likely	20.9	21.8	22.3	46.3	28.4	0.0	22.9
Likely	31.3	27.6	28.0	29.8	33.1	60.3	34.8
Only two top categories reported above							
Length of stay in MLD							
Less than 6 months	4.4	6.0	5.4	1.3	2.6	6.6	4.4
6 months to one year	10.0	9.6	4.2	2.7	5.0	5.8	6.7
1 to 2 years	31.5	25.5	16.8	7.7	12.0	14.1	19.6
2 to 5 years	26.4	25.9	37.7	30.3	26.6	22.6	28.0
More than 5 years	19.0	22.0	25.9	49.7	43.7	43.8	32.1
Don't know	8.7	11.1	9.9	8.3	10.0	7.1	9.1

would want to become citizens in their MLD. The highest percentages of respondents who desired to retire in their MLD were from Swaziland (38%), Zimbabwe (37%) and Lesotho (36%).

The impact of the brain drain can be mitigated somewhat if emigrants retain strong social and economic ties with home (Table 16). Less than 10% of the total sample were prepared to give up their home, take all of their possessions or all of their assets out of the country. Similarly, very few were willing to give up their citizenship. Zimbabwe is the main anomaly. Zimbabwean students are significantly more dissatisfied with their economic prospects and more willing to cut their links with home when they leave. Even there, however, the majority would retain links with home.

Table 15: Type of Residence in the MLD							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Extent of desire to become a permanent resident in MLD							
Large extent	15.8	8.9	10.1	32.8	23.2	26.9	19.2
Some extent	30.7	24.9	23.2	27.0	34.3	31.3	28.8
Average	46.5	33.8	33.3	59.8	57.5	58.2	48.0
Extent of desire to become a citizen in MLD							
Large extent	15.6	6.8	6.2	30.8	23.5	22.2	17.3
Some extent	30.5	19.6	19.7	26.5	32.5	25.6	26.4
Average	46.1	26.4	25.9	57.3	56.0	47.8	43.7
Extent of desire to retire in MLD							
Large extent	11.0	5.8	7.6	18.8	16.7	15.7	12.4
Some extent	20.9	11.0	15.0	18.5	21.4	20.4	18.3
Average	31.9	16.8	22.6	37.3	38.1	36.1	30.7
Only two top categories and average percentages for all five categories reported							

Table 16: Strength of Links with Home							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Willingness to give up home in home country							
Very willing	6.7	7.0	5.4	17.1	7.6	12.9	9.1
Willing	21.7	14.8	10.7	12.0	13.4	14.9	15.5
Willingness to take all possessions out of the country							
Very willing	5.9	4.0	3.1	14.1	7.7	7.0	6.8
Willing	20.2	8.6	8.2	12.1	10.1	10.6	12.8
Willingness to take all assets out of the country							
Very willing	6.6	3.7	3.3	14.7	14.7	7.4	7.8
Willing	17.7	9.2	6.2	9.6	9.6	10.5	8.1
Willingness to give up citizenship							
Very willing	4.8	4.0	3.2	17.0	8.6	9.6	7.5
Willing	9.6	7.2	5.2	8.9	12.4	8.6	8.8
Only two top categories reported							

Only 4% of students across the region said they would never return once they had left (10% of Zimbabweans) (Table 17). Over 60% said they would return at least once a year. Again, only 4% said they would not remit funds back home. The vast majority (63%) said they would send money home at least once a month. In general, students show a much greater willingness to maintain strong and regular contact with home than their older counterparts.

Table 17: Maintaining Links With Home							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Frequency of return to home country:							
Weekly	1.3	3.1	3.9	0.6	2.5	4.5	2.5
Monthly	6.3	9.1	9.5	6.7	18.7	25.6	11.8
Once every few months	34.2	23.6	25.5	20.7	32.3	28.6	28.3
Yearly	44.2	39.6	42.7	35.6	28.8	23.7	36.9
Once every few years	9.6	15.0	10.3	19.7	9.6	10.0	12.0
Never	1.2	2.0	2.8	10.5	4.3	4.2	3.8
Don't know	3.2	7.7	5.5	6.3	3.9	3.4	4.8
Frequency of sending money home:							
More than once a month	8.2	12.2	4.2	25.2	9.3	12.9	11.6
Once a month	44.9	45.5	47.4	46.0	66.7	64.5	51.5
A few times a year	19.6	21.6	24.4	16.1	15.7	13.4	18.6
Once or twice a year	7.3	9.8	12.8	3.8	2.2	2.9	6.6
Just once or twice	3.7	2.2	4.4	1.6	1.0	1.3	2.5
Never	8.7	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.4	2.7	3.7
Don't know	7.6	7.0	5.1	6.0	3.8	2.1	5.6

The likelihood of leaving is clearly higher if new graduates have the support of their families and they are well-connected with people who have already left. These are the final two issues addressed in this paper. Nearly half of the students felt that their family would encourage them to leave (Table 18). Family support for departure was perceived to be strongest in Zimbabwe (79%) and weakest in Botswana (33%).

