

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARY AND RESEARCH
INSTITUTES IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE
KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY: THE CASE OF KENYA'S
CENTRE FOR PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES AND
TRAINING (CPST).**

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ABSTRACT

1.0 Introduction:

Our times are characterized by new demands upon trainers in policy and politics. But experience and research show us that training is well suited to contribute directly to the resolution of political conflicts. At the Centre for parliamentary studies and training (CPST), the experience over the past decade of working on day-to-day basis with Parliamentarians suggest that, most trainers are simply unaware of the potential role of Parliamentary training institutions in promoting knowledge economies. Hence it is appropriate to view this paper as an attempt to connect scholarly understanding of training in Parliamentary context with the practical experience of Parliamentary trainers who increasingly face everyday decisions about how to position Parliamentary training and research in the context of policy and politics.

Rather than prescribe what course of action each individual training institution ought to take, the aim here is to identify a range of options for individual training institutions to consider in making their own judgments' on how they would like to position themselves in relation to training and research. A central argument throughout this paper is that training has become used increasingly as a tool of politics and its role in policy Research has arguably been overshadowed. "Training has a notable shortage of honest brokers of policy alternatives. Honest brokers of Policy alternatives matter in training because a powerful role for training in society is to facilitate the creation of new and innovative policy alternatives. Such alternatives have the potential to reshape political dynamics and in some cases enable action. By understanding the different roles that training plays in both policy and politics, we may enhance the benefits to society related to the public's substantial investments in generating new knowledge.

Without doubt, parliamentary training has demonstrated its enormous value to society and continues to have great potential to contribute significantly to further improving Political environment. However, for the potential to be more fully realized, we must adopt a perspective on training that allows room for a close engagement with research. It has become widely accepted by the public policy-makers that training is one of the key means of addressing a wide range of societal problems. Consequently, we should not view training as an activity to be kept separate from policy and politics but, instead, as a key resource for facilitating complicated

decisions that involve competing interest in society. We want training to be connected to society. But how we make this connection is not always easy or obvious.

Training in the political environment is getting threatened as trainers and policy makers are increasingly coming to see training as a servant of interest group politics. That is to say, increasingly, training has come to be viewed as simply a source for enhancing the ability of politicians to bargain, negotiate and compromise in pursuit of their special interests. Once trainers start tailoring their training to suit the needs of politics, that is when training ceases to be training and morphs completely into politics, threatening the sustainability of Parliamentary training institutions. The result is that political battles are played out in a language of training, often resulting in policy gridlock.

2.0 The big Picture: Agenda 2063 and Capacity Development

‘Agenda 2063’ which aims to create an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena is a call for transformation based on knowledge and guided by research and training.

The Agenda is different from past continental initiatives for the reasons that it is a bottom-up document drawn up not by a bureaucratic process but through extensive consultations. It is supposed to be driven by the voices of the African people; A result-oriented agenda with goals, targets and strategies indicated in each aspirational area holding stakeholders accountable; it also has monitoring and evaluation infused in the agenda with provisions for mid-term reviews of projects and mid-course corrections, where needed; it is also policy coherent agenda with all continental and regional initiatives brought under one umbrella to avoid policy overlaps and redundancies; it also has a Ten Year Implementation Plan with mandates identification of priority areas, dissemination of information to all stakeholders and assignment of responsibilities to stakeholders.

The implementation mechanism in the first Ten Year Implementation Plan, requires both training and research achieve the Aspirations. The main challenges to ‘Agenda 2063’ pertain to the

prerequisites essential to achieving the desired goals. These relate, for one, to human resources development; there is no specific mention of training and research in the Aspirations.

Unless there is substantial investment in research, education, skill development and capacity-building, the Aspirations will be difficult to realise. Africa will have to engage in research and training in order to move up in the Global Human Development Index to provide the enabling environment for achieving results. Parliamentary training and research institutions therefore have a role.

3.0 Parliamentary Training Institutes and Think Tanks

The achievement of the Africa's Agenda 2063 is dependent on national governments taking ownership and establishing policies, plans, and programmes. The political reality of each country—which includes economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, political systems, and ideologies—will have a bearing on the achievement of the targets at a local level and therefore on the attainment of the Africa's Agenda 2063 aspirations.

Think tanks and Parliamentary training institutes are poised to play a key role in political decisions that aim to shape implementation at the levels of state, region and the continent. This means not only analysing and assessing progress towards the Aspirations, but also acting as knowledge brokers between sectors and stakeholders to enable greater dialogue between the general public, decision makers, and wider society.

