



African
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BACKGROUND PAPER 4

RESILIENCE INNOVATION

STUDYING RESILIENCE TO VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY
IN AFRICA

A Research and knowledge transfer programme by the African
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PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Three core sets of questions occupy our attention in this programme. First, what does resilience mean in African societies and states? Is resilience what we think it means in those places? What separates the notion of resilience in the African context from other contexts? Second, in what realms can we find evidence of the most robust structures and instruments of resilience to destructive conflict, violence and large-scale insecurity including disasters? Are the most prominent places the most robust sources of resilience? Third, through what mechanisms and processes can we develop, transfer and scale up ideas and methods that offer solutions that make societies more resilient to destructive conflict, violence and disaster?

In seeking to address these questions this programme focuses on “society” rather than the “state” as an entry point from which to study interventions and approaches that work or fail to build resilience in societies and states affected by conflict, violence, disaster and large scale insecurity. To be sure, it recognizes the important role of the state. But we contend that in the process of solution seeking there is the tendency to relegate ideas and interventions outside the view of the state, which provide some evidence of success, to the background. More so, many African societies demonstrate a fine measure of resilience when compared to the state. As such, there is potential to upscale some of the experiences for application at the level of the state.

The three research streams identified by the programme are indicative of this. The first focuses on models and practices of managing insecurity and violence among non-state actors. In particular, it seeks to understand the nature of the social contract between citizens and non-state actors and why some non-state actors are able to purchase the loyalty of citizens even the state tends to struggle to achieve this. We will examine lessons of resilience that are transferrable to the state from the experiences of various African communities.

The second research stream on “Youth bulge as resilience” locates itself at the intersection of competing narratives of ‘youth as risk’ and ‘youth at risk.’ It questions the dominant narrative that interprets Africa’s youth bulge as a burden and young people as purveyors of violence and insecurity and intervenes in the narratives that frame the youth as risk and argues that there is much excellence outside the realm of the state among youth. The programme will examine some of these including, for example, youth’s use of technology to build resilience and draw scale-able lessons.

The third research stream, “simulating alternative leadership perspectives: building resilience through leadership as process” argues that contexts of violence and conflict are better understood, and responses enhanced, by defining and applying leadership as process rather than as a phenomenon that relies on an individual leader in a particular position of authority. Through a series of simulation exercises, we will seek to show how alternative leadership perspectives might have altered the course in select situations.

More importantly, the programme will also simulate the leadership approaches in the transfer of solutions and methods identified through the research. We will seek to develop next generation scholars in this area of research through a combination of emerging scholars’ Fellowships targeting, think tanks, private sector; small research grants and doctoral and post-doctoral Fellowships. The partners’ extensive collective network and convening power will be leveraged to facilitate uptake of the research among policy practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

Innovations in resilience to violent conflict and insecurity in African societies

The main question at the core of this research and knowledge transfer initiative is what interventions and approaches work or fail to build resilience to conflict, violence and large-scale insecurity in African societies?

In addressing this question, we will focus over time on various African regions over the next five years, starting with East Africa.

A key feature of this programme is its deliberate focus on “society” rather than the “state” as an entry point from which to study interventions and approaches that work or fail to build resilience in societies and states affected by conflict, violence, and disaster. The search for effective responses to conflict, violence, disaster and large scale insecurity; and efforts to build affected societies' capacity for recovery while harnessing their internal resources to avert future crisis are overwhelmingly state-centric (Rotberg 2004; Mazrui, 1995; Zartman 1994: 1-15). It is difficult to challenge any effort geared toward the revival of societies reeling from the effects of armed conflict, violence or humanitarian tragedy. It is harder still to fault any underlying intentions to build the resilience of affected states and societies to mitigate against relapse or prevent future crisis. The source and target of an intervention seeking these ends are hardly the focus of society or indeed observers, particularly when they deliver results and meet crucial needs on the ground. Besides, this focus on the state is entirely understandable and a natural inclination given the state's expected role as the harbinger of security and final arbiter of society's contradictions. The reality however, is that in the process of solution-seeking there is the tendency to relegate ideas and interventions outside the view of the state that

provide evidence [even if anecdotal] of success, to the background.

To be sure, there is still much to discover about what is effective in state-based and driven efforts – past and present – or why some such interventions have proven to be ineffective. At the same time, there are many unknowns about interventions that occur outside of the state in societies affected by conflict, violence and disaster. Penetrating the murky terrain of seemingly unstructured societies afflicted by conflict, violence or insecurity might offer less attraction for those seeking answers in real time. Yet therein lie ideas and approaches that are organic in their evolution, original in their nature, and adaptable to the situation confronting that society. If and where such ideas and interventions exist, it seems eminently sensible to learn more from them and test their potential for up-scaling and transfer across societies and from societal to state-level.

We are thus deliberate in our focus on a problem-driven and ground-up approach in our study of interventions and approaches that work or not in building society's resilience to armed conflict, violence and disaster – with a view to identifying potential solutions that work not just for society but that can be up-scaled to influence state-centric approaches.