Whatever the family sentiment, the vast majority of students in all countries said that they would make their own decision on whether or not to leave. Today's student is obviously relatively footloose and independent-minded when it comes to making life-changing decisions.

Knowledge about people who have already emigrated is shown in Table 19. A total of 34% said they have a family member who has emigrated. Highest and lowest percentages were found in Zimbabwe and Botswana with 56% and 19% respectively. In Zimbabwe, 79% knew of an extended family member who had emigrated. Across the region, 59% had close friends who have emigrated. Again leading the pack was Zimbabwe at 81%. Nearly 80% of Zimbabweans knew fellow students/trainees/colleagues or co-workers who had emigrated, compared

with a regional percentage of 60%. For most students, then, emigration would not be a step into the unknown.

Table 18: Leaving the Home Country							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Family attitude about leaving home country							
Strongly encourage	17.1	14.9	15.4	59.7	17.3	23.3	23.7
Encourage	27.5	20.9	18.4	19.6	22.0	23.3	22.7
Who would make final decision to move							
Self	77.1	65.2	71.5	78.7	67.3	69.4	72.2
Spouse/partner	8.8	9.0	12.3	8.5	9.6	13.6	10.1
Parents	10.2	18.2	11.1	8.1	18.2	12.2	12.7
Other family members	1.5	2.8	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	1.9
Others	1.1	1.1	2.1	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.3
Don't know	1.3	3.7	1.4	2.2	1.8	1.0	1.8

Table 19: Knowledge of People Who Have Left the Country							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Knows at least one or more emigrant amongst							
Members of immediate family	24.2	27.3	18.5	55.7	45.5	41.3	34.0
Members of extended family	44.7	40.3	35.6	78.8	66.4	62.4	53.5
Close friends	57.3	46.5	43.9	80.7	64.2	63.6	59.1
Fellow students / trainees / colleagues / co-workers	56.2	51.5	47.6	78.2	65.4	65.5	60.3
Has life become better or worse for the permanent emigrants?							
Much better	27.8	25.1	40.5	74.5	57.4	50.6	43.8
Better	34.5	26.3	20.2	17.5	26.3	23.9	26.0
Only two top categories reported							

Finally, the students were asked whether life had become better or worse for permanent emigrants. An average of about 70% of respondents across the six countries think life has improved with emigration (with 92% of Zimbabweans holding this opinion). In general, therefore, the students of SADC remain incorrigibly optimistic about emigration.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

The findings of this survey ought to be extremely sobering to all governments of the region. All are investing heavily in skills development. In happier times, these skills would be invested in the national and regional economy. Yet, there is a real danger that government is actually providing students with a passport out of their country and the region as a whole. This survey has identified considerably more than the understandable wanderlust of the newly-graduated. Across the region, large numbers of students are interested in and seriously considering leaving upon graduation. What can governments do to stem or reverse what is obviously an ongoing exodus? The survey asked students themselves this very question (Table 20).

When asked about national service, 39% agreed that people should complete some form of national service before enrolling at institutions of higher learning. The highest number in agreement was in Botswana and Lesotho, with 56% and 55% respectively. Most Zimbabwean students disagreed with any national service requirement.

Over half of the students (56%) felt that those who receive some form of government support should do some form of national service, but only 18% of the respondents held this view in Zimbabwe. With respect to policies that require citizens to work for some time in the country after completing their education, 41% were supportive. Highest percentages of support were found in Namibia (63%) and Lesotho (58%) while the lowest were in Zimbabwe (20%).

There was less support for the imposition of financial restrictions by governments. Also, the majority of students did not feel that the usual restrictive government measures to control the brain drain would make the situation worse by encouraging more to migrate. However, only 29% said that governments should pass legislation to make it more difficult to emigrate. The highest percentages were in Botswana with 35% and the lowest in Lesotho with only 14%. On the other hand, students were very clear about what governments should do to stabilize the situation. An average of 78% said that governments should encourage economic development in order to discourage out-migration. Over three-quarters of all respondents supported policies to encourage qualified professionals to return from abroad.