The term “think tanks and training institutes” is used here to cover a spectrum of technical department in parliaments and related institutes which concern themselves with the creation and communication of relevant knowledge, often facilitating public dialogue and contributing to greater transparency of the policy process. Their recent proliferation in and around Parliaments is appreciated as they contribute to accountability and pluralistic debate.

The convening role of think tanks and Parliamentary training institutes is important both nationally and supra-nationally. They bring together continental policy actors with national level implementers and those most affected by continental policies. This exchange of experiences in

relation to different policy, technical, and institutional options is a critical role for Parliamentary think tanks and training institutions.

If think tanks and training institutions are to fulfil their role in accelerating progress towards achieving the Africa's Agenda 2063 aspirations, a specific focus on the following six areas will be needed.

a). Better governance for the Africa's Agenda 2063

Think tanks can support the Africa's Agenda 2063 by actively championing new governance mechanisms at country level that prominently position the Aspirations as contributing to wider issues of equity. They need to acknowledge the changed relationships between states and other actors. Equally, it is important to recognise the need to reach consensus at both the national and international level in order to ensure Africa's Agenda 2063 implementation.

The focus should be on the political processes and institutional support needed at country level. It will be critical to develop mechanisms to manage trade-offs, and the means to ensure that what is needed to achieve one Aspiration does not conflict with what is needed to achieve another. Without effective mechanisms that manage and negotiate the inter-dependence between the seven (7) aspirations, little will change.

b). Stakeholders' engagement

Think tanks and Parliamentary training institutions are powerful convening platforms. They need to reach out to actors at all levels of governance, from all sectors and all stakeholders, to discuss and develop policies that would strengthen the implementation of the Africa's 'Agenda 2063'. This includes the global level as well as decision makers and stakeholders at the national level so as to create a productive interface between the levels of governance. The process needs to include all levels and means reaching out to city governments; to regional bodies to increase their commitment to Africa's 'Agenda 2063' implementation.

c). Systemic challenges

As conveners, think tanks and training institutes should prioritize issues that are systemic, inter-sectoral, continentally interdependent, and beyond any single country's capacity to solve. This requires engaging with domestic actors with high policy clout like Members of Parliament and representatives of civil society, as well as global stakeholders. It is in these areas of “two level games” that think tanks can be particularly beneficial. The Africa's Agenda 2063 link domestic policies to the continental system in new ways.

d). Knowledge sharing and joint learning

Parliamentary think tanks and training institutions while focusing on Africa's Agenda 2063 should commit to universality. Knowledge should be considered a continental public good and think tanks and other knowledge institutions should share learning and solutions beyond old divides at national, regional, and global levels. While each country might face unique challenges in achieving the Aspirations, “universality” implies recognition that the Africa's Agenda 2063 provide a framework for tackling problems that require continental cooperation.

e). Policy research

Think tanks and training institutions should be centres of excellence in research, with a special focus on policy research. The Africa's ‘Agenda 2063’ however has not placed enough premium on research. Success will require research that takes many factors into account—social, economic, and environmental. Too little is known about the policy processes, connections, and tradeoffs that allow for successful Africa's ‘Agenda 2063’ implementation. Research must help to develop new metrics, improve integrated monitoring, and strengthen evaluation mechanisms. Researchers must also ensure there is dialogue with policy makers at all levels and make their results easily accessible to all.

f). Interdisciplinary Network of Think Tanks and Training Institutions

The Parliamentary think tanks and training institutions should have a strong network that covers a range of interdisciplinary expertise. This includes national think tanks which work to engage the public, tackle innovation relating to Africa's 'Agenda 2063' implementation, and hold governments to account; think tanks that provide a continental forum for debate, enable sharing of national experiences, and can influence the global agenda; and training institutions that may be best equipped to generate new knowledge and evidence. Because of the strong context dependency much of the work of the networks will be done through established regional hubs and through in-depth, country specific research and workshops.

To create a prosperous Africa means that no level of governance can continue with business as usual. Countries as well as international organizations, actors across all levels, and public and private stakeholders will need new knowledge and new ways of working. Think tanks and training institutions have a critical role to play in this.

4.0 The CPST's experience with Parliamentary Training

In Kenya, the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) exists as one of the independent commissions established under article 127 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and its main mandate is to provide facilities and services to enable parliamentarians to function effectively in executing their mandate and also to undertake singly or jointly with other relevant organizations, programmes to promote the ideals of parliamentary democracy.

