

Dr Doreen Atkinson

Manager: Heartland and Karoo Institute, Philippolis, Free State, South Africa

Doreen Atkinson holds the following degrees: BA Hons (Politics): Rhodes University, 1982; MA (Political Science): Berkeley, California, 1984; and PhD (Political Science): Natal, Durban, 1992.

She has 20 years' research experience, at various institutions, including:

- The Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg, 1991-4
- McIntosh Xaba and Associates (based in Durban), 1994-2001
- Human Sciences Research Council (Research Director, Bloemfontein), 2002-4.
- In 2004, she established the Heartland and Karoo Research Institute, in the Free State Province, South Africa.

Dr Atkinson has extensive research experience in the local government sector, including development planning, organisational design, political leadership, infrastructure provision, and municipal finance. She has ten years' experience in rural development in arid areas. Relevant projects include:

- In 1998, she compiled the Free State Provincial Rural Development Strategy, as well as a development plan for 7 towns in the south-western Free State.
- In 1999, she participated in a study of rural livelihoods, using the Sustainable Livelihoods paradigm and methodology.
- She has done various research projects for the South African government (Municipal Demarcation Board) on all the phases of local government restructuring, between 1994 and 2000.
- During 2002, she led a research for DFID and the Department of Provincial and Local Government, which focused on linking municipal development planning with municipal budgets. The study included LED, land reform, rural-urban development dynamics, infrastructure provision, and environmental health.
- In 2002, she led an interdisciplinary research team to the US (funded by USAID), to study service delivery to farm workers. Her recent work includes community-based natural resource management (particularly communal grazing systems), small town development, and the community development dimensions of mining.
- In 2005, she undertook a study of the impact of mining on sustainable local development, for the Chamber of Mines in South Africa, and a study of a desert mining town (Arandis) in Namibia.

She has co-edited three books, including *From a Tier to a Sphere: Local Government in the new South African Order* (EISA, 2000), and *A Pathway to Sustainability: Local Agenda 21 in South Africa* (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2000). She is currently completing a book on the urbanisation of farm workers (for the Human Sciences Research Council).

She is currently working on the socio-economic aspects of arid areas in South Africa. She is putting together an international research proposal on the management of arid areas, with particular reference to urbanisation, small towns and sustainable livelihoods.