Our aim is to generate knowledge deriving from the experiences/ challenges confronted by target East African societies on issues of conflict, violence and disaster. From this, solution-based ideas and intervention methods can be derived, which can be shared and tested by policy makers, practitioners as well as other researchers. Knowledge produced by the Resilience Innovation Hub will offer clarity about enablers and disablers of resilience and produce ideas and identify potential solutions that can be further tested by critical actors in the region and applied beyond the region especially by other regional Hubs.

CONTEXTUALISING RESILIENCE

Developing Core Research Questions and Research Streams

A number of questions will occupy our attention in this programme as it seeks to produce solutions-oriented knowledge about state and societal resilience to conflict, violence and disaster in Africa. Central to this is the question of what constitutes resilience in Africa and more specifically within the East African region under study. In a relatively short period, discourses on resilience have assumed varying perspectives across disciplines. And we have witnessed the evolution of resilience studies from ideas and perspectives in natural and physical sciences, which laid emphasis on the ability of 'systems to reshape after disturbance', to ecological perspectives on 'ability of ecosystems to absorb and maintain functionality' (Mackinnon and Derickson 2013:255).

The understanding and application of the concept of resilience in social sciences has certainly influenced policy frameworks and approaches to security, not least in international financial institutions and development agencies (Welsh 2014; Walker and Cooper 2011). When considered from a social science perspective, the normative assumption in resilience is that individuals and communities should not be viewed as vulnerable victims who need saving but 'active agents capable of self-transformation' (Chandler 2012: 217). Interestingly, these paradigms have enabled a shift from state-centric (even if Eurocentric) approaches, to society-centric approaches and practices in security as well as in crisis and emergencies (Lentozos and Rose 2009; O'Malley 2010; Schott 2013).

However, when considered in the context of Africa, there is a quandary about not only how to build the resilience of individuals, communities and states but also divergent perspectives of what resilience means. Recent studies suggest a variance in Eurocentric and African ideas and conceptualisations of resilience (Theron et al 2013). Thus there is a need to better understand what constitutes resilience in the African context.

This calls not only for innovative approaches that involve rigorous interrogation of the concept but also goes beyond integrating various socio-cultural facets of individuals and community ideas of resilience to one that encourages participatory processes of generating these ideas; if you will, an organic idea of resilience that is every day in evidence within societies confronted with conflict, violence and other forms of insecurity. What is more, in the African context, anecdotal evidence in a number of conflict and violence affected societies (e.g. Guinea-Bissau, Somalia) suggests a disparity in capacity for resilience between state and society. Thus, while the state and its core institutions appear weak and vulnerable to crisis, their societies remain visibly resilient. This phenomenon of weak states and strong societies is worth a closer examination.

Regardless of the variances in understanding and interpretation, there is consensus across the board about the existence of and value of inbuilt mechanisms and resources that shield communities of people from the worst effects of crises. And this is the central message of resilience. Research in this programme will therefore concern itself with the following sets of central questions:

01 *What does resilience mean in African societies and states? Is resilience what we think it is in those places? What separates the notion of resilience in the East African context from other contexts?*

02 *In what realms can we find evidence of the most robust structures and instruments of resilience to destructive conflict, violence, disaster and insecurity? Are the most prominent places the most robust sources of resilience?*

03 *Through what mechanisms and processes can we develop, transfer and scale up ideas and methods that offer solutions that make societies more resilient to destructive conflict, violence, disaster and large scale insecurity?*

Proposed research streams

We propose to explore the following three inter-related research streams, with each focusing on a set of operational questions, which will guide the work of three research clusters in the first four years of the Hub's operation:

01 *Models and practices of managing violence and (in) security by non-state actors*

02 *Youth bulge as resilience*

03 *Building resilience through alternative leadership perspectives*

Each of the research streams interrogates the intersections of conflict, violence and insecurity such as disaster. We will explore the extent to which resilience to disaster, for example, also provides resilience to other vulnerabilities and ultimately assess whether the same resources that are needed for resilience to violence and conflict are the same ones needed for other forms of insecurity such as disaster. This intersection of conflict, violence and insecurity reveal interesting interconnections.

RESEARCH CLUSTER ONE

Models and practices of managing violence and (in) security by non-state actors

There is more than anecdotal evidence to support the existence and fair measure of influence that non-state actors command among citizens in the management of conflict, violence and insecurity manifested in the form of various threats across African communities. It is the case that many non-state actors and sources command the loyalty of a significant number of citizens while the state sometimes struggles to command such loyalty.

This is not a factor that is unique to East Africa but is widespread across many African states [Olonisakin, Ikpe and Badong 2009; Olonisakin, 2012]. The existence of a sustained level of citizens' commitment to non-state actors and sources has rightly raised concerns about the inadequate connectedness between African states (and state institutions) and citizens.

However, this concern is often intensely manifested in the area of security provision through the activities of civil militia and other armed groups including, for example, Mungiki, Sungusungu, Boko Haram, Bakassi Boys, to name just a few. The havoc wrought by some of these groups particularly when political conflict escalates, leads many to dismiss non-state actors as nothing more than criminal groups and purveyors of violence. Not surprisingly, this is also often tied to the youth question i.e. "youth as risk".

