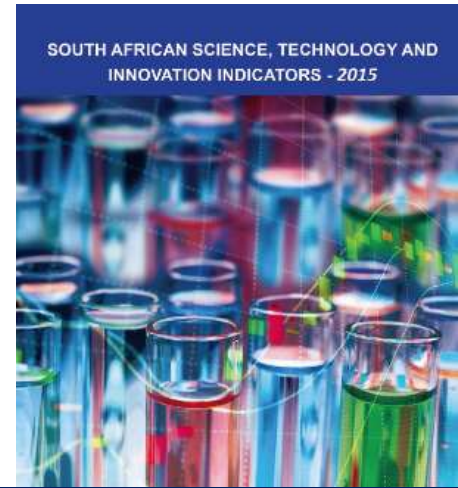
A large, artistic water droplet is the central focus, reflecting a rainbow spectrum. It is surrounded by abstract, flowing lines in shades of green, blue, and purple that create a sense of movement and depth. The background is a light, neutral color.

# Conceptualisation, thoughts and emerging issues regarding the impact of research and innovation

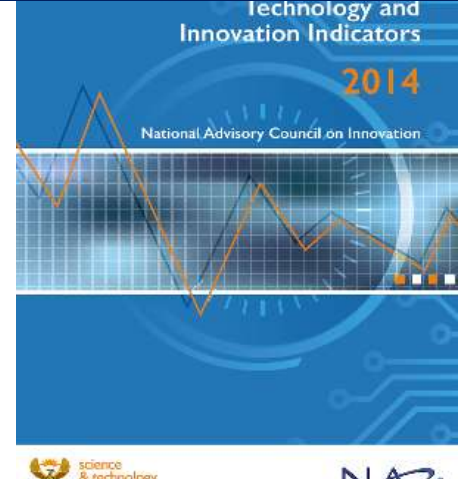
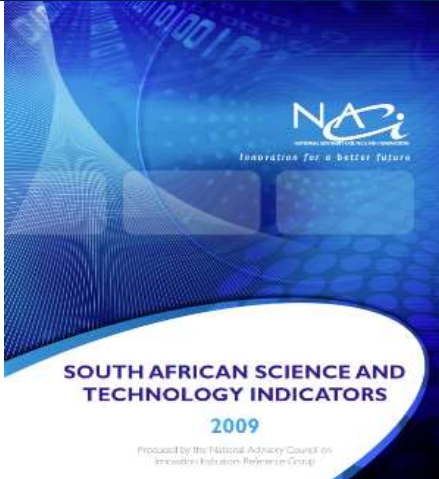
Dr Sibusiso Manzini, WRC Research Symposium,  
Sandton, 12 September 2019

# Outline

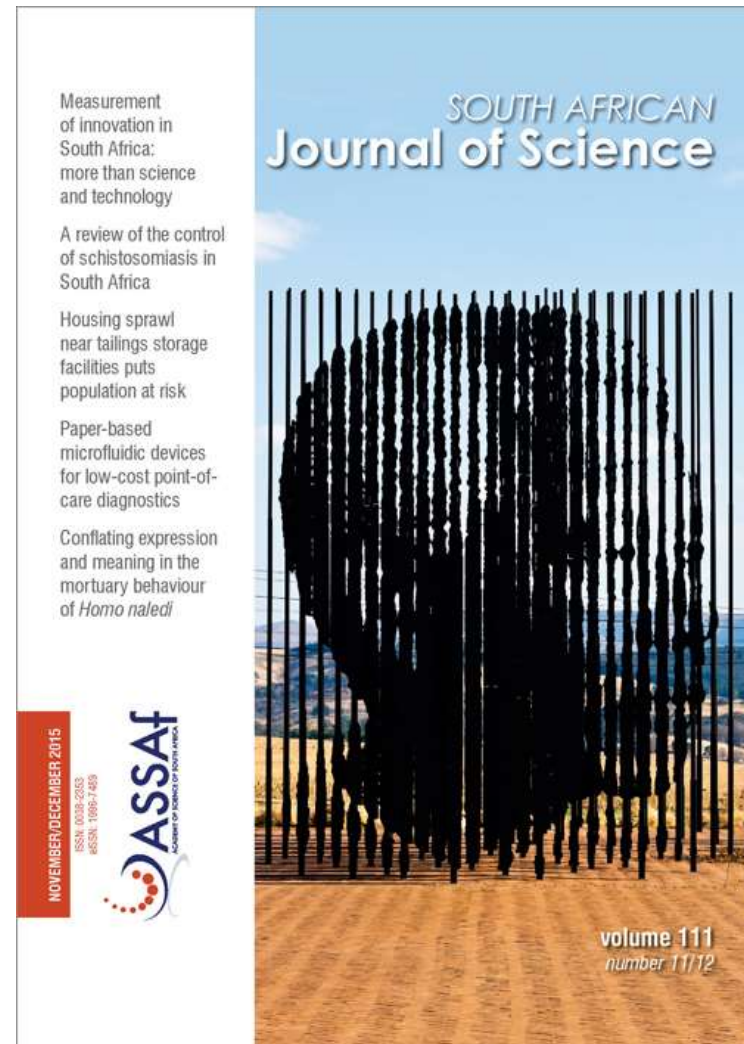
- More reports – less understanding?
- An analysis of innovation indicators
- The South African Innovation Index
- The 2019 STI Indicators Report
- Uncalled-for criticism of indicators
- South Africa in 2019
- Concluding thoughts

