



## ***Regional Cooperation Newsletter – East and South Africa Region***

**August – November 2015**

**Newsletter Editor: Benjamin M. Mutie**



### **Contents**

#### **1. Policy Diffusion, Domestic Politics and Social Protection in Lesotho (1998 - 2012)**

Lesotho is one of a small number of countries in Africa to have introduced one national cash transfer programme (the Old Age Pension, OAP) and to be in the process of establishing another (the Child Grant Programme, CGP). Although Lesotho has followed what has been called the ‘Southern African model’, the introduction of the OAP was not the result of an explicit process of cross-national policy diffusion. The CGP was initially driven by international organizations, but the dynamics were not Southern African, and the Lesotho Government quickly took ownership of the initiative. Unlike in many other parts of Africa, these reforms were not resisted by domestic political elites. The OAP, especially, was championed by the Prime Minister, with support from the Minister of Finance. The reforms were rooted in both socio-economic changes, with the AIDS pandemic highlighting the inadequacy of extended familial responsibility for the poor, and political change, with the (possibly short-lived) restoration of stable democratic competition in the early 2000s opening the political space for programmatic reform.

<http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za/sites/cssr.uct.ac.za/files/WP%20357.pdf>

#### **2. Kenya’s Social Development Proposals and Challenges: Review of Kenya Vision 2030; First Medium-Term Plan, 2008-2012**

Kenya faces several development challenges including poverty, disease, unemployment, negative civic engagement among others. The development bottlenecks worsened following the introduction of the IMF/World Bank-propelled Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the late 1970s and early 1980s. While the SAPs had envisaged benefits, they largely became part of

the problem rather than the solution to development in Kenya. Accompanying these were negative civic engagements, particularly, ethnic conflict and political maladministration especially after the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the early 1990s.

These drawbacks notwithstanding, development planning went on culminating in the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and employment Creation (ERSWEC) 2003-2007 in 2002 and its successor, the Kenya Vision 2030 in 2007. While the former was implemented, the latter is on course with the First Five Year Medium-Term Plan running from 2008 to 2012 recently concluded.

The blueprint is driven by three pillars, namely; the economic, social and political pillars aimed at transforming the country into a middle income nation status by 2030. In the social pillar of the Vision are envisaged development projects for social transformation of the country. This paper reviews the proposed projects in the social pillar that were to be implemented by the year 2012 and points out the possible challenges that stood on the way of the envisaged transformation and suggests the way forward.

[http://www.aijernet.com/journals/Vol\\_4\\_No\\_1\\_January\\_2014/24.pdf](http://www.aijernet.com/journals/Vol_4_No_1_January_2014/24.pdf)

### **3. Consolidating social cohesion through community development in Rwanda**

Since the 1994 genocide, Rwandans have been making efforts to rebuild their country's social fabric using a variety of creative means. Socio-economic groupings, such as cooperatives and self-help groups, have been developed and used not only for economic growth but also for repairing and consolidating social cohesion. Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) is one example of the socio-economic groupings approach developed in Rwanda.

#### **Overview of the VSLA approach**

The approach was initiated in Rwanda by CARE in 1999 with its CLASSE (Community Learning and Action for Saving Stimulation and Enhancement) Project. VSLAs help alleviate poverty in three ways:

- Assisting members to save so that they are able to accumulate a significant amount of money at the end of the cycle
- Providing members with an opportunity to request loans of small amounts
- Members earning income from interest paid by members who borrowed.

The approach employs a field officer and village agents to establish the VSLAs in communities. The village agents are exemplary members of the target community, who are trained to promote the establishment of VSLAs and are supervised by field officers over a period of 10 – 18 months.

#### **VSLAs in the AEBR's trust-building project**

Association of Baptist churches in Rwanda (AEBR) has undertaken a socio-economic development programme using the VSLAs approach. The programme was piloted in Rwanda's Southern Province, in Gisagara, Huye, Nyanza and Nyaruguru districts, and has brought together more than 7,000 people. Throughout the implementation of the pilot phase of the programme, it was realized that the established VSLAs need to benefit from an activity aimed at strengthening trust among the members. Oriented to responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, AEBR, in partnership with Shalom Educating for Peace and supported by the Baptist Union of Denmark, has initiated a trust-building project designed for VSLAs' members. The project developed a training activity with the aim of equipping the VSLAs with skills to transform conflicts and building trust among the VSLA members.

### **Content of the training**

The trust building project consists of training organized for the village agents who facilitate the dissemination of its content to the beneficiaries of the project. Training modules include: understanding and analyzing conflict; conflict resolution approaches; conflict resolution: collaborative approach; problem-solving: conciliation; building trust within group/community; celebrating differences; effective nonviolent communication and anger management; building a resilient and peaceful community; and enhancing skills for effective dialogue among the group members. The training took place from 9 to 13 December 2014.

### **Short-term impact of trust-building training on the VSLAs**

In September 2014, after nine months, a short-term impact assessment of the training was carried out. Feedback from participants highlighted a number of positive effects of the training.

The participants confirmed that the training increased their understanding of conflicts, their sources and how they can be positively resolved. They acknowledged the decreased number and intensity of conflicts in VSLAs as evidence of the training's impact.

The participants explained that before the training, they had not had time to discuss issues affecting the groups. They reported that dialogue has increased and they have managed many of conflicts happening in the VSLAs without the intervention of village agents or field officers. In some cases, members of the VSLAs have facilitated or contributed to the resolution of conflicts that occur in their communities.