The reality on the ground in most of the contexts where citizens are loyal or exercise deference to non-state systems and actors is that physical security is not the only area in which non-official actors respond to citizens' needs. Frequently, non-state institutions provide alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; and they exploit their social organisation for communal protection in times of crisis among other things. But it seems that these issues that do not hold the threat of physical violence or potential for competition with state actors tend to receive less attention from official sources. While this has the effect of letting non-state systems and communities "get on" with

practices that tend to work for them, there are several risks inherent in this.

First and perhaps more critical is that the negative impact of these practices continue unabated. This tends to include structural issues at the core of violence such as societal norms, beliefs and values, which invariably become entrenched if left unchecked. As such, the same non-state actors that prevent and mediate conflict, and organise against violence and disaster, might sustain inequality and abuse of their members including sanctioning the exclusion of women, and intimidation of those with minority opinions and worldviews or other non-conforming minorities. Indeed, this potential for abuse that resides within non-state institutions and practices is what makes them unattractive to many progressive state actors.

Notwithstanding the ambivalence that surrounds non-state actors, it is difficult to dispute their effectiveness in certain areas particularly where the state has been unwilling and unable to meet the needs of the population. They have also, for good or bad, served to build resilience in their communities in difficult situations including in the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya where non-state actors were notable first responders to the crisis. The real challenge however is whether some of the ideas and methods that facilitate resilience within non-state systems can be refined and adapted beyond the communities where they are presently practiced with active investment of the state. A recent speech by Kenya's Chief Justice, which draws from the Judicial Transformation Framework, 2012-2016, seems to signal state willingness to grant greater recognition to non-state systems of justice. In a bid to unclog the court system with backlog of cases numbering in the thousands, he has urged that people seek alternative systems of dispute resolution from their "churches, mosques, elders and neighbours". While this is not indicative of a systematic effort to turn to non-state sources, it certainly confirms the existence and the legitimacy of such channels.

This programme proposes to investigate the potential sources of resilience to conflict, violence and insecurity within non-state systems, while highlighting areas of failure.

We will look at both non-state actors that provide alternative channels of conflict prevention and de-escalation and organised responses against disaster; and those that serve as managers of the instruments of violence across East Africa. In relation to the activities of both sets of non-state actors, we will seek to ask the following questions:

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- 01 *What is the nature of the 'social contract' between citizens and non-state actors and institutions? Why are they able to purchase the loyalty of a significant number of citizens?*

 - 02 *How do non-state actors manage sources and instruments of violence?*

 - 03 *How is crime and insecurity handled in non-state settings?*

 - 04 *What models of social organisation and social hierarchy produce resilience, are resilient to (destructive) change e.g. disaster and violence? Can they be transformed?*

 - 05 *What can the state learn from these experiences? How can we translate what works in this realm into a workable common national and regional agenda and programme?*

 - 06 *What can we learn from these societies about the management of radicalisation? How do they de-radicalise or reduce exposure to violent radicalisation among young people?*

We will look at the non-state areas to which citizens tend to retreat in times of crisis and from where they seek protection. The following are some issues worth examining under this programme:

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- 01 *What forms of social organisation helps societies prepare and for and deal with natural or climate related disasters in East Africa? What local early warning mechanisms are trusted by communities but*

rarely taken into account by official sources? What lessons can be transferred?

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- 02 *How land and other conflicts are mitigated by alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. The experiences of the Abunzi – local mediators – in Rwanda, for example are instructive in this regard. Can such systems mitigate the difficult issue of land conflict across East Africa? If they can, why are they/ not the medium of choice? Lessons will be drawn across East African societies about the role of traditional methods of conflict resolution, their accessibility to all citizens, and the extent to which they generate resilience, given that they are not entirely free from politicisation and instrumentalisation by political actors.*

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- 03 *What channels of influence moderate the use of instruments of violence among non-state actors? What determines whether the means of violence is deployed for protection or harm? Persistent insecurity and crime in both urban and rural areas, combined with limited presence of state security has often seen the emergence of vigilante groups and extremist elements. While these groups are viewed as operating outside the boundaries of the state, they command loyalty and legitimacy of their communities in particular within the youth constituencies.*

RESEARCH CLUSTER TWO

Youth bulge as resilience

This research stream locates itself at the intersection of competing narratives of 'youth as risk' and 'youth at risk!' It questions the dominant narrative that interprets Africa's youth bulge as a burden and young people as purveyors of violence and insecurity. This cluster intervenes in the narratives that frame the youth as risk. Literature that supports this argument has grown by accretion since Kaplan first warned of the "coming anarchy" in 1994. Although less extreme than Kaplan in their analysis, others have argued that a youth bulge i.e. the predominance of young people in society, without corresponding planning, unlike the experience of South Korea, for example, which took advantage of its own youth bulge, spells doom. Arguably, a youth population unplanned for is likely to put pressure on systems and predispose young (male) people to violence (Cincotta 2005).