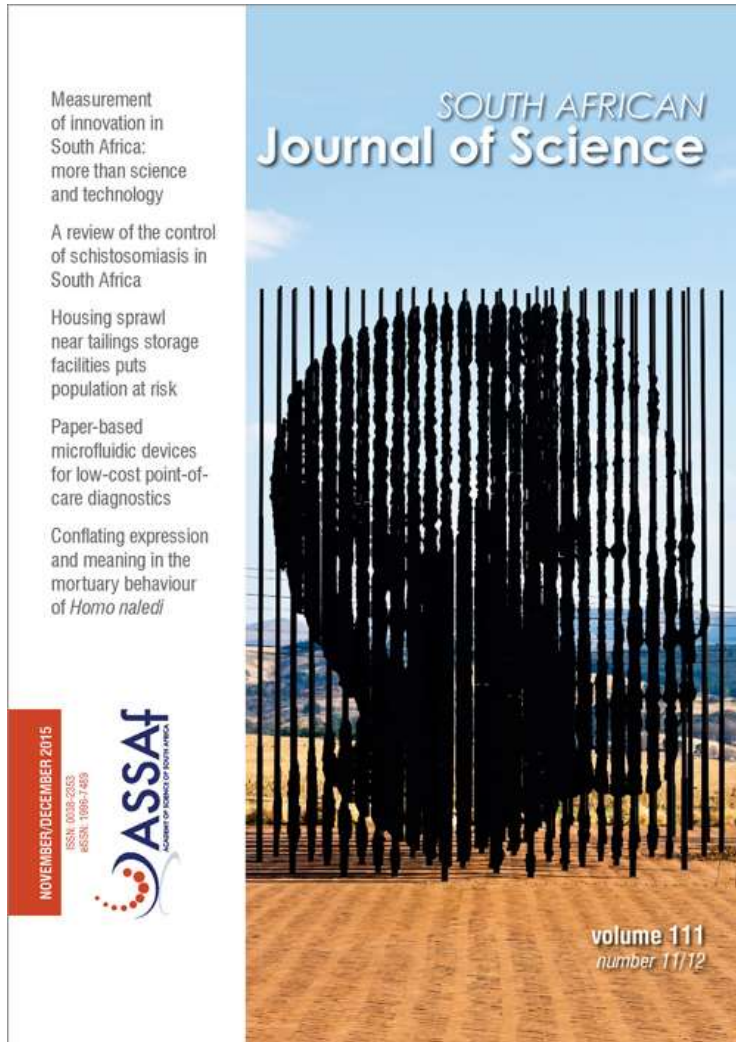


# More reports – less understanding?



Measurement of Innovation in South Africa: An analysis of survey metrics and recommendations. 2015. *SAJS*, Volume 111 Issue 11/12 (Pages 77-84)





