

# **CODESRIA STRATEGIC PLAN 2017–2021**

**Reaching New Frontiers  
in Social Science Research and  
Knowledge Production for African Transformation**



**CODESRIA**

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Knowledge Production for African Transformation**



**COUNCIL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN AFRICA**

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Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa

Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Angle Canal IV

BP 3304 Dakar, 18524, Senegal

Website: [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org)

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The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is an independent organisation whose principal objectives are to facilitate research, promote research-based publishing and create multiple forums geared towards the exchange of views and information among African researchers. All these are aimed at reducing the fragmentation of research in the continent through the creation of thematic research networks that cut across linguistic and regional boundaries.

CODESRIA publishes *Africa Development*, the longest standing Africa based social science journal; *Afrika Zamani*, a journal of history; the *African Sociological Review*; the *African Journal of International Affairs*; *Africa Review of Books* and the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. The Council also co-publishes the *Africa Media Review*; *Identity, Culture and Politics: An Afro-Asian Dialogue*; *The African Anthropologist*, *Journal of African Transformation*, *Method(e)s: African Review of Social Sciences Methodology*, and the *Afro-Arab Selections for Social Sciences*. The results of its research and other activities are also disseminated through its Working Paper Series, Green Book Series, Monograph Series, Book Series, Policy Briefs and the CODESRIA Bulletin. Select CODESRIA publications are also accessible online at [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org).

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## ACRONYMS

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACI	African Citation Index
AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCNY	Carnegie Corporation of New York
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CODICE	CODESRIA Documentation and Information Center
COP	Conference of Parties
CRN	Comparative Research Networks
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
EWIC	Encyclopaedia of Women in Islamic Societies
GA	General Assembly
GGTTI	Global Go-To Think Tanks Index
HQ	Headquarter
HSS	Humanities and Social Sciences
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEP	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
IDRC	International Development Research Centre

ISSC	International Social Science Council
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRI	Meaning-Making Research Initiatives
MWG	Multinational Working Group
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NOR AD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NWG	National Working Group
OSF	Open Society Foundations
OSI	Open Society Institute
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
RFGI	Responsive Forest Governance Initiative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STE(A)M	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
TGF	Training, Grants and Fellowships
UIUC	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CODESRIA celebrated its 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017. Forty-four years of research and knowledge production and capacity enhancement for African development is very significant. Following the comprehensive reviews of its intellectual agenda, membership and governance, and management, the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, which builds upon the achievements of the previous strategic plans, presents the various ways in which the Council will reform and reposition itself. It is defined by continuity and change, consolidation and innovation in its intellectual agenda, research vehicles and operational modes, and management. It emphasizes the importance of policy relevance and engagement with policy communities and civil society, and deliberately seeks to inform and support the African development agenda by connecting with but also critically engaging the African Union's *Agenda 2063* and the *Global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*. In this way, the Council will better fulfil its mandate of promoting social research for African transformation and development under the changing global and regional environment.

The table below presents the continuities and the innovations:

2012–2016 STRATEGIC PLAN	2017–2021 STRATEGIC PLAN
<b>Thematic Priorities, 2012–2016</b>	<b>Thematic Priorities, 2017–2021</b>
<b>Main Themes</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher Education, ICTS, Internationalization: Changing Landscapes, Changing Modes, Emerging Trends</li> <li>Higher Education Dynamics in a Changing Africa</li> <li>Climate Change, Resources and Development: The New Scramble; Transformation and Value Addition with Africa</li> <li>Regional Integration; Mobility; The African Diaspora</li> <li>Contemporary Forms of African Encounters with Globalisation – The Emerging Powers and Africa; Changing Relation with the West?</li> </ol>	<b>Main Themes</b> (much fewer; legibility enhanced) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Democratic Processes, Governance, Citizenship and Security in Africa</li> <li>Ecologies, Economies and Societies in Africa</li> <li>Higher Education Dynamics in a Changing Africa</li> </ol> <b>Cross-Cutting Issues:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender</li> <li>Generations</li> <li>Memory and History</li> <li>Futures and Alternatives</li> <li>Inequality</li> </ol>
<b>Research</b>	
National Working Groups Comparative Networks Multinational Working Groups Joint Research Networks Post-Doctoral Research Grants	Meaning-Making Research Initiatives (new); includes NWG CRNs, MWGs, post-doctoral grants and fellowships Emphasis on analysis and interpretation; theory; interrogating narratives and counter narratives
<b>Research Training &amp; Capacity Enhancement</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutes, summer schools</li> <li>Methodology workshops</li> <li>Small Grants for Thesis Writing Joint Research</li> <li>College of Mentors (introduced)</li> <li>Training Trainers Workshops</li> <li>Streaming some institute lectures</li> <li>Support to doctoral schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutes, summer schools</li> <li>Methodology workshops (organized by universities)</li> <li>Small Grants for Thesis Writing</li> <li>College of Mentors (developed)</li> <li>Refresher courses for faculty</li> <li>Virtual campus; MOOCs</li> <li>Support to doctoral schools</li> <li>Centre of Excellence</li> </ul>

