

## *Eliciting and Applying Local Research Knowledge for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding* International Development Research Centre and Carnegie Corporation of New York

### **Introduction:**

Violent conflict has emerged as a central obstacle to the attainment of equitable and sustainable development. According to the World Bank, some 1.5 billion people live in fragile and conflict affected contexts. With 90 percent of the last decade's civil wars occurring in countries that experienced a civil war in the last 30 years, many of these 1.5 billion people are caught in what could be referred to as a "violence trap."<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to break this cycle, international and national stakeholders have invested heavily in research and other activities designed to prevent or end conflict. In some important respects, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has led the way. In December 2011, the OECD-affiliated International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding brokered a "New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States" with the G7+ and 19 fragile and conflict affected countries, development partners and international organizations signing on. This "New Deal" put forward a revised development architecture and set out new ways of working in fragile and conflict affected contexts that were deemed necessary to build peaceful states and societies.<sup>2</sup>

At the center of these efforts is the belief that peacebuilding and statebuilding are two mutually reinforcing processes that contribute to the building of effective, legitimate, accountable and responsive states. While there is considerable consensus among OECD countries regarding this hypothesis, the reality is that very little effort and investment have been directed to: (1) elicit local knowledge from conflict affected contexts to understand the connection between violence, development and recovery and; (2) to apply local knowledge to inform policy and practice on the ground.

By working in collaboration, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), aim to help address this gap by investing in local knowledge on peacebuilding and statebuilding. Through two separate calls for proposals, IDRC and CCNY will seek to showcase local knowledge to help define **what peacebuilding and statebuilding success looks like from African perspectives**. An overriding objective behind this joint venture is the goal of deepening and diversifying the base of knowledge upon which peacebuilding and statebuilding enterprises are built.

### **Background:**

In many ways, peacebuilding and statebuilding are "fields-in-the-making" with boundaries that are a matter of debate. The OECD provides a functional definition of peacebuilding that reflects some of the core characteristics generally associated with this expansive concept. These include: "activities designed to prevent conflict through addressing structural and proximate causes of violence, promoting sustainable peace, delegitimizing violence as a dispute resolution strategy, building capacity within societies to peacefully manage disputes and reducing vulnerability to triggers that might spark violence."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Conflict, Security, and Development: The World Development Report 2011.

<sup>2</sup> The "New Deal" was endorsed on December 1, 2011 at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea. For more see: [http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3746,en\\_21571361\\_43407692\\_49151766\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html?rssChId=37413](http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3746,en_21571361_43407692_49151766_1_1_1_1,00.html?rssChId=37413)

<sup>3</sup> "Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding," <http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834>

A field of peacebuilding research has been emerging over the last decade, supported by national and intergovernmental donors and by private foundations and academic research institutes. In 2005, the United Nations established a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a significant development that has helped institutionalize this still emerging field, and a Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which has identified a need for more research to inform its work. While regional and international organizations have recognized the promise of peacebuilding, the production and synthesis of knowledge on the subject—as well as its incorporation into decision-making processes—have lagged behind this acknowledgment.

In terms of statebuilding, there has been a steady stream of work commissioned by donor countries on definitions, knowledge and practice, much of this coordinated by the OECD. This work has tended to draw heavily on political science and has produced definitions that view statebuilding as an indigenous, national process driven by state-society relations.<sup>4</sup> Subsequent work by the U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID) has helped to promote statebuilding as primarily a “political” process rather than just a question of technical capacity enhancements.<sup>5</sup> This work has helped define statebuilding as involving a threefold dynamic of: (1) political (usually elite) deals or settlements; (2) the prioritization of core government functions; and (3) the willingness of leadership to respond to public expectations. Increasingly acknowledged in this work, is the fundamental importance of local buy-in and citizen participation in the forging and sustainability of statebuilding and peacebuilding processes.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Challenge:**

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of local knowledge and input in both peacebuilding and statebuilding, many of the original insights, paradigms and motivations for the two concepts have come from the Global North, where most researchers and affiliated institutions are located, and where governments and international institutions command substantial consultancy and research budgets. Historically, Northern institutions have retained “ownership” of knowledge in these areas and have often overwhelmed Southern voices. Decades of crises have intensified this imbalance, leaving many Southern institutions lacking human, social and economic resources. Cumulatively, this has intensified the shortcomings of educational systems—especially in higher education—in conflict affected countries and diminished the role of scholars in the shaping of public policy and debate.