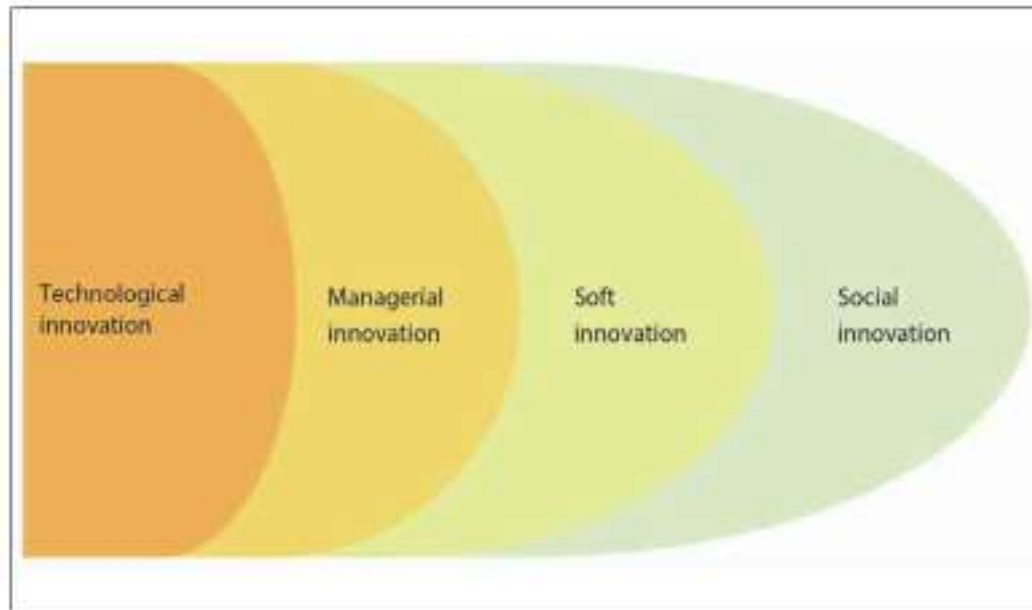
## PURPOSE

- Critique SA indicators
- Broaden perspectives on innovation
- Demonstrate the implications of a broader innovation perspective
- Propose new metrics for South Africa's NSI

# Gaps & Shortcomings in Indicators

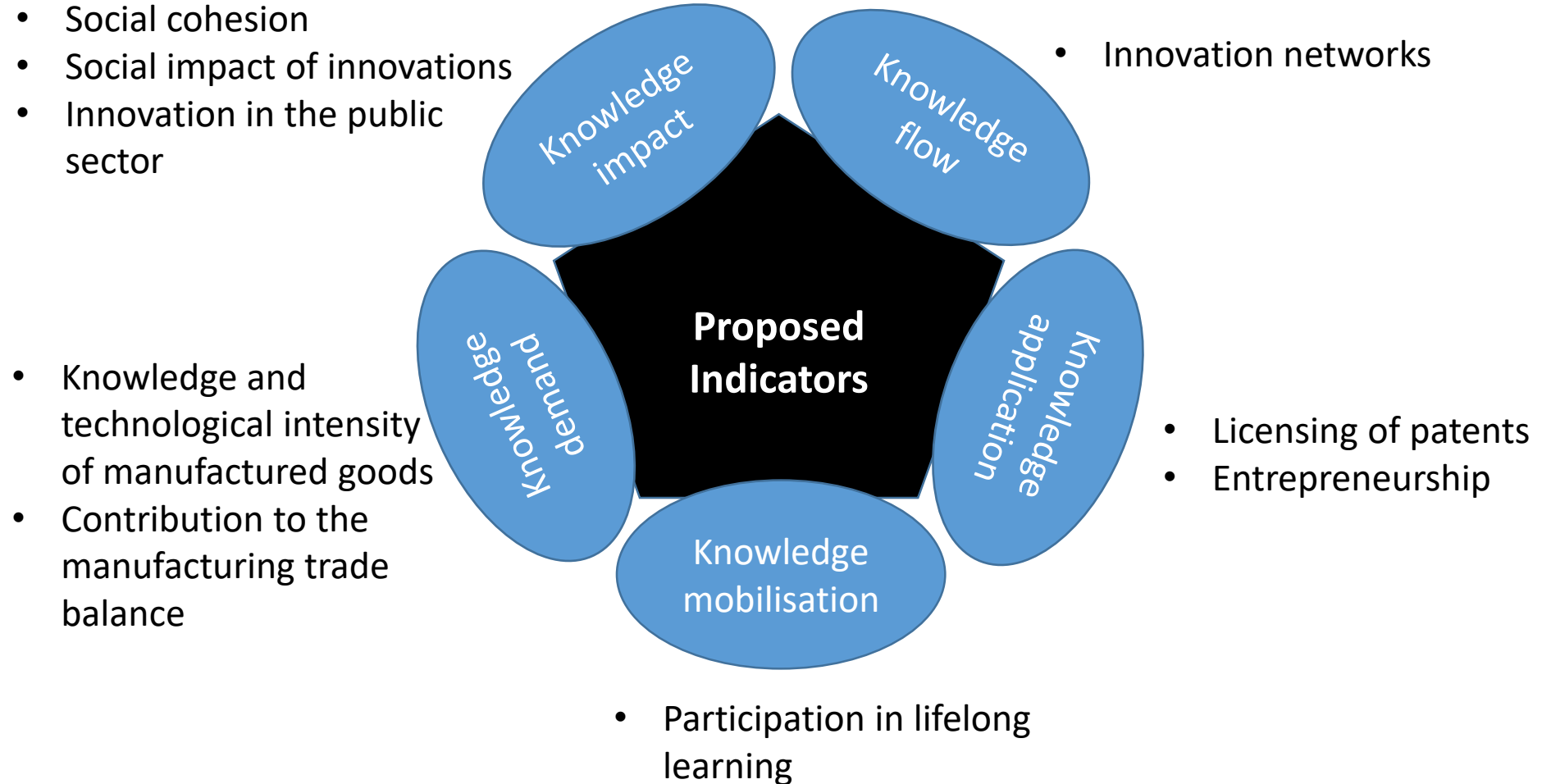
- Poor definition of non-technological innovation
- Emphasis on inputs rather than outputs
- Lack of regional and sectoral analysis
- Limited attention to innovation diffusion
- Subject to respondent interpretation
- Ignored the wider conditions of innovation
- No attention to linkages and learning