Based on this constitutional mandate, the PSC established the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST) under Legal Notice No.98 of 22nd July, 2011 as one of its directorates to facilitate the process of capacity building for Members and staff of Parliament and County Assemblies. In addition to serving the Members and staff of Parliament and County Assemblies, PSC expanded the objectives and mandate of CPST, to serve other stakeholders, who may be interested in gaining an appreciable understanding of Parliament, to also serve the Parliaments of the East African Community, the Great Lakes Region and the Continent of Africa at large but

not limiting itself from engagement with other global Parliamentary institutions. The overall goal of establishing the CPST was thus to enhance democracy and governance through the Parliament of Kenya (CPST, 2017a)

The mandate and functions of the CPST as outlined in the Legal Notice require the Centre to: conduct courses for the exposition and enhancement of the knowledge, skills and experience of members and staff of parliaments; conduct courses on parliamentary matters to other persons as may be approved by the CPST Board; provide directly or in *collaboration* with other institutions of higher learning, facilities for parliamentary research, studies and training; participate in the preservation and transmission of parliamentary knowledge in Kenya; conduct examinations and grant, academic awards as may be necessary; contribute to the effective and efficient execution of the roles and functions of Parliament in democratic governance; and prepare modules of training on legislation, representation and the oversight roles of Parliament in collaboration with other interested institutions (CPST, 2017a).

The CPST has played a key role in capacity development through development of crucial publications and tools that ensure the smooth running of its operations; offering training to Members and staff of legislatures, conducting research that inform the development of training programmes; preservation and dissemination of knowledge and forming collaborations with institutions of similar mandate. This section will focus on the activities the CPST has undertaken since its inception so as to promote capacity Development.

4.1 Development of the CPST Curriculum and Manuals

The Legal notice that established the CPST mandates it to develop modules for training on legislation, representation and oversight roles of Parliament to help in training legislators at all levels locally and internationally.

In the year 2011, the CPST together with several other stakeholders who included staff of parliament, development partners, academia and civil society representatives initiated training curriculum development through a rigorous process that lasted for about two (2) years. The first

step was to identify key areas that an MP would need to cover during their tenure. Seventeen key areas were identified as critical for all Members and staff of parliaments to cover. The seventeen (17) short courses so developed had issues of gender, youth and people with disabilities fully mainstreamed. This was done to ensure that all trainings offered by the CPST are inclusive and do not have any language or examples that would make marginalized groups uncomfortable.

To operationalize, support and standardize curriculum delivery, the CPST developed training manuals from the curriculum in the year 2014, with the objective of bringing similarity into the content delivered to participants. The training manuals were developed under the under six thematic areas as: the Constitution, Parliament and Systems of Governance; Legislative and Procedural Matters; Public Finance Management; Human Resource and Administration of Parliament and Facilitative/Cross-Cutting issues. Also developed was a facilitators guide for trainers/facilitators to ensure that the trainers follow some laid down guidelines and methods.

Different actors were involved in supporting the curriculum and manuals development process. The Parliamentary Service Commission directly funded while part of the activities were funded by the PSC/CPST development partners. The development partners who supported this process both financially and technically included; Canadian Parliamentary Centre (CPC), West Minister Foundation for Democracy (WFD), State University of New York (SUNY)- PSP, Society for International Development (SID), Electoral Institute for Democracy in Africa (EISA), UN Women and Ford Foundation.

4.2 Capacity Building and Training Initiatives

Since the year 2013 (after the 1st election under the Constitution of Kenya 2010), the CPST has successfully trained members and staff of parliaments in all the six thematic areas as envisaged in the curriculum. The three main approaches that CPST use in conducting its trainings are: supply driven approach which involves development of a training calendar by the CPST on a yearly basis and circulating it to relevant stakeholders who then choose their preferred courses and apply for them accordingly; or demand driven approach, whereby stakeholders who are interested in training on specific subjects make direct requests to the CPST for training; and

lastly collaborative trainings organised in collaboration with the support from development partners.

It is also important to note that the CPST has not only conducted trainings for Kenyan legislators but also for Members and Staff from other Parliaments namely; Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, The Gambia, Seychelles, Zambia and South Sudan. CPST's premier courses which include; include Public Finance Management; Hansard training; Legislation and Procedure; corporate governance training for Parliamentary Service Commissions & County Assembly Service Boards, Role and Mandate of Committees, Public Participation, Oversight and Parliamentary Leadership are reflected in the annual training calendar to invite applications from interested parties. Additionally, the CPST has been in charge of induction of Members of County Assemblies for whom the Centre has developed a uniform induction manual.

4.3 Fostering Research

The initial programmes developed by the CPST for County Assemblies were done on a demand based approach and therefore developed from a technical analysis of the skills and knowledge required to undertake the core functions of representation, oversight and legislation from experiences of the national legislature, demands of the Constitution and subsidiary legislation, all undertaken under a transition framework.