<b>2012–2016 STRATEGIC PLAN</b>	<b>2017–2021 STRATEGIC PLAN</b>
<b>Thematic Priorities, 2012–2016</b>	<b>Thematic Priorities, 2017–2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CODESRIA publishes all that is positively peer-reviewed</li> <li>• Journals publish unsolicited articles</li> <li>• From CODESRIA supported research</li> <li>• Policy Briefs</li> <li>• Working Papers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of right of first refusal (authors could publish elsewhere, with due acknowledgement of CODESRIA)</li> <li>• Journals to publish more article</li> <li>• Priority to CODESRIA Journals</li> <li>• Policy Briefs systematically developed</li> <li>• Working papers</li> <li>• E-publishing</li> </ul>
<b>Publications and Dissemination</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Access</li> <li>• Digitization of theses and rare books</li> <li>• Communications – media, social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Access</li> <li>• African Citation Index</li> <li>• Improved use of modern and traditional media</li> </ul>
<b>CODESRIA Documentation, Communication, Information and Outreach Management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive reviews of CODESRIA</li> <li>• New Charter and Policy Documents</li> <li>• New Scientific Committee (reconstituted) (with a new mandate)</li> <li>• Developing Manual of Procedures</li> <li>• Land for new headquarters (HQs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing Reforms (Action Plan)</li> <li>• Implementing new Charter; developing bye-laws and policies</li> <li>• Scientific Committee actively engaged</li> <li>• Decentralization – regional programme hubs with universities</li> <li>• Implementing Manual Procedures</li> <li>• Fundraising for and building of new HQs</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Partnerships</li> <li>• Reaching out to policy communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Partnerships</li> <li>• Reaching out to all policy communities</li> </ul>



## INTRODUCTION

### **Repositioning CODESRIA in a Changing Twenty-first Century Africa: Lessons from Forty-four Years of Research**

CODESRIA's mandate is to promote social science research in Africa with a view to producing knowledge that can enhance the understanding of the social dynamics and structural transformations taking place within Africa and in the world around us, and inform policy and social action. CODESRIA is 'conceived as one of the engines needed to promote independent and audacious African reflections on the challenges of the contemporary world'. The Council does this by supporting research among individuals and networks on the thematic priorities identified by the community of scholars and African thinkers in and outside of the academy. It takes into account the concerns of policy communities, civil society and community-based organizations on the continent. The promotion of social research also includes research training and the nurturing of the new generations of scholars, publishing and disseminating research results, and engaging policy-makers, civil society and other potential users and beneficiaries of research. Part of this engagement takes the form of multi-stakeholder dialogues involving researchers, policy and decision-makers, and leaders in civil society.

CODESRIA celebrated its 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017. In the course of its 44-year history, CODESRIA research has covered a broad range of themes and issues that are central to the global, regional and sub-regional policy agendas, and to the concerns of social movements in Africa and other parts of the global South. The Council has also trained and enhanced the research capacity of thousands of young scholars, and published hundreds of books and journal issues. Consequently, the Council has its footprints in all parts of the continent and beyond, and has helped shape the ways in which Africans think about governance and development in Africa and the rest of the world. In the process, it has accumulated valuable experience in the design of research and research vehicles, as well in networking, organizing and conducting. It has further acquired adequate experience in building and managing a pan-African research institution that works across regions, disciplines, languages, genders, generations, and cultures.