# Different types of innovation



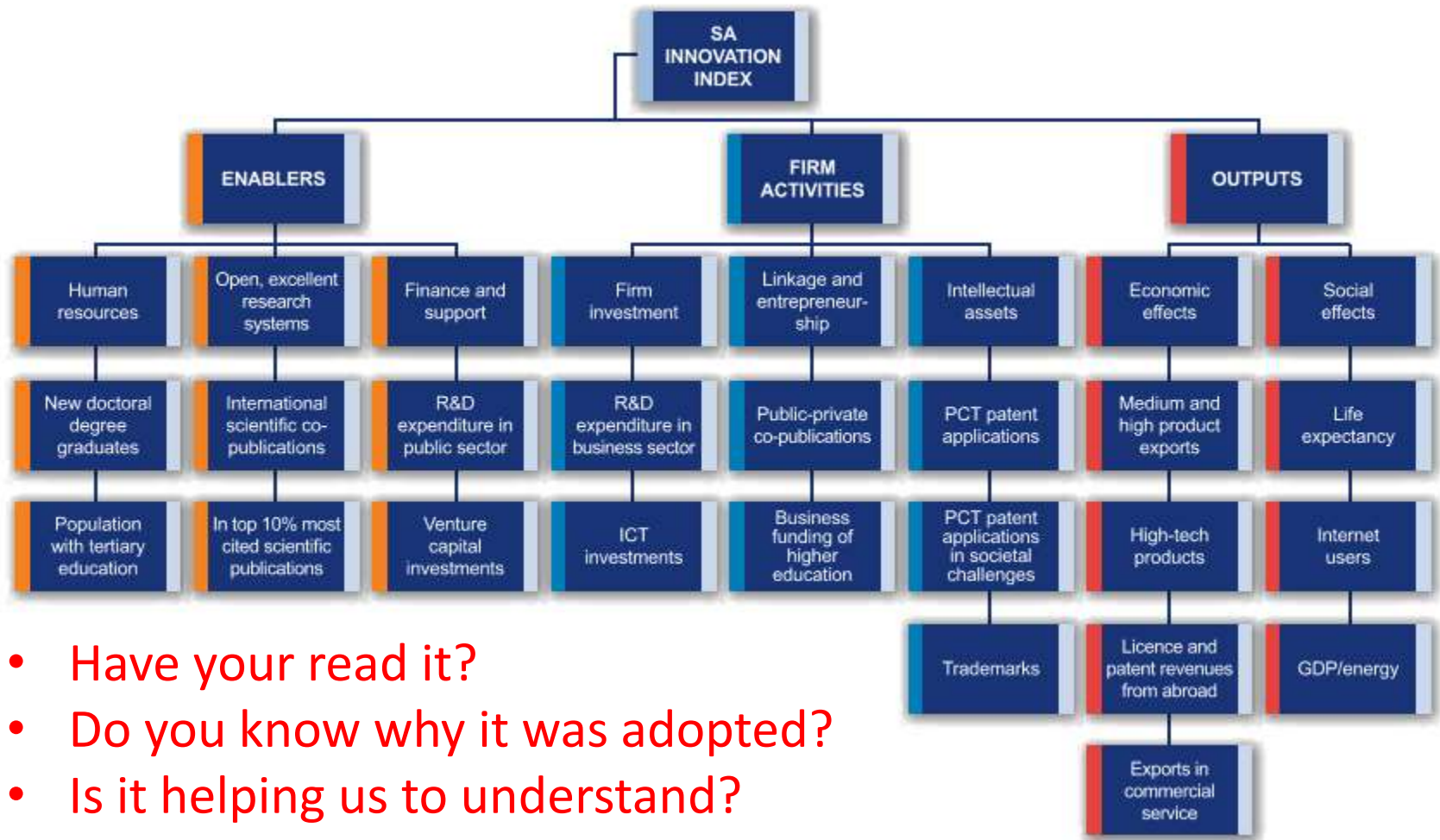
**Figure 1:** An illustration of the overlapping types of innovation.