According to United Nations projections, Africa is experiencing a rising youth bulge that is likely to continue until 2050. At least two of the countries in East Africa (Uganda and Tanzania) will be among the four most populous African states in 2050. At this moment, East Africa reportedly has one of the youngest populations in the world. Between 2005 and 2010, East Africa's population grew by 24 million and it is estimated that it will reach 237 million by 2030. In 2010 alone, the youth population (15-34 years) was estimated at 48 million, which is 45 % of the total population of the region. This age bracket is expected to grow in the next 20 years to 82 million people.

While there is some merit in aspects of the policy approaches to dealing with the African youth question, much of the responses to the region's youth bulge by state and regional actors are less-than imaginative if not ineffective. However, official responses to the challenges confronting African youth, while correct in its definition and identification of affected population is grossly inadequate in its approach to addressing youth concerns having already succumbed to faulty diagnoses of their challenges.

With a framing of the problem in ways that pigeon hole African youth as posing a risk to the state and society, rather than people at risk; and an inference that employment is a panacea to addressing youth problems thus taking them from the course of violence, it has been difficult to innovate in tackling the complex challenges that face the larger society that youth are a part of. Indeed, the knock-on effect of tagging youth in these contexts as a "risk" to society is that they invariably become excluded from official and mainstream life and thus relegated to the margins of the state where they are rendered vulnerable to the influence of escalating conflict and the enterprise of violence.

There are diverging conceptual definitions of who constitute the youth including cultural and socio-economic variances policy responses have correctly defined the age categories of youth. Officially, the youth population includes any person within the age structure of 15-35 years. This age structure is inclusive of the various policy definitions of youth adopted within the East Africa countries and the African Union through its Youth Charter. As such what counts as youth in Africa i.e. people of ages 15-35 years varies sharply from the global definition (i.e. ages 12-24 as defined by ILO and World Bank; and ages 15-24 as defined by the UN). The sharp variation in definition correctly responds to the evidence that people in this categorization suffered a significant measure of arrested development over time in Africa for a host of reasons.

Many scholars and policy makers alike are therefore locked in a frame and mind-set that sees only doom particularly when youth bulge intersects with escalating or unmanaged conflict on the one hand and youth exclusion. It is clear that these intersections are potentially dangerous and a possible consequence is that more youth are rendered vulnerable to violent radicalisation. It is therefore tempting to assume that if only jobs were found for idle and marauding youth, society would be at peace. But this

RESEARCH CLUSTER TWO

Youth bulge as resilience

narrative is faulty to say the least. If we were to accept the logic that many unemployed and angry youth are peddlers of insecurity and are likely to spread violence across African countries, then East Africa should be far more insecure and unliveable given its rising youth bulge and the high rate of youth unemployment. It is this faulty logic, which underpins perceptions about African youth that compels this programme to propose an agenda that looks beyond the crisis-causing role and potential of youth. We argue that the exclusion of a large community of young people from mainstream life has increased the space for dynamism and experimentation outside of the state. As such, youth relegated to the edge of the space have innovated paths back into mainstream life, which consist of models that either disable or enable resilience. The search for workable and transferrable models of resilience must look into these spaces.

Evidence from an earlier study (2006-2009) on youth vulnerability and exclusion in seven West African countries led by the Principal Investigator, showed that young people are resourceful and resilient and that there was no cause for the alarm raised about youth in policy debates. The seven case studies indicated that local context was important for understanding the situation of youth, while also demonstrating that it was possible to draw common lessons that would be useful for policy interventions and programme design that would enable relevant approaches to the challenges confronting youth in the region. To the extent that it is possible and relevant, the Hub will draw from the experiences of other regions including findings from such studies.

In this proposal, beginning with the assumption that there is much evidence of excellence outside the state through innovations among youth, we seek to penetrate the cities in which East African youth operate to look for the innovations that keep majority of young people occupied away from

theatres of destructive conflict and violence or to survive these very theatres without necessarily being violent themselves. The following specific questions will be crucial for our understanding of resilience among East Africa's youth:

01 *In what realms and spaces is excellence located among East African youth?*

02 *What acts as a bulwark against violent radicalisation among youth and how can it be enhanced to continue preventing violent radicalisation?*

03 *What are the main indicators of youth experimentation outside of the state? Which of these indicators offer the potential for transfer of innovation and resilience to mainstream life?*

04 *How correct or far-off are state-led ideas and methods of youth inclusion? What can East African states learn from youth strategies of resilience in order to be more effective in its engagement with the changing demographic profiles and the transitions taking place in the region?*

The following are some of the potential areas that will form part of the focus of the study across East Africa:

Youth and Innovation

Technology has become the site on which youth innovation has grown exponentially and the basis on which their 'invitation' by default into the formal economic sector has been defined. It is clear that creativity thrives both formally and informally and that these narratives not only nuance conversations on youth and employment but also challenge the negative conceptualization of the youth bulge. Certainly, technology and social media has been effectively used to drive positive change, galvanise and

See: Kenya. (2010). The constitution of Kenya. Nairobi, Government Printer; Republic Of Uganda [RoU]. (2001). The National Youth Policy: A Vision For Youth In The 21st Century. Kampala, Ministry Of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Kampala. <http://www.k4health.org/system%252Ffiles%252FUGanda%2BNational%2BYouth%2BPolicy.pdf> ; Republic of Uganda [RoU]. (2000). National Adolescent Health Policy. Kampala, Department Of Community Health, Reproductive Health Division <http://www.Youth-Policy.Com/Policies/Uganda%20national%20adolescent%20health%20policy.Pdf> ; Republic of Rwanda [RoR]. (2005). National Youth Policy. Rwanda, Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports. http://www.miniyouth.gov.rw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=143&lang=en ; See summary paper at: <http://securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/CSDG%20Papers%2021%20Summary.pdf>

channel public discontent, political mobilization, governance and civil awareness (Omanga and Chepngetich-Omanga 2013).