Put simply, despite a proliferation of research on peacebuilding and statebuilding in recent years, scholars from conflict-affected regions are greatly under-represented. While the problem is global in scope, it is particularly evident in Africa. This is the case especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where research infrastructure, though expanding rapidly, remains limited. Although African scholars have often conducted detailed case studies, these are not published in ways that inform international and cross-case literatures. Moreover, these studies, along with consultancy work, are generally undertaken in response to research and policy agendas developed by the dominant Northern institutions. Thus, there is a low level of recognition and utilization of local expertise and capacity where peacebuilding and post-conflict challenges are most acute.

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<sup>4</sup> “Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience,” OECD, 2008

<sup>5</sup> Building Peaceful States and Societies, DFID, 2010

<sup>6</sup> IDRC 2011, Walter 2004, 2009; Licklider 1995; Wagner 1993; World Bank World Development Report, 2011

### **A Jointly Funded Research Initiative:**

To address this challenge, CCNY and IDRC will support a jointly funded research initiative involving two calls for proposals focused on policy-relevant research in Africa. This joint venture will focus on answering questions that **generate new or heretofore undervalued insights about how sustainable and inclusive peace and statebuilding processes can best be attained. It will also seek to bring these insights to the attention of relevant scholarly, policy and practitioner communities.** In accordance with their respective legal and operational guidelines, CCNY grants will be limited primarily to support for U.S.-based public agencies, universities and public charities that are tax-exempt under section 501 (c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code or their equivalent, while IDRC grants will seek to fund institutions located in Africa.

### **CCNY:**

More specifically, CCNY will seek projects that complement the recently launched African Peacebuilding Network (APN), a Carnegie Corporation-funded initiative led by the New York City-based Social Science Research Council to increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of locally produced research on peacebuilding and statebuilding (<http://www.ssrc.org/programs/apn/>). Complementarity, in this sense, could involve projects focused exclusively on Africa or comparative research involving regions beyond Africa that might be applicable to cases on the continent. Drawing on some of the core principles informing the “New Deal,” the emphasis will be on projects that bring local context and knowledge to bear on promoting sustainable peace in fragile and conflict affected African states. Special attention will be given to efforts that engage networks of regional or country-specific scholars or promote institutional linkages between academic centers, think tanks and professional scholarly associations in Africa and those in the Global North through joint North-South research collaborations.

In an initial round of grantmaking during the remainder of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, the Corporation will consider support for a limited number of projects that respond, in whole or in part, to the following key questions and operational challenges:

### **Research and Operational Questions:**

1. What insights can be gleaned from peacebuilding and statebuilding challenges in other regions of the world that might be applicable to cases in Africa, and how can these best be integrated, disseminated and applied?
2. How do African perspectives on peacebuilding and statebuilding compare with those generated in the Global North, and how can any differences be reconciled to strengthen research and analysis on these themes more broadly?
3. What new insights can be gleaned from existing but under recognized or valued research and analysis on peacebuilding and statebuilding on Africa by Africans, either on the continent or abroad, including work on one African country that might be relevant to another?
4. What gaps remain in the extant scholarly and policy-oriented literature on peacebuilding and statebuilding, and how can they be filled to respond to ongoing challenges in Africa?
5. How can approaches to addressing peacebuilding and statebuilding challenges from “emerging donors” be integrated into the New Deal as they apply to Africa?

6. How can the best scholarship and policy analysis produced in Africa by Africans on peacebuilding and statebuilding be identified, supported and integrated into global scholarly and policy networks?
7. How can North-South research collaboration be structured and implemented to ensure an equitable balance in terms of intellectual input, “ownership” and comparative advantage?

**Program Restrictions:**

The Corporation does not make grants for basic operating expenses, endowments, or facilities for individual school districts, colleges, universities or human services organizations. It does not generally make grants to individuals, nor does it make program-related investments. No curriculum projects within individual schools or colleges are supported.

**Deadline for Applications:** Letters of inquiry for this first round of submissions should be received no later than May 15, 1, 2012 via [https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID\\_904?SA=SNA&FID=35010](https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_904?SA=SNA&FID=35010). Please select “International Program - International Peace and Security - States in Transition” when asked to enter “Program Area.” Applications, once started, can only be returned to through the [account login page](#). After an initial review, applicants to be considered at the Corporation’s September 2012 Board of Trustees meeting will be invited to submit full proposals.