Table 20: Influence of Home Government Policies							
	South Africa	Namibia	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Lesotho	Average
Government is completely justified or justified to:							
Require citizens to complete national/public service before enrolling at institutions of higher learning	29.9	51.9	55.5	11.2	37.8	54.3	38.7
Require citizens who have received government bursaries for education to complete national service	64.9	69.0	55.8	17.5	48.3	70.3	55.6
Require citizens to work in the country for several years after completion of their education	31.2	62.9	46.4	20.1	36.1	58.2	41.3
Government is completely justified or justified to:							
Require citizens to pay taxes on all income earned outside of your country	25.5	39.6	36.7	19.7	29.3	51.6	32.6
Require citizens to pay a larger share of their income in taxes according to their ability to pay	24.3	31.9	26.4	22.5	24.3	33.5	26.8
Limit the amount of money you may send out of your country	26.7	41.2	32.0	22.0	36.7	47.9	33.3
It makes it much more likely or likely to migrate:							
If the government steps to make it more difficult to emigrate	32.3	27.6	24.1	32.3	20.1	27.8	28.0
If the government required people leaving schools to do one year national service in their area of expertise	38.8	33.9	29.4	35.8	29.4	31.8	33.9

Table 20 continued							
If the government was going to allow people to hold only one passport	32.1	30.6	19.3	30.3	22.4	26.6	27.5
If the government were to increase fees for emigration	26.9	22.4	22.6	26.9	17.3	21.5	23.5
Government should:							
Encourage economic development, which will discourage people from leaving	76.6	76.5	78.8	77.1	83.2	78.0	78.1
Enact legislation which will make it more difficult for students to migrate	26.8	45.1	35.4	25.4	26.1	14.3	28.5
Institute measures which encourage the return of qualified professionals abroad	58.7	60.2	59.1	42.7	49.6	30.8	51.2
Forge links in destination countries of emigrants to discourage them from employing emigrants	22.1	41.6	31.0	21.8	22.4	10.4	24.4
Prohibit emigration	20.3	47.6	31.8	23.2	24.5	7.3	24.9
Do nothing	1.2	17.7	10.9	3.7	16.3	5.9	7.9
Take other steps	28.8	8.4	13.7	46.2	92.3	3.4	12.8

CONCLUSION

In spite of the fact that most SADC students are proud of their country, have a strong sense of national identity, have a strong desire to help build their countries with their talents and skills, and want to play a role in their country's future, the findings from this research show that there is a high risk of a continued brain drain from all six countries. A major finding from the research is that many of the students, especially from Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland, were taking emigration very seriously. Across the six countries, about 36% of the students said it was likely they would emigrate within six months after

graduation. This increases to about 52% within two years of graduation.

The findings reveal extremely low levels of satisfaction about current, personal and national economic conditions. There were modest expectations about improvement in the future in all the six countries with the Namibians the most optimistic. The least optimistic were the Swazis. This pattern of low expectations about the future was reflected across a number of measures including ability to find a job, professional advancement and level of income. Most of the respondents felt that the government was not doing enough to create employment opportunities for graduates.

SADC students are well informed about living conditions in other countries and it is not surprising that three-quarters perceived developed countries, especially those in Europe and North America, as places where they could do better than at home. Within the region the preferred country of destination is South Africa and Zimbabwe the least preferred. Zimbabwe has the highest number of students who know of people who have emigrated. It is also the country with the most students that considered people were much better off outside their home country. Also, most Zimbabweans said that the lives of migrants from their country are much better abroad. From the research results, most of the respondents in the six countries cited the level of income, ability to find a job (not necessarily the job they were trained for), prospects for professional advancement and cost of living as important reasons to go to their MLD. The most important reason in five out of the six countries was the level of income. Almost 50% of students have considered becoming permanent residents in their MLD with the highest percentage from Zimbabwe closely followed by Lesotho and Swaziland. Almost as many have considered becoming citizens in their MLD. However, in all six nations, few have applied for emigration documents, permanent residence and citizenship in their MLD.

The students identified a number of home government policies that have some effect on the likelihood of migration. However, these policies were relatively insignificant when viewed against the major reasons for migration. To keep graduates at home, the students want significant job creation, economic development, opportunities for professional advancement and improvements in the quality of life in their home country. Without these things, new graduates will continue to look for opportunities to ply their trade in other countries. The prognosis for stopping and reversing the brain drain remains bleak if the students of SADC are to be believed.

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- 11 Not all categories for all questions are reported in the tables which means that columns do not always total 100%. Table percentages are reported to the nearest tenth of a percent while in the text percentages are rounded off to the nearest percent.
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