

The International Conference on the role of Think Tanks in  
Developing Countries: Challenges and Solutions, Cairo Egypt,  
17 – 18 January 2009

Modalities for South South Cooperation in engendering linkages between  
research and policy making,

by

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## Context for South-South Cooperation

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- Define the South.
- Understand the relevant factors in each region, taking into account national, sub-regional and continental factors based on systems theory
- Recognise the research and policy nexus noting the need for inter-linkages with various social partners, business, civil society government and organized labor, locally and globally.
- Theorising from an African base into the South and globally



## Full involvement in the policy cycle

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- Provide inputs into the policy process, seek to influence policy and policy makers.
- Production of academically credible and high quality policy research. Monitor implementation of policies, including impact and develop new areas of work or deepening of focus.
- Create and strengthen effective and efficient networks with various social partners, business, civil society government and organized labor, locally and globally.
- Participate in training, mentoring capacity and institution building.

## Legacy of colonial education systems

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Development of higher education during colonialism (elitist academies). For the few.

Content of education not grounded in local realities.

Developing world hardly involved in determining the modus operandi of the global academy.

Ideas, values, content very northern.

Structural Adjustment Programmes resulted in reduced resources for higher education, particularly .

## Challenges

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Donor interests and agendas which are at variance.

Brain drain from developing countries, strategies for retention.

The poor quality of some information and data.

Identification of strengths and niche areas.

Need to indigenise education.

Note language as a subjective medium for transmitting values,  
ideas etc

## Challenges....

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- Quality not quantity of think tanks.
- Market forces driving agenda, not needs of academy, especially consultancies.
- Trade in education services disadvantaging the South.
- Geopolitical shifts in the South democratization peace in Africa, rise of Brazil, China and India as global players. South not homogenous
- Create appropriate research agendas to assist the South with development challenges.

## Challenges....

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Maintain as much academic independence as possible.

Create, collate and disseminate knowledge as widely as possible considering access, technology and language costs.

How is this done in a world where so many denied access to education and literacy.

ICT is not globally available; energy costs and infrastructure limited.

Reports esoteric; academics and policy makers mainly speak to themselves.

Think tanks perceived as elitist.

## Challenges .....

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Competing needs – how do we choose. Access - costs, location of institutions role of ICT. What can we learn from other think tanks and countries both in the South and North.

Competition between local people and expatriates. Dominance of foreign ideas, resources and countries of the South and people are objects or pawns in these relationships.

Build private and public sector capacity. Ensure local capacity both human and institutional. Allocate sufficient resources.

## Benefits of networks

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Study visits within and across countries.

Allow more cost effective utilization of resources across institutions and geographic space.

Scope and depth of work can be deeper.

Share experiences.

Cross fertilization across diverse issues.

## Benefits of networks continues.....

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Stronger partners assist and mentor weaker ones but:

- But could drain resources, time and be over burdening
- Allow organisation(s) to lose focus
- Increase competition and conflict.

## CODESRIA Model

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Council for the Development of Social Sciences in Africa formed 1974:

- Strengthen Social Sciences.
- Multidisciplinary work linking humanities and social sciences.
- Geographic spread brings together all sub-regions in Africa.
- Inter-linkages of most official languages used in Africa .
- Academic exchanges across Africa.
- Manage donor relations defined by CODESRIA's interests

## **CODESRIA Model**

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25 year strategic plan (2007-2032) divided into 5 year phases

Triennial CODESRIA General Meeting develops work programme;  
Council oversees in between

Strong thematic research programme relevant to Africa

Make institutions international/regional in staff, studies etc.

Call for papers, abstracts, conference, papers published.

Capacity building esp Research methodology and publishing of work

## CODESRIA Model

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Multidisciplinary methods and projects combat fragmentation of knowledge and its production.

Research relationships and joint projects with other regions of the world – Asia, Latin America, Europe various parts of the Diaspora.

Strong publishing programme, especially E- publishing

Over come gender and generational gaps.

Grants and fellowships, exchanges.

Institutional developoment

## CODESRIA Model

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- Database of scholars / institutions based on specific standards.
- Culture of excellence.
- Encourage academic freedom across Africa.
- Linkages to other communities outside academia based on connecting theory and practice.

## CODESRIA Model

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Provide evidence based research for policy – formulation, implementation etc.

Policy: research nexus non – linear.

Provide policy options not recommendations. Former – gives alternatives. Latter not flexible.

Proper communication channels with stakeholders.

Inadequate resources.

## CODESRIA Model

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Trust between researchers and policy makers builds credibility.

Researchers assist scanning issues to address societal challenges and problem solving.

- Strengthen capacity of public sector

- Long term scenario planning

- Futures research

# Thank you!

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