A few examples include:

The development of what has become the largest internet service provider in Africa - Africa Online in 1994 by three young Kenyans.

The founders of a market access tool that relies on an SMS and a web based application to disseminate agricultural information to farmers.

Ushahidi, the open source crowd sourcing tool.

'Nduru' (scream) is a Kenyan phone application that allows people to reduce their chances of disaster on the country's notorious roads by reporting accidents or any other volatile situations, such as reckless drivers and dangerous vehicles.

Bomb detection device: *Three Ugandan A-Level students have invented a device that can detect and detonate bombs, particularly the Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) commonly used by the terrorists that have blighted East Africa in recent years. The device uses Bluetooth for movement control and Wifi to send signals. It can be steered through suspected bombsites using a remote control within a twenty-metre radius, minimising the risk to counter-terrorism officers. It is particularly designed to detonate the improvised devices that are increasingly popular with terrorists.*

The development of iHub, Nairobi's technology innovation incubator.

In response to the famine in Northern Kenya, a campaign initiated by a young Kenyan, Ahmed Salim, in collaboration with Kenya Red Cross urged Kenyans to skip at least one meal in order to donate the cost of a meal to feed starving Kenyans in Northern part of the country. The campaign raised 4,901,978.00 Euros through donations via the mobile payment transfer solution, M-Pesa.

Notwithstanding these positives, the use of social media in East Africa by the youth can both enable and hinder resilience. Social Media tools can be used to polarize citizen debates and attitudes. The use of social media for example has been used to spread hate speech during electioneering periods in Kenya and against the sexual minority communities in Uganda. The use of technology and social media by youth in East Africa therefore provides a rich empirical basis for analyzing resilience systems within the youth population in East Africa.

This programme will be especially interested in exploring some of these youth innovations, in particular, to see how they enable or disable resilience among communities vulnerable to conflict, violence and disaster. We will collect comprehensive data around the East African region over several years using innovative data collection methods including surveys using mobile collection tools; social and mainstream media data mining tools; and in-depth discussions with various stakeholders.

The Hub will also set up a central database to curate this information which can further be developed to include an analysis and visualization platform that links to all the data collected. Special focus will be put on data mining and Natural Language Processing algorithms using open source software such as Python and R. In this regard, the programme will explore the possibility of collaborating with iHub technology consulting firm based in Nairobi.

Omanga, D., & Pamela C. (2013). Twitter and Africa's "War on Terror": News Framing and Convergence in Kenya's Operation Linda Nchi. In: Olorunnisola, A. A., & Douai, A. New media influence on social and political change in Africa. Hershey, Pa, IGI Global (701 E. Chocolate Avenue, Hershey, Pennsylvania, 17033, USA).

As such, the aim is to build institutions that will invariably “take care” of the leadership factor even though how this is done is never made explicit. In conflict and violence affected societies, where institutions are relatively weak or perhaps non-existent, leadership becomes a really important variable in the process of building peace and stability, quite often a process that builds on the resilience in society. Despite the recognition of the weakness of Africa's institutions by policy practitioners, typically, leadership is engaged in the most simplistic of ways during peace processes.

Academic literature, which engages leadership more scientifically, explores the phenomenon from its various perspectives and across disciplines. In so doing, leadership exposes its complexity and presents various alternatives for dealing with the construct. Among other things, four main perspectives are highlighted in the study of leadership: position, results, traits and process. Grint (2010), for example, asks four profound questions in his presentation of four alternative definitions of leadership, which help capture the complexity of leadership while focusing the analyst's mind on the key issues and questions:

Leadership as position: is it where leaders operate that make them leaders?

Leadership as person: is it who the leaders are that make leaders?

Leadership as result: is it what leaders achieve that makes them leaders?

Leadership as process: is it how leaders get things done that makes them leaders?

The critiques of some of these approaches to leadership; and the questions thrown up by the situations of violence and conflict to which solutions are being sought, invariably de-emphasize some definitions of leadership and focus our attention on one for the purposes of this research agenda. For example, defining leadership as position or as person – as typically done in the analysis of African politics and governance discussed above – does not help explain the absence of sustainable stability or failure to transfer resilience in violence and conflict-affected situations that experience massive injection of local and international

investment.

On their own, leadership as person or leadership as position does not guarantee effective solutions in such contexts. Removing a particular position or a person from leading a process or institution does not guarantee lasting peace. At the same time, delivering results yields relatively little for sustainable peace if the process through which those results were achieved cannot withstand key tests.