CODESRIA operates in a context where the study of Africa is a global enterprise, the centre of which is now within the continent. However, how Africa is accounted for in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) in the West, and the question of how Africa has affected the HSS are still key preoccupations for the Council. While avoiding 'intellectual ghettos', CODESRIA has, over the years, been dealing with the epistemic hierarchies and 'knowledge divides' of the kinds presented in the World Social Science Report (2010), seeking to understand how they are being reproduced over time and in different contexts.

Indeed, the whole point of defining an intellectual agenda for Africa is that issues are not approached the same way in the North and in the South, just as they are seldom approached with the same urgency in different parts of the South. Part of the explanation for this is that there are power relations involved. Furthermore, new knowledges produced about Africa in different arenas are also not readily accessible to Africans. Bridging the knowledge divides, transcending disciplinary boundaries, and devising ways of enabling African scholars to access knowledge about Africa and the rest of world, wherever it is produced have, therefore, been and will continue to be key concerns for CODESRIA. Beyond access, the real issue is the need to make spaces available for new generations of scholars to think and produce knowledge about Africa.

African researchers also need to continue to understand how South-South relationships are changing Africa and global economic relationships. For instance, are the BRICS enabling Africa to transform structurally, or are they, instead, locking Africa in new unequal relationships? Is Africa running the risk of "losing for the second time" with the arrival of the BRICS? Should Africans continue to be as critical of South-South relations as they are of North-South relations? Clearly, the need for African scholarship to go beyond mainstream concerns is perhaps more pressing today than it has ever been. Such mainstream discourse has a particular way of framing Africa as a policy problem to be solved rather than a reality to be understood. On the contrary, there is greater need to bring critical and progressive thinking, giving due consideration to, among other areas of study, qualitative economics.

The 2017–2021 Strategic Plan builds upon CODESRIA's achievements of more than four decades of research and knowledge production. It carries forward work begun during the previous strategic plan periods and explores ways of making African research adequately respond to and inform policy communities, as well as civil society and the social movements working in or with the continent. In doing this, it will, by implication, give attention to the global development challenges and the agenda that is designed to address them from an African perspective.

The recent adoption of the post-2015 global development agenda including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the outcomes of the Financing Development Conference held in Addis Ababa in 2015, the results of COP21 and COP22, and the adoption of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 are all clear indications of, not only heightened awareness, but also willingness to address important global/regional challenges such as climate change. At a regional level, development conversations in Africa focus on the first ten years of the AU's Agenda 2063 that partly overlaps with the post-2015 agenda. This is the case, in part, because the African region adopted a 'common position' on the SDGs that is largely informed by Agenda 2063.

The vision of the AU laid out in Agenda 2063 is one of '*an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena*'. Realizing this vision requires much work given the current African and global contexts.

Today, the African continent is witnessing multiple transformations. Poverty, insecurity, over exploitation of natural resources and violence (both physical and structural) are still widespread. But there have also been notable improvements in the performance of many economies resulting from the high demand for the primary commodities produced by the continent, and new creativity and dynamism driven by public and private initiatives and resolve that have led to the creation of new economic niches and opportunities. The upsurge of struggles for democracy led by the youth and organized in new ways, such as *Balai Citoyen* in Burkina Faso and *Filimbi* in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have reinforced continued struggles by old actors including women's movements and other civil society actors leading to changes encapsulated in the so-called 'Arab Spring.' All this has led to a shift in the dominant narratives about Africa from a primarily negative one to a much more positive discourse captured in terms like 'Africa rising,' 'the African resurgence,' and 'the African renaissance'.

The structural conditions undermining Africa's progress have, however, remained largely unchanged. Africa still produces and exports primary commodities and imports manufactured goods. The continent is probably among the regions that are most vulnerable to climate change. It does not play a leading role in global governance, and is still at the receiving end of global power relations. The collapse of the state in Libya and the spread of terrorist attacks in parts of West and East Africa add to what was already a long list of cases of disintegrating political and social institutions. Precious resources that would have otherwise been available for the improvement of social services and for development are being lost through legal and illegal mechanisms ranging from capital flight, through corruption, to various kinds of trafficking.

The questions of how to reverse the negative trends, mitigate their adverse effects, enhance the resilience of the societies and strengthen institutions continue to beg for answers. Demographic projections that indicate a massive increase in population sizes and rapid urban growth along with the challenges these will pose make proactive action grounded in sound knowledge critical. These transformations at once pose policy challenges and offer up an embarrassingly high array of epistemological puzzles for scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.





# LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES FROM THE 2012–2016 STRATEGIC PLAN

CODESRIA's work in the 2012–2016 Strategic Plan was conducted under the theme '*Extending the Frontiers of Social Science Research and Bringing Social Research to Public Issues*'. The Council achieved significant success in pursuit of its major objectives during that plan period. For instance, CODESRIA attained the following achievements during the Plan period (that includes the 2013–2015 programme cycle):

- i. The Council created 56 research groups. These included National Working Groups (NWG), Comparative Research Networks (CRN), Multinational Working Groups (MWG), and Joint Research Networks launched under the *African Diaspora Support to African Universities Programme* (14), and country research teams set up under the Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) (6). 70 individual research projects were also supported during the period. They include 36 scholars engaged in the RFGI projects and post-doctoral fellows. CODESRIA published 88 books in addition to many journals that were very well received by academic communities and policy makers, and used as teaching materials in universities. The Council held 34 conferences, seminars and workshops and published 34 working papers, and 7 policy briefs. During the period, 44 groups, including some created in the preceding programme cycle, completed work. 3 *Small Grants for Thesis Writing* competitions were launched, with each attracting between 600 and 750 applications. A total of 87 PhD and 65 Masters candidates received small grants for thesis writing, and 95 PhD and Masters recipients of small grants graduated during the cycle.
- ii. The work produced by the Council has had significant influence on scholarly work and policy making as well as policy practice in Africa. 30 of the 47 lecturers from across African universities surveyed indicated that they used CODESRIA publications for teaching purposes. 21 of the 23 policy makers and practitioners surveyed indicated that they engaged with these publications in their work.
- iii. The Council's investment in nurturing young African social scientists by providing them with methodological skills, improving their capacity for engaging in critical theoretical debates, and the completion of their Masters, doctoral and post-doctoral studies have been very successful. 57 of the 58 former participants in the CODESRIA thematic institutes surveyed indicated that the institutes improved their capacity to carry out academic research. Further, 20 of the 21 former trainees surveyed indicated that the workshops improved their ability to conduct academic research.

- iv. Although CODESRIA's commitment is to basic research, its work has had a notable influence on policy. This policy influence is reflected in the MoUs the Council signed during the previous programme cycle with, among others, the African Union Commission (AUC), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and its collaboration with leading institutions working on development and peace and security issues in Africa. Its convening power has similarly grown equally evident in at least 110 high level officials (including, but not limited to sitting and former presidents, prime ministers, ministers, ambassadors, other senior state officials, very senior officials of leading regional institution) who attended CODESRIA events. These events included the African Higher Education Summit held in Dakar in March 2015 that had participants like former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the African Union Commission Chairperson, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and the President of Senegal, Mr Macky Sall. Further, CODESRIA's expanding convening power was evident when the Council co-organised and co-hosted (with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) the third edition of the World Social Science Forum in Durban, South Africa, in September 2015, which was attended by 1040 participants from all over the world.
- v. The 2015 Global Go-To Think Tanks Index (GGTTI) Report of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the University of Pennsylvania ranked CODESRIA among the best 3 think tanks in Africa, the best 120 think tanks in the world (out of more than 6,600 think tanks reviewed), the 30 best think tanks on international development worldwide, and among the think tanks that have the greatest impact on public policy worldwide. The African Union (AU) Education Outlook (2014) made a special mention of CODESRIA as one of the foremost 'Thriving Research Institutions in Africa,' whose research work in higher education, regional integration, climate change and resources management, gender, policy and governance influenced the body's policy articulation in the 2012–2013 programme cycle.

Clearly, investment in basic research can be highly effective as a means of influencing policy and practice in the future.



## EXPLAINING THE ACHIEVEMENTS

Three key reasons can be credited for achievements made during the previous cycle. First, the rebirth of the African Higher Education sector seems to have played a key role in re-establishing research and publication as key criteria for staff promotions. However, the sector did not create the environment and instruments needed for scholars to research and publish. This has led into a high demand for CODESRIA activities that aid scholars to conduct research and publish. This environment has also generated a growing interest in collaboration with CODESRIA from many leading universities on the continent and other regions of the world who seek to enhance the ability of their faculty and students to conduct research, publish and get integrated into international knowledge networks.