# Proposed new indicators





# The South African Innovation Index



- Have you read it?
- Do you know why it was adopted?
- Is it helping us to understand?
- Did it address the shortcomings?

# Numbers don't lie – or do they?



- GERD – 0.82%
- STI Human Capital - ?
- Publications – 350/mil
- Patents – 38/mil
- Technology exports
- Human Development Index – 113/161

# Blame it on the mirror

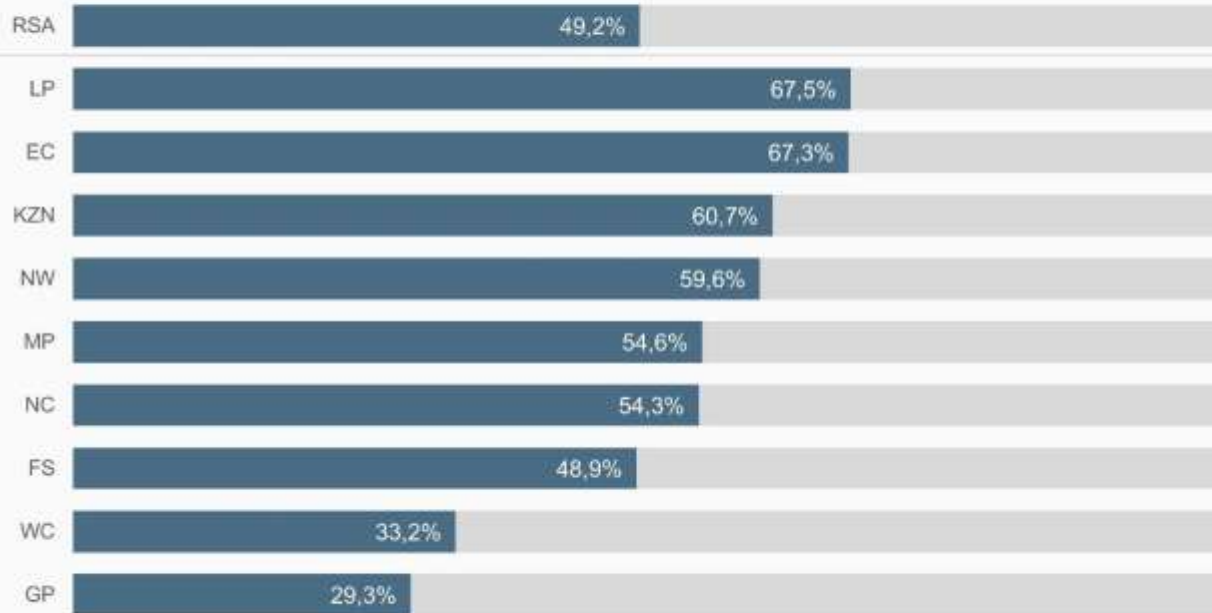
A growing chorus of uncalled-for criticisms

- “Indicators are decontextualized”
- “They don’t take into account the roles of local institutions.”
- “They advantage institutions in the developed world.”
- “Indicators essentially seek to homogenise.”

# Meanwhile, South Africa in 2019

## GP and WC had the lowest proportion of adults living in poverty

*Men, Women and Children: Findings of the Living Conditions Survey 2014/15*



# Who should we listen to?

- Ministers, DGs, CEOs, Annual Reports: “We are doing fine.”
- How do we know whether investments in research and innovation are working for SA?
- Who should we hear from?  
Whose report should we trust?



# We cannot just do research, nje!

- Publicly funded research cannot ignore these realities: poverty, inequality and unemployment
- Private research with any sense of social justice or ethics ought to address these chronic national challenges
- We have to value our people - including those who are skilled