

Report on the Conflict and Governance Facility's High Level Workshop held at the Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, 13-14 November 2007

1. Introduction

The Conflict and Governance facility is not just a grant-maker that funds research into issues that are pertinent to the South African Government's policy agenda. While this responsibility is possibly CAGE's primary function, its other function is to build research capacity amongst its partners, grantees and stakeholders. To this end, CAGE convened a number of workshops on policy research methodology and other topics. This workshop aimed to build capacity amongst grantees by bringing them together to present their research in a forum where issues could be debated and lessons and experiences shared for the greater benefit of the research community who received funding. In a sense, the workshop served as a form of peer review where the findings of funded research were presented and open to scrutiny. Internationally, the practice of a policy conference amongst researchers in a community is accepted as a key component of quality control as it contributes to the improvement of the reliability and accuracy of the research. In addition to this important outcome, a policy workshop creates an environment where researchers from diverse, disparate and competing sectors can come together in a collegial environment to share information and build relationships. In a developing country like South Africa, this attempt to build a cooperative environment amongst the policy-research sector is long overdue. This workshop should have been the first in a lengthy process of bringing researchers together for these goals and objectives. Unfortunately, this workshop is both the first and last of such a meeting as CAGE will be ceasing to operate as of February 2008. It is no exaggeration to state that the energy created at this workshop not only vindicated CAGE's years of operation, but it also demonstrated the potential that such workshops have in bringing researchers together for the exchange of ideas and the building of cooperative relationships. Sadly, this is a great loss to the consumers of policy research as well as the producers. If evidence-based decision-making is to become firmly established in policy-making, then a facility like CAGE and annual conferences such as this are not a luxury, they are a necessity. As the report will show, the workshop was a resounding success with around fifty delegates attending most of the sessions on both days. Not only was the attendance exemplary, the quality of the deliberations demonstrated the need for considering the future establishment of a facility like CAGE.

2. The Workshop Programme

Day	Time	Subject Area and Chairperson	Topic	Presenters
1	07:30-09:00	Registration		
	09:00–10:00	Ceremonial	Opening Adresses	European Union National Treasury / Presidency CAGE
	10:00-10:30	Tea		
	10:30-12:30	Policy Management and Evaluation. Chair: Dr. Ivor Sarakinsky	The Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy in South Africa: Appropriate Alignment Processes. Race and Redress in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Case Study of the Economy. Consensus-Building Approaches and Policy Co-ordination Mechanism.	Prof. Leanne Scott (UCT) Dr. Roger Southall (Wits University) Richard Smith (CSVR)
	12:30-13:30	Lunch		
	13:30-15:30	Poverty, Inequality and Black Economic Empowerment. Chair: Dr. Roger Southall	A Comprehensive Overview of Welfare Shifts in Post-Apartheid South Africa: 1993-2005. A Critical Review of the Role of Social Grant Policy in Mitigating or Contributing to Social Conflict and Unrest. Unemployment Among Black South Africans: A Retrospective Survey of Young People in South Africa's Four Largest Metropolitan Areas.	Sumayya Goga and Carlene v d Westhuizen (UCT) Isobel Frye and Glenn Farred (SPII) Dr. Stephen Rule (CDE)
	15:30-16:00	Tea		
	16:00-17:30	Peace and Security. Chair: Dr. Ivor Sarakinsky	Policy Guidelines for Development, Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. South Africa's Peacekeeping Role in Burundi: Challenges and Opportunities for Future Organisation.	Richard Gueli and Sybert Liebenberg (CSIR) Karishma Rajoo (ACCORD)

Day	Time	Subject Area and Chairperson	Topic	Presenters
2	09:00-10:30	Economic Processes and Prospects. Chair: Susan Brown	Understanding the Dynamic Linkages Between Informal and Formal Economic Activity. Responding to the Skills Crisis: Can JIPSA Deliver Skills for Growth? Proactive, Pragmatic and Critical Review of Strategies, Interventions and Initiatives with Regard to ASGISA.	Imraan Valodia and Dr. Miriam Altman (UKZN / HSRC) Dr. Sandy Johnstone (CDE)
	10:30-11:00	Tea		
	11:00-13:00	Local Government Challenges	Conflict in South African Cities: An Analysis of Service-Related Unrest. Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa. A Decade of Local Economic Development on the Wild Coast, 1997-2007.	Dr. Zacheus Matebisi (UFS CDS) Susan Tolmay (Gender Links) Ncumisa Ngxowa (CIET)
	13:00-14:00	Lunch		
	14:00-16:00	Governance, Service Delivery and Development	Towards a Coherent Governance Model for the Delivery of Basic Services by Provincial Governments, District Municipalities and Local Municipalities. Participation, Service Delivery and Social Cohesion. Managing Concurrency of Powers and Functions Through Cooperative Government.	Nico Steytler (UWC) Dr. Ivor Chipkin (HSRC) Prof. Nico Steytler (UWC)
	16:00-16:30	Tea		
	16:30-17:30	Ceremonial	Closing Address	