Second, CODESRIA's investment in the training and research of scholars who then go on to become leading policy makers and practitioners gives the Council significant policy influence.<sup>5</sup> Many of these scholars use ideas that they developed with the support of the Council into their policy work. Further, their continued links with CODESRIA gives the Council relatively easy access to them, providing good channels of policy influence. The fact that many of them continue to read work published by CODESRIA and even continue to publish with the Council ensures the percolation of the Council's work into policy circles. This has reinforced the need to upscale CODESRIA's commitment to develop programmes at the nexus between basic research and policy engagement that this strategic plan proposes.

Third, the significant progress made in the strengthening of national, sub-regional and regional governance structures since the turn of the twenty-first Century means that many such institutions are now in a position to realize the importance of research to their work and use this research when it is available. Subsequently, the AU and the Pan-African Parliament, and the solicitations from the governments of several African countries have all demonstrated an interest in partnering with CODESRIA in their work. CODESRIA was among the select group of academic organisations invited to participate in USA-Africa, China-Africa, India-Africa, and Turkey-Africa dialogues, among other international dialogues held during the past five years. The Council is continuously invited to participate and contribute to the shaping of the orientation of research partnerships between African universities and those in Europe and North America.





## CHALLENGES AND INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

The successes highlighted above were achieved amidst challenges that continue to limit CODESRIA's capacity to realise its full potential.

- i. First is the crisis affecting many countries where CODESRIA works. Many African countries continue to experience economic and/or governance and security crises. The fall of primary commodity prices, and the disruption of livelihoods, ecosystems, economies, and institutions of governance caused by climate change, epidemics and pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and, more recently the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), terror attacks, and the conflicts in West and Central Africa, as well as in the Horn of Africa, Sudan and South Sudan, and in Libya, and the economic and governance challenges in Egypt are illustrations of the difficulties of the situation in which the Council runs programmes.
- ii. Second, African universities, which are both part of the membership base and partners of CODESRIA, may have overcome some aspects of the crises of higher education, but new challenges continue to emerge due to extremely rapid expansion of the sector. Impoverished and without a clear perspective of the real challenges with which Africa is confronted, many universities on the continent see CODESRIA as a financial source for their own 'research projects', and those of their faculty, regardless of the relevance or importance of those projects. There is therefore a risk that CODESRIA could be reduced to simply being the "receiving vessel" of applications for funding, which may cause it to lose its real function of promoting, through its own initiatives, debate on the major challenges of modern times.
- iii. Third, the nature of the funding regime seen against the flexibility necessary for programming. The crisis in Africa forces the Council to centre its work on its challenges, paying particular attention to how they manifest or are confronted through cross-cutting issues such as gender, economy, culture, institutions, and politics. As the experience of the last programme cycle has shown, this makes the importance of programme flexibility and an ability to respond to unexpected challenges even greater. However, the funding regimes do not always leave room for flexibility and adaptation. Matters are worsened by the fact that the demand for support from CODESRIA far outweighs its resource capacity to meet that demand.
- iv. The fourth challenge concerns timely completion of projects. The research groups and networks and individual researchers awarded grants by the Council do not always complete their work on time. This is an area that is of concern to CODESRIA and to the many scholars involved in these networks. The small size of research grants offered, the fact that

the Council does not buy off the teaching time of researchers involved and the limited ability of Secretariat staff to monitor groups as effectively as they ought to are all issues of major concern that need to be addressed in the new plan period.

- v. A fifth challenge concerns the ability of the Council to communicate the work it does in the most effective way. The frameworks of reporting contribute to the limited capacity to communicate our work effectively. This limits the possible impact of the Council's publications and conferences. It also limits CODESRIA's visibility, thus, impacting its ability to raise funds.
- vi. Fundraising constitutes the sixth challenge of the Council. The difficult economic and political environment has led some donors to cut down on aid for research cooperation. The funds that are available also tend to be earmarked, making it difficult for the Council to invest in work on the themes that it finds to be the most important based on wide-ranging consultations and discussions within the African social science community. Institutional development is a key victim of this situation. Few are the partners willing to invest core support to those who manage and mobilise the research process, a fact that often turns staff into missionaries for research. Further, the fact that CODESRIA has chosen to promote basic research means that projects and programmes might not immediately be tied to policy. This has made some donors perceive certain projects as undeserving of funding, constituting a significant problem. Yet in the absence of high quality basic research and an investment in those who administratively make that research possible, the quality of policy, applied or problem-solving research, cannot be sustained. It is possible to draw very important lessons for policy and practice from the results of basic research. The challenge of reaching fundraising targets has far-reaching consequences for the ability of the Council to fully implement its strategic plans.