Results, including ceasefire agreements, comprehensive peace agreements and elections, for example, can be short lived if the process that produced these results did not carefully deal with the factors at the roots of crises and if it did not reflect the mutual needs and interests of the protagonists and the rest of society. In effect, defining leadership as process is more helpful than the other definitions, in terms of addressing the unending questions about the persistence of conflict and violence in society and the failure to address their deep-seated roots; and failure to transform the channels of resilience toward positive outcomes. The traits of the individual leader do not serve to address this question. The leader's position within an organization or country does not go far enough to explain the gaps.

In this research, we argue that contexts of violence and conflict are better understood, and responses enhanced, by defining and applying leadership as process. Context matters in leadership and the importance of context cannot be overstated in this regard. Defining leadership as process allows us to capture the dynamism of this construct in situations of violence and conflict, which are especially defined by rapid change. We argue therefore that the study of leadership in contexts of conflict, violence and insecurity should focus on “situations” as an entry point rather than individuals in positions of authority.

RESEARCH CLUSTER THREE

Building resilience through alternative leadership perspectives

The notion of leadership is one, which barely captures attention in Africa beyond popular perceptions. Leadership, a hugely complex phenomenon, is perhaps the best known and most universally used concept and commodity. The average person has their own understanding of what the notion means and what it entails. Interestingly, there is often little difference in the conception and certainly the application of leadership between people and their leaders across African states and society. The interpretation of leadership as a notion that depends on an “individual” and/or a “position” of hierarchy is the single most important gap, which in turn affects all realms which rely on leadership – particularly, spheres of security and development.

Beyond Africa, security and development policy actors and practitioners focus on “institutions” and give this priority in the belief that what matters is to build effective institutions and once this is achieved, leadership will be regulated. At the African Leadership Centre (ALC), a body of research is developing in this area. We have anecdotal evidence to suggest that resilience to conflict and violence occurs and is sustainable when there is effective leadership process in the target society.

At all stages of responses to violence and conflict and in the search for stability in Africa, leadership has been featured in dialogues both in popular (societal) spaces as well as in grey and academic literature. In popular terms, public opinion through media including art and music are not short of regular, if not daily reference to what is often termed “bad leadership” in explaining Africa's instability and resulting insecurity even if seen only through the prism of development gaps, political instability and inability of institutions of state to be responsive to the needs of citizens. Governance and development outcomes in Africa have on balance, been in deficit notwithstanding a small number of high performing countries. Observers and commentators alike have identified leadership as a determining factor in

these outcomes (VonDoepp 2009). This easily connects with the storyline provided by analysts seeking to explain the underlying causes of conflict and violence. However, there is often no systematic engagement with what leadership really means in these contexts and how it is affected by the exigencies of different situations.

Typically, a great deal of focus is placed on the individual leader and their actions or inactions, which in many cases serve to undercut rather than bolster the potential that exists in society. Far less attention is focused on “how” the exercise of leadership occurs in the particular contexts.

Similarly, in grey literature and policy dialogues in particular, leadership lurks in the background. Typically, leadership is implicated in discussions about governance of conflict-affected societies. At the same time, there is no robust engagement with how leadership impacts these societies in the making and transformation of conflict and violence, as well as in responses to it. In a typical response framework, while leadership is taken into consideration it is not an obvious item on the agenda beyond peacemakers' central engagement with protagonists who invariably become the centrepiece of political engagement or the disaster manager's identification of personnel in lead institutions. Much attention is paid to the establishment of institutions, which according to North (1990) establish “a stable environment of rules and procedures” which will ensure predictability and sustainability of any (security and development) outcomes.

In this sense, although the institution building focus in the international agenda does not preclude leadership development, it is often not in policy-practitioners' direct view. Implicitly, the focus on institution building is consistent with the underlying principle imbibed by institutions of global governance, for example, that effective institutions will regulate political and administrative behaviour.

What matters for resilience is that leaders emerge from a process that led to a collectively owned solution that offers a greater promise of stability. The argument here is that a systematic engagement with every crisis situation in a way that facilitates organic process of interaction within affected society such that they can collectively engage developing solutions offers a better prospect of effectively dealing with the impact of conflict, violence and disaster and reduces the incidence of periodic relapse.

We offer two inter-related arguments in our focus on leadership in this research agenda. The first is that faulty application of leadership is one of the key factors for the failure of a range of efforts to build resilience across African societies and states. Second we argue that it is on the interpretation and application of leadership that the successful harnessing of lessons of resilience and adaptation within African states and societies rest. We therefore propose to devote this third research stream to the analysis of leadership processes in the various situations and cases of conflict, violence and disaster under study in the Hub. Through a series of simulation exercises, we will seek to show how alternative leadership perspectives might have altered the course in select situations. More importantly, we will also simulate the leadership approaches in the transfer of solutions and methods identified through the research. As such, this research stream will act as a first stage in the process of testing, incubating and piloting results identified in the other research strands.