3. Ceremonial

Charmaine Estment introduced and welcomed the delegates from the European Union and National Treasury and outlined the history of CAGE and its achievements. The delegates outlined their roles in establishing CAGE while discussing the facility's achievements and impact.

4. Day One, Session One: Policy Management and Evaluation

Presenters: Dr. Roger Southall, Richard Smith and Prof. Leanne Scott.

Chair: Dr. Ivor Sarakinsky.

Dr. Southall discussed ten propositions on Black Economic Empowerment in South Africa. The nuances of the policy were highlighted showing that the conventional view that only a few had benefited was misleading. While acknowledging that the policy agenda might have been implemented in ways to increase its effectiveness, the claim that in its "third phase" the policy has focussed on increasing its scope to ensure a broader base of beneficiaries is accurate. Moreover, the need for BEE to be linked to national socio-economic development is an insight requiring further analysis.

Richard Smith analysed the complexity of engaging in peace-building and conflict resolution in communities in the Western Cape. The fundamental point emphasised in this presentation is the importance of drawing parties together through negotiating consensus on the meanings and significance of values. This type of intervention does not promise easy solutions, but creates a framework that, when successful, binds the community together and allows it to secure peace for the future. Facilitators play a particular role in this kind of intervention in bringing parties together, but allow the parties to find their own ways of establishing common understandings of issues of concern.

Prof. Leanne Scott discussed the challenges in establishing meaningful indicators of socio-economic development in South Africa based on national standards and forms of data gathering. Instead of aggregating and cleaning data, the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation is really about clarifying objectives in terms of defining an assessment instrument. If data gathering does not have a clear objective, then it becomes difficult to use pre-existing statistical information to make judgements about policy success or failure.

The discussion in this session was wide-ranging and quite detailed. Issues were raised about the class-focus of BEE with regard to less of a focus on its effects of previously disadvantaged groups who were not business people. Thus, it was thought that BEE needed more discussion in terms of socio-economic development as opposed to the accumulation of capital. The difficulties of intervening to resolve conflict in communities using the approach discussed were discussed and alternatives based on resource provision were mentioned. This pre-empted the discussion of developmental peace-building in a

later session. The enterprise of monitoring and evaluating policy implementation was questioned as it was claimed that the answers were self-evident and a complex method and instruments was unnecessary to establish significant policy failure. In reply, it was asserted that not all aspects of policy were a failure and that monitoring and evaluation was needed to separate out successful from unsuccessful policy implementation.

5. Day One, Session Two: Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment

Presenters: Sumayya Goga and Carlien Van Der Westhuizen, Isobel Frye and Glenn Farred and Dr. Stephen Rule.

Chair: Dr. Roger Southall.

Summayya Goga and Carlien Van Der Westhuizen discussed the findings of their research with regard to establishing trends in changes in welfare in South Africa post democratic transition. In the first section of the presentation, the challenges in cleaning and interpreting the data were presented. In the second section, conclusions were presented showing that in terms of households, significant positive developments had taken place.

Isobel Frye and Glenn Farred attempted to identify links between welfare grants and social instability in this presentation. However, strong correlations could not be made as there was insufficient data and access to some in the Department of Social Development was not possible. Instead, the paper discussed how social grants might mediate conflict and contribute to development.

Dr. Stephen Rule presented the findings of his research on youth unemployment and attempted to define the research in terms of identifying the factors that contributed to youth employment rather than youth unemployment. The key finding was that those who found jobs did so through contacts, such as family and social networks, rather than through formal channels and applying for advertised positions. The implication of this research is that the youth ought to be made aware of the power of such networks as part of a broader youth employment strategy.

The discussion revolved around whether the research welfare shifts was methodologically accurate and meaningful with regard to static employment and increasing inequality regarding the increasing wealth divide. The status of household and other surveys was also discussed in this regard and the point was made that surveys produce different results because of their assumptions, not due to poor research. It was also argued that correlating welfare with social conflict was an ambitious enterprise even if the data was available due to the complexity of the causal variables. In terms of youth employment, the discussion focussed on how to empower youth to pursue this avenue in the most productive way in the light of many continuing to apply formally for positions.