The participants testified that the training contributed significantly to building and consolidating group cohesion within the VSLAs. Some within the VSLAs had interpersonal conflicts in their daily life (such as land-related conflicts), and were able to give examples of how such conflicts had been resolved by applying knowledge gained from the training. In addition, the participants underlined that mutual respect between members had increased due to the lesson on respecting differences. The participants also recognized that the training inspired good leadership in VSLAs. They stressed that before the training the VSLAs leaders in some groups had used an authoritarian leadership style. After the training, they have freedom to discuss group issues and make decisions collectively. This has allowed members to have much more involvement in decision-making regarding the management of the VSLAs.

## **Observations from a peace building perspective**

It is clear that the efforts to build conflict-transformation capacity within VSLAs and other socio-economic groupings could significantly contribute to building peace and consolidating social cohesion in beneficiaries' communities. Above all, this approach helps to strengthen the relationships among group members. The approach is particularly relevant in the context of Rwanda, as the country is investing in rebuilding socio-economic development. Building sustainable reconciliation, social cohesion and economic growth have been and remain the key pillars of reconstruction. One way in which society and local governments are dealing with the challenges is through socio-economic groupings.

The approach meets the interest of the Rwandan society in two key ways. Firstly, such groups are in keeping with the strong emphasis on community in Rwanda. Secondly, although groupings such as VSLAs may be viewed as organizations for the promotion of the economic interests of its members, it does not confine itself solely to the economic aspects of life. It permeates the social side of life and aims to establish a new democratic social order based on freedom, fraternity, equality and equity, where people live in harmony, caring and sharing like a family, where there is a unity of spirit and a common economic bond and where people have the freedom to shape their destiny.

<http://www.insightonconflict.org/2014/12/rwanda-vs-la-programme/>

## **4. The effect of social exclusion of women from development in Uganda by Betty Mategeko**

Social exclusion remains a major hindrance to the development of Uganda as a country, a hindrance to improved welfare of women and generally leads to ignoring of the recognition of the contribution of women to national development. Exclusion and discrimination have become a central focus of discourses in the world today. Social exclusion and discrimination refer to the process and outcome of keeping a social group outside the power centers and resources. Despite the effort put by the government of Uganda and other women organizations to develop, integrate and find ways of addressing the social exclusion, the problem still persists. Exclusion creates concern since it involves the denial of ownership, access and control over resources, denial of right over ones labour and right over ones reproductive resources, denial of opportunity for education, health care, housing, public amenities, recreational facilities and spaces and basic needs, denial of social interaction and denial of access to social spaces, denial of right to representation and participation in social, economic, and political participation. The way forward to social exclusion should be the Inclusion of women in all the development aspects.

<http://www.interestjournals.org/er/february-2011-vol-2-issue-2/the-effect-of-social-exclusion-of-women-from-development-in-uganda>

## **5. News and Events**

- a) **I Event: International Education and Career Exhibition, IERECE 2016 EXPO**

**Date:** 14-15 April, 2016

**Location:** Zurich, Switzerland

**Venue:** Novotel Zurich City-West Hotel [www.novotel.com](http://www.novotel.com)

**Deadline for Applications:** 25 January, 2016

If you wish to be Exhibitor, Sponsor or Volunteer, please enter the **IERECE 2016** web page and send us the relevant filled application form as soon as possible.

**Participation Fee:** 2100EUR

**Financial Aid for Exhibitors:** Due to the Exhibitor`s financial aid request we could offer discount on requested participation fee amount. Deadline for Sponsorship request is **02 November 2015**.

**IERECE 2016 EXPO web page -** <http://www.ipdinstitute.ch/International-Education-and-Career-Exhibition-2016/>

**b) II Event: International Winter Academy/3 Month CAS Program in**

**Peace building, Conflict Resolution, Mediation, Security and Intercultural Dialogue.**

**Date of Winter Academy:** 15 - 25 February, 2016

**Date of 3 Month CAS Program:** 15 February - 14 May, 2016)

**Location of Winter Academy:** Zug, Switzerland

**Venue:** Eckstein Zentrum [www.zentrum-eckstein.ch](http://www.zentrum-eckstein.ch)

**Deadline for Applications:** 20 November, 2015

**Scholarship:** IPD offers several type of scholarship support to reduction the participation fee amount for most needed potential participants from all over the world countries. In this matter to request discount on the participation fee amount payment, please write your request briefly via email before or during the application submission period till the **1 October 2015**. Unfortunately IPD scholarship program can't cover all the participation fee amount and international travel expenses.

**Winter Academy 2016 web page:** <http://www.ipdinstitute.ch/Winter-Academy-3-Month-CAS-Program-2016/desktop/>

**c) Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development 2016**

27 June 2016 - 30 June 2016: Location: Seoul, South Korea: Main Theme: Promoting the Dignity and Worth of People.

**d) Rural Development Conference 2016 :**  
March 13th - 15th 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

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**Please distribute this newsletter as widely as possible.**

**Newsletter Editor:** Benjamin M. Mutie  
(Regional President – ESA)

**and Director of Programmes,**

Kenya Institute of Social Work,

P.O. Box 57961 00200

NAIROBI

KENYA

Cell: +254 733 756739

Cell: +254 722 944031

Email: [Mutie@Kiswcd.co.ke](mailto:Mutie@Kiswcd.co.ke) or [bmutie@icsw.org](mailto:bmutie@icsw.org)

Website: [www.kiswcd.co.ke](http://www.kiswcd.co.ke)