In the effort to improve the training programmes offered to these sub-National legislatures the CPST with the support of USAID under a devolution support programme called Agile and Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (USAID-AHADI) sought to conduct a Learning Needs Assessment for twenty one (21) County Assemblies with the broad objective of assessing the training needs of Members of County Assemblies and staff. The finding of the report that was launched in May, 2017 now informs the design of training all the CPST programmes.

4.4 Public Outreach Initiatives

When the CPST Board visited Indian parliament in early 2015 and witnessed their outreach work, one of the recommendations the board made to PSC was the need to start the Kenyan version of Parliamentary Outreach. The recommendation was adopted the Commission and the a similar programme was started the same year with the Executive Director of the CPST as the chair. Through this initiative, the PSC has been able to use various channels to demystify Parliament and also build the capacity of members of the public and help them understand what Parliament does and can do for them. The main channels used have been Annual Parliament Week where several activities are held to educate the public on Parliament. The other channel has been, participation of the Kenyan parliament in the country-wide Agricultural shows and exhibitions where very many members of the Public and students visit and ask questions; publications such as FAQs and a parliamentary handbook that provide easy to read information on the history and working of the Parliament of Kenya have also been made available by the CPST as outreach instruments.

5.0. Partnerships and Collaborations with other Institutions of Parliaments

In a bid to expedite capacity building and knowledge dissemination, there emerged a need for the CPST to expand its working relations with regional Parliaments, academic and research institutions. This was meant to develop synergy in areas of research, consultancy and capacity building. This initiative has helped in bridging gaps in skills, knowledge, expertise, logistics, and information resource sharing. The CPST has since entered into partnerships with University of Nairobi, Kenya, McGill University in Canada, the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR) based in Geneva Swizerland and Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) based in Ethiopia.

In May, 2017 and May 2018 respectively, the CPST hosted the 2nd and 3rd Global Symposia of Parliamentary Training Institutes (PTI's) whose main goals were to harness the capacities of PTIs for enhanced parliamentary research and training. During the 2nd symposium it was resolved that there was need for an International Association of PTIs (APTI) whose notable objectives are to enhance the capacity of the Institutes to effectively and efficiently execute their

training and research mandates; and promote knowledge and experience sharing amongst the PTIs be formed.

5.1 Possible Partnership with African parliaments

Parliamentary Training institutions and research think tanks are uniquely placed to broker links between different sectors and assist with cross cutting approaches to achieving the African ‘Agenda 2063’. Sub regional and regional integration is the key to a true African resurgence, the objective of Aspiration (2). Fortunately, sub regional and regional partnerships have been gaining momentum over the last few decades. At present, there are eight Regional Communities recognized by the AU. Some of these regional partnerships have found the need to collaboratively streamline parliamentary training activities through Parliamentary Training Institutes —such as the East African Parliamentary Training Institute (EAPI), the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Institute (formative), Arab Institute for Parliamentary Training and Legislative Studies hosted by the Lebanese Parliament, Beirut, etc.

Borrowing from this, other regions can expedite formation of such training and research Institutes to achieve a Continent wide Association of Parliamentary Training Institutes (PTIs), with free movement of parliamentary scholars. This will, of course, require national, regional and continental efforts. If achieved, it will boost Parliamentary training and research, create new knowledge and build capacities

6.0 Key messages:

- Achieving the aspirations of Africa’s ‘Agenda 2063’ will require a new transformative governance for training and research which focuses on intersectionality and partnership
- Think tanks and training institutions have a crucial role to play in realizing and accelerating actions for the aspirations of Agenda 2063’ to be achieved.
- Six core areas will contribute to the achievement of the Africa’s ‘Agenda 2063’— developing elements of governance, increasing, engaging national and continental stakeholders, identifying new solutions to systemic challenges in intersectoral working, enabling joint learning, and knowledge sharing

- Parliamentary training institutes and think tanks must join hands and form a strong network of creators (think tanks) and communicators (trainers). of relevant knowledge which can be strengthened by holding regular symposia where research findings and training experiences are shared.

ENDNOTES

- i). Prof. Nyokabi Kamau “the place of Parliamentary Training Institutes in enhancing Parliamentary Democracy: The Case of Kenya’s Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training” Paper Presented at the 13th Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians –29---30 July 2017,Wroxton College–UK
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- iii). Address by Namibian President, Hage Geingob at the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, New Delhi. Oct 26-29, 2015.
- iv). “Can Africa be a manufacturing destination?” New Research Paper, US Think Tank Center for Global Development.
- v). Agenda 2063 Document
- vi). CPST Annual Reports
- vi). 1. Baruch, L., 2001. *Intangibles. Management, Measurement, and Reporting.* Washington