**IDRC:**

For its part, IDRC will also draw on the core principles informing the “New Deal” and build on the 2011 World Development Report by investing in operational and policy oriented research that documents the *shape* of political settlements, or elite bargains, that do or do not endure in African contexts trying to escape conflict and violence. In doing so, IDRC supported research will assess the implications of different kinds of political settlements in Africa for the legitimacy and accountability of more inclusive peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. IDRC supported research will assess the extent to which, and how, proponents of what are in essence agreements between elites based on their best interests were able, or not able, to foster broad-based public *confidence* in political settlements in a way that reinforced the sustainability and durability of peacebuilding and statebuilding processes over time. IDRC funded research will complement initiatives funded by CCNY by documenting the link between political settlements that managed to reconcile the non-inclusive nature of political settlements with the need to respond to public expectations for broad based peacebuilding and statebuilding. In doing so, IDRC and CCNY supported research will be able to provide a more comprehensive account of what statebuilding and peacebuilding success looks like from African perspectives.

**Program Restrictions:**

In principle, all research in or on countries in Africa qualify for IDRC support. The primary considerations in selecting projects are the scientific merit of the research proposal and its potential for development impact, including capacity building. However, in addition to these criteria, each proposal will be subject to IDRC’s risk management process that assesses the ability of IDRC to support programming in those countries or territories according to Canadian law, knowledge of the research setting, and the ability to monitor research activities. Countries where higher risk restrictions apply are continuously updated. As of March 2012, African countries where higher risk restrictions apply include Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Eritrea, Liberia, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Applications on or from these countries are welcome; such applications will be subject to the approval by IDRC’s Vice President for Corporate Strategy and Regional Management.

In addition to the above, consideration of support by IDRC will only be given to research projects proposed by institutions that have legal corporate registration in Africa and consortia where the lead institution has a legal corporate registration in an IDRC eligible country based in Africa. All consortia may have no more than an additional two partners.

**Deadline for Applications:** IDRC will be open to receiving proposals beginning on June 1, 2012 to August 31, 2012. Proponents will submit research grant proposals using the on-line form available on the [IDRC website](#). Applications should be submitted to [gsj@idrc.ca](mailto:gsj@idrc.ca).

### **Research Questions:**

IDRC is particularly interested in receiving research proposals that answer the following research questions.

#### **1. What are the essential characteristics of political settlements that have endured in Africa?**

- a. How inclusive have enduring political settlements been? How gender-inclusive were the settlements that endured?
- b. Informal governance institutions can be important political actors; under what conditions have they contributed to the sustainability of political settlements and when have they undermined them?
- c. What has been the impact of the integration of non-state armed groups in political settlements?
- d. What has been the influence of private sector actors on the forging of these political settlements?
- e. Was broad-based citizen engagement sought? If so, how effective was it in promoting the durability of settlements?
- f. What was the role of marginalized communities and highly vulnerable communities in the shaping of political settlements?

#### **2. Are some forms of political settlement more/less resistant to the temptation to resort to violence?**

- a. What degree of inclusion has been proven as sufficient to reduce the risks of future episodes of violence?
- b. Under what circumstances have elites abandoned an existing settlement and reverted back to violence?
- c. What tools have been used to ensure that non-state armed groups remained committed to political settlements?
- d. What has been the role of the private sector in preventing/promoting a reversion to violence?
- e. What has been the role of citizens, and in particular groups most vulnerable to the impact of violence, in holding parties accountable to peace agreements or pushing parties to abandon peace agreements?

#### **3. How have proponents of political settlements (or peace agreements) in Africa fostered *confidence* in those agreements?**

- a. What set of factors have or haven't generated confidence in political settlements over time in Africa?
- b. How have political settlements gained legitimacy, a critical condition for confidence, after internal violence? What strategies have been used to gain legitimacy among different groups, constituencies and communities?

- c. How has service delivery reinforced or failed to reinforce the legitimacy of political settlements in Africa? How has donor support to state services reinforced perceptions that the state (or the managers of the political settlement) has sought to meet social needs?
- d. How has humanitarian assistance undermined or reinforced the legitimacy of the political settlements and thus increased/decreased the risk of relapse?