The following questions will form part of the focus of this research stream:

01 *Where does society look for leadership in the building of resilience to conflict, violence and disaster?*

02 *What leadership perspectives offer the most effective solutions for resilience to conflict, violence and disaster?*

03 *Where are the best ideas that drive resilience in society in situations of conflict, violence and disaster?*

04

How can a process-based leadership approach be modelled to secure the channels of resilience to conflict, violence and disaster?

OUR APPROACH

The questions at the core of this research agenda and its problem-driven, solution-seeking basis compel a pragmatic research approach. All research projects inspired by this research agenda will benefit from methodology workshops and training as required. The details of our research approach will form part of the focus of methodology seminars. What we offer in this document is a summary of the key elements of our research approach and process. We envisage that we will mix quantitative and qualitative methods; give voice to a range of actors within and outside East African states, including private sector actors; and produce findings that are testable through further research as well as practical recommendations for policy and programmatic interventions that can be piloted.

A key instrument for connecting the research undertaken on this programme and key communities including end users is our Working Group framework. This structure has been in use at the ALC since its inception and by the Principal Investigator for more than a decade as a tool for bringing researchers and a broad constituency of actors together from research inception phase to dissemination.

This was successfully and effectively used, for example, in country case study research, regional action research, multi-country studies on youth vulnerability and exclusion and on radicalisation and violence. And presently, the IDRC-funded research on the role of political settlements in peacebuilding and statebuilding in Africa is benefitting from the ALC Working Group on Leadership and Peacebuilding.

A key achievement of the working group approach is that it bridges the gap between academics/researchers and policy practitioners as well as other beneficiary communities. By coming together from the conceptualisation stage and meeting at key stages throughout the research process, we will avoid the perennial habit (among many researchers) of taking research findings to potential end users only at dissemination stage when its often too late to make the

research relevant to their needs. This accounts in part for the relatively low level of research uptake. In our experience, the Working Groups established through our research programmes at the ALC have invariably become important networks that expand over time and serve as convening mechanisms on issues related to the research agenda. The participation of EALA in this proposed Consortium is one example of partnership that builds on existing involvement in the Working Group.

Borrowing from this previous and on-going experience, we will establish a Working Group on Resilience, which will bring together researchers and academics, students, policy actors, programme personnel in state and civil society institutions, parliamentarians and private sector actors across East Africa and from other parts of Africa as required. Typically, the Working Group structure will be used for most of the seminars and workshops related to the research project. Members will comment on relevance of the research from the outset and validate research process and findings at various stages; and they will play key roles in facilitating dissemination of outputs. In this particular research, we envisage that select members of the Working Group will take up the research findings by serving as “incubators” for particular findings, which might be piloted over a period of time. We envisage that this Working Group will become crucially important for convening various actors in the region and for disseminating leading ideas emerging from the research. It is envisaged that the Working Group, will have both virtual and physical meetings.

Our core and operational questions, the themes, and series of issues highlighted across the research streams suggest that case study research will feature prominently in the research undertaken under this programme without prejudicing other approaches. This research agenda already proposes to seek out a range of actors and situations that are worth engaging and studying in order to understand what works or fails to build resilience to conflict, violence and disaster.

We will devote careful attention to case selection and in-depth case-study analysis. Researchers will be required to provide methodological justification for why some cases are preferred over others.

We also realise that in a number of situations across the research streams, our task will be to better understand what constitutes the populations or situations under study in the first instance. As such, we will seek to undertake baseline studies as early as possible to determine the initial conditions and establish a point of departure. We therefore envisage that the research conducted under this programme will have a four-stage process. Following the first stage in which baselines will be established, propositions will be generated from the baselines, which will be further tested in the field during a second stage. The field study will combine a number of tools from surveys to in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. All of this will be explored and discussed during preceding methodology seminars.

The field study stage is significant for several reasons. First, having undertaken initial baseline studies, we will seek to attract a number of additional researchers who will join the research streams through other ALC programmes including, for example, ALC Fellowships, Alumni and Visiting scholars.

We will target researchers with relevant research interests. Second, and related, we will be able to expand the knowledge base on the programme's key research areas while deepening our focus on particular cases and situations.

Third, some of the emerging, doctoral, postdoctoral research undertaken at the African Leadership Centre will be able to work on the research areas and emerging issues identified from the programme and in particular, draw from the results of the baselines. All of this, we believe, will increase the tempo of research work under this programme at the ALC and facilitate the process of collating an emerging body of knowledge in this area.

The third stage will entail analysis of data from field study phase, writing and validation as well as production of various outputs. The Working Group on Resilience and the Reference Groups established to undertake validation for each research stream will be part of the validation process at this stage. During this stage, we will identify findings to be further tested through further research; and through policy and programmatic interventions incubated in volunteer institutions and piloted through select processes.

The dissemination, testing and transfer of research findings will be the focus of the fourth stage of the research. While a variety of channels will be used to disseminate findings of the research undertaken, we will target some specific dissemination processes and methods. One of these will include targeted policy and programmatic interventions through key institutions, which will have been engaged since the first stage of the research and invited to be part of the Working Group. Another channel of dissemination, which will have evolved gradually through the research stages, is the use of Policy Round Tables, which will take place on the back of Working Group meetings. During this dissemination phase, the round tables will more specifically consider ideas for policy application of select findings from the research.