6. Day One, Session Three: Peace and Security

Presenters: Richard Gueli and Sybert Liebenberg and Karishma Rajoo.

Chair: Dr. Ivor Sarakinsky

Richard Gueli and Sybrand Liebenberg outlined the difficulties of modelling peace-building interventions using formal techniques. While acknowledging such difficulties, they then set out to show how developmental interventions could contribute to the peace process in particular contexts. Here, emphasis was placed on non-military personnel being involved in the planning and execution of such interventions in cooperation with the military. In essence, a multi-faceted intervention aiming to improve the socio-economic profile of a conflict zone was presented as an important factor in ending hostilities.

Karishma Rajoo presented an analysis of South Africa's peace building role in Burundi and affirmed many of the points made in the previous presentation. In addition to this, there was an attempt to extract the success factors in the Burundi intervention and thereby develop a model for future peace-building interventions in other contexts. The decision process in such an approach as well as the input into Defence structures was presented.

The discussion was lively in questioning many of the assumptions of developmental peace building. While ignoring "meanings", it was also argued that bringing resources into conflict zones had the potential of increasing rather than diminishing conflict. At the same time, questions were raised about the accuracy of generalising beyond the Burundi experience. The prospect of a unique situation with specific factors may have limited the application of this approach with regard to other conflict situations.

7. Day Two, Session One: Economic Processes and Prospects

Presenters: Imraan Valodia and Dr. Miriam Altman and Dr. Sandy Johnston.

Chair: Susan Brown.

Imraan Valodia and Dr. Miriam Altman presented their research on informal traders in Durban to try and establish how they set the prices of their goods and whether they were competing with formal traders retailing similar products. Before presenting the findings, the objectives of such a project were spelt out with regard to better engaging in the development of policy for informal traders. The findings of the research, a pilot to a larger and more encompassing survey, appeared to emphasise the importance of price with regard to buyers rather than a broader strategy with regard to competing with formal traders.

Dr. Sandy Johnston presented research conducted by the Centre for Development Enterprise that examined the impact that the development of skills was having on the South African economy as well as its future growth potential. Four areas were identified and discussed: the performance of SETAs, the public service, artisan training and the function of JIPSA. The first area, the SETAs, dominated the presentation and numerous issues regarding efficiency in the use of resources as well as outputs with regard to learners were discussed.

The discussion of the first presentation focussed on the methodology of the survey of informal traders and its representivity. In addition, points were made about the value of such a research project but that some of the assumptions were not applicable regarding competition with formal traders at the levels of both price and the quality of goods. In a sense, argument was presented that formal and informal traders serviced different markets and that this might have policy implications. The discussion of skills focussed on the many claimed weaknesses of the SETAs and the implication that they had for economic growth.

8. Day Two, Session Two: Local Government Challenges

Presenters: Dr. Zacheus Matebisi, Susan Tolmay and Ncumisa Ngxowa.

Chair: Tara Polzer.

The first presentation analysed the reasons for the outbreak of unrest in towns in Free State Province. The point was made that people don't just decide to go onto the streets, but rather that they do so in response to social and service delivery problems that remain unattended to. Details of these issues were presented linked to the length of time that the community had since raised them with councillors. In response, almost out of desperation community members took to the streets in the form of violent protest as an attempt to get redress. Other factors raised were the capacity constraints of councils and perceptions of inefficiency within these structures.

The second presentation focussed on the role of women in local government and analysed the number of women in local councils and other structures. The significance of the data in the presentation was that it analysed the Southern African region and attempted to get data on the existing situation with regard to the number of women in local government in relation to stated policy targets. In addition to this, the presentation examined inhibiting and enabling factors in contributing to the meaningful participation of women in local government in numerous countries. The role of men and the need for a change in their attitude was discussed as well as the positive elements that women brought into local government.

The third presentation examined the findings of detailed surveys of people in the Transkei to try and establish their perceptions about socio-economic improvement. On a number of indicators and criteria the findings of the 2007 survey were compared to previous surveys showing clearly shifts in perception. At the same time, the presentation focussed on regions in the Transkei and also compared the differences in perception between regions on the same indicators and criteria. While the overall results of the 2007 survey show an increase in "satisfaction", caution was suggested in actually establishing the meaning of the results.