A third channel of dissemination will be through a range of publications and media outputs. We will utilise already existing channels at the ALC and IDS to publish outputs from research – these include ALC Working Papers, Policy Briefs, Research Reports and Monographs series, a new open source Journal to be launched at the end of 2014; IDS Working Papers and Journal; and ALC-coordinated book series with Zed Books. The media-related dissemination will have two aspects. First, the Hub will prepare periodic media briefs and op-eds and disseminate both through the web and media networks. Second, dissemination will be done through the ALC's digital radio station, which is in the process of being established. This will provide an opportunity for participants in this programme to transfer knowledge produced through media channels such as the radio and new media outlets.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

We envisage that the programme will lead to the following outcomes:

01

Establishment of an operational and sustainable Resilience Innovation Programme at the ALC

02

Establishment of a core of doctoral and Emerging Scholars' Fellowships with a focus on the key thematic areas in this programme

03

Production of a body of knowledge on resilience to conflict, violence and insecurity in Africa with an initial focus on East Africa

04

Production of testable, scale-able, and transferable solutions on conflict, violence and insecurity including disaster

05

Increased policy engagement for research uptake, policy formulation and implementation

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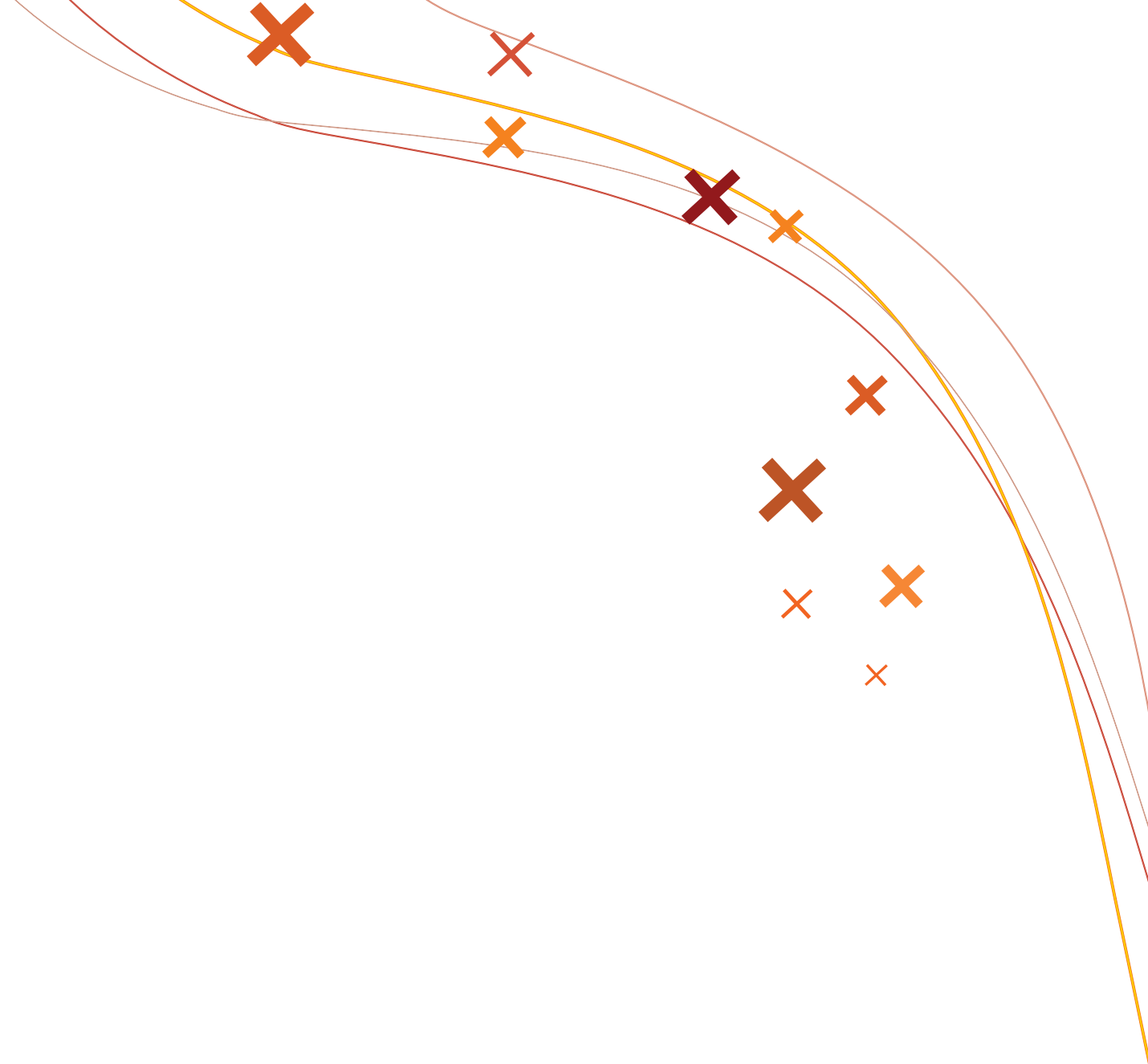
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