The discussion was dominated by questions on the outbreak of unrest in towns as discussed in the first presentation. Methodological and political points were raised about the research methodology and whether the findings were generaliseable. Issues surrounding political mobilization in addition to discontent were raised as a concern with

the assumption of spontaneity of the outbreaks of unrest. On the role of women in local government, questions were raised about interventions to change the attitudes of men as well as the extent of resistance from men to women in local government. Other questions related to the strength of women's movements in all countries in the region and the existence or prospects for cross-country cooperation. The issue of perception surveys was raised with regard to the last paper in the session raising methodological and analytical issues regarding actual changes on the ground rather than community member's perceptions. While acknowledging some of these limitations, it was argued that the value of such surveys lay not the accuracy of the perception, but in the change over time. If significant changes were established over time, this would act as an indicator of improved or deteriorating socio-economic conditions.

9. Day Two, Session Three: Governance, Service Delivery and Development

Presenters: Prof. Nico Steytler and Dr. Ivor Chipkin.

Chair: Richard Smith.

The first presenter collapsed his scheduled presentations into one overall discussion on the challenges of aligning National, Provincial and Local Government with regard to service delivery. The initial problem related to the status of local government at the negotiation process for the constitution in 1994. This meant that a local government dispensation was set in place without the time to integrate it into a broader framework of inter-governmental relations. This meant that there were overlaps and confusions on how local government was conceptualised with implications for the status of district and local municipalities. This raised significant constitutional challenges with regard to overlapping and concurrent powers that might require constitutional amendments if they were to be addressed.

The second presentation examined the challenge of social cohesion in South Africa. The discussion focussed less on the social issues that are indicative of a break down in social cohesion, but more on the institutions that might provide services to build an integrated society. The challenges facing a range of institutions, especially local government, were noted and then alternative intervening-institutions were discussed. The focus was on the role of Pentecostal Churches in building social networks within congregations. As a rapidly-growing religious movement in South Africa and other parts of Africa, it was argued that this Church had the potential to build social cohesion where government institutions had failed. This related to congregants helping each other with employment and other networking resources and facilities.

The discussion raised issues with the notion that constitutional change would lead to an improvement of service delivery with regard to the challenges facing local government. This issue was amplified in a discussion of whether another phase of reconfiguring would hamper or increase the prospects of improving the effectiveness of local government. In addition to this, the discussion examined the relationship of provincial government to metropolitan municipalities and discussed the overlaps and political challenges at this level as well. Moreover, the issue of participation arose as an effective factor in

addressing the challenges of service delivery at the local level. With regard to Pentecostalism, issues were raised about its prevalence in South Africa in relation to older, more established churches. Also, points were raised about different types of participation regarding church activities and local government with regard to political processes and parties. The overall issues was that Pentecostalism might link congregants for mutual benefit, but this not mean that it is an alternative to effective local government and that, as a result, its impact on service delivery might prove to be limited.

10. Day Two, Conclusion and Ceremonial

Presenters: Dr. Ivor Sarakinsky and Charmaine Estment.

All the presenters and participants were thanked for attending the workshops and their constructive interventions. The point was stressed by the academic manager of the conference that all those contacted to present and chair had, without hesitation, agreed to participate. Moreover, it was argued that this showed the impact that CAGE had had in building a community of researchers producing high quality policy-relevant research. It was also stressed that CAGE was closing just when it about to have its greatest impact. The CAGE Coordinator concluded the proceedings by thanking all contributors again and highlighted the closure of the facility as a grant maker. However, it was stressed that the capacity developed in the research community would survive for some time and continue to impact on the policy environment positively.

11. Conclusion

The most definitive indicator of a successful workshop is difference between the number of delegates at the beginning and end of the gathering. Despite people coming and going, about the same number of people began and concluded the workshop. Moreover, the quality of the presentations as well as the diversity of the topics and the inclusivity of the presenters demonstrated clearly that CAGE broke new ground in the field of research capacity development in the production of policy-relevant research. A further indicator of the success of the conference was the wide variety of published research funded by CAGE. All the recipients of funding who were present brought numerous copies of their publications and displayed them at the venue. In a short space of time, all the delegates had taken copies of their peers research. This cross-pollination demonstrated in practice the accuracy of the theory of a research community in the policy environment. This energy was evident throughout the workshop with delegates discussing issues at all opportunities. The wide dissemination of research amongst the delegates will ensure that this spirit of collaboration and engagement will continue for some time. Alas, with the closure of CAGE, this initial intervention will not be able to impact on the research community in the longer term. This is not only sad, but also tragic as the success of this workshop demonstrated the need for an ongoing intervention to bring researchers together for the benefit of research and the production of evidence for decision making. Hopefully, the practices of CAGE throughout its short existence as well as this workshop will serve as a bench mark for any future organisation that hopefully will emerge. ed.