The challenges cited above signalled the need for institutional renewal. Achieving the necessary institutional renewal that all organizations require to obviate their gradual atrophy has, however, not been easy. It is because of this need for internally driven institutional renewal that CODESRIA instituted three internal review committees in 2014 to examine the Council's governance and membership, intellectual agenda, and management. For over three years, these committees have engaged in deep reflection and lively debates on CODESRIA's intellectual agenda and the extent to which that agenda enables it to enhance African contributions to global debates while addressing the challenges facing the continent. They have also reflected on its effectiveness as a continental body, and its level of preparedness for the challenges that lie ahead. The reports produced by the three committees make for compelling reading in appreciating the achievements of the institution, the problems it faces and the ways in which these challenges can be surpassed. The main recommendations of the three reports include the following:

- That CODESRIA maintains its strategic choice of being a focused institution that 'promote[s] independent and audacious African reflections on the challenges of the contemporary world'.

There is a need to further sharpen the focus of the intellectual agenda and organize it around a few broad areas and themes to facilitate greater legibility;

- That the portfolio of programmes directly managed by the CODESRIA Secretariat be kept manageable and mechanisms for both research activities and publications should be reinforced to make them more efficient and effective;
- That the management of transitions at the level of the senior members of staff requires closer attention;
- That there is a need to develop more effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms and carry out regular and continuous collection of data on the outcomes of CODESRIA's work;
- That the governance of the Council be better tailored to suit a scholarly institution and be made more truly pan-African;
- That the funding base of the Council be better secured through the diversification of the sources of funding, the increase of the sources and the size of the core funding.

The recommendations of the review committees were discussed during the 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in Dakar, Senegal in June 2015, and have been taken into account in the preparation of the new programme cycle and this Strategic Plan. Closely studying and implementing the recommendations of these committees with a view to positioning CODESRIA as a critical contributor to Africa's development running up to 2063 and beyond is a key objective of CODESRIA in the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.





## THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The global context is full of uncertainties, not only because of the rapidity of the pace of change at different levels, but also because of the shifting priorities of the main global players. The changing fortunes of the African state make uncertainties for African research even greater. Research budgets are low, and there is growing fascination for the STEM subjects that are seen as the real keys to development. The resources allocated by African governments to social science research could therefore be diminishing, thus making the prospects of donor priorities changing an even worrisome prospect. Other threats include those posed by political instability, terrorism and fundamentalism to intellectual freedom and the freedom of speech and thought.

There are however many opportunities for research, and for CODESRIA, more specifically. The current transformations make the case for increasing investments in research in the HSS much stronger, for they are disciplines that are well-placed to increase the understanding of the transformations and facilitate meaning-making at every level including at the policy levels. There are many more pockets of excellence in the African Higher Education and knowledge system than was the case a few decades ago. African governments and thought leaders in civil society and within communities are more aware of the importance of higher education and research, and of the work that CODESRIA is doing. The interest in CODESRIA publications is growing. The decision by African governments to devote 1 per cent of GDP to higher education and research and the adoption of the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa* (CESA) also provide opportunities for mutual engagements between research and policy, and for generating greater support for research from within the continent. The rise in the number of African foundations that are beginning to take greater interest in research, and the progress of democracy in a growing number of countries also create favourable conditions for research, and for the implementation of this Strategic Plan.





# **REINFORCING CODESRIA TO HELP SHAPE AFRICA'S FUTURE: THE 2017–2021 STRATEGIC PLAN**

From the above, the following strategic orientations will be the hallmarks of the new plan:

1. CODESRIA reaffirms its commitment to promoting independent African thinking on all issues of relevance to Africa, the global South and the rest of the world; promoting basic research as a service to a resurgent higher education sector in Africa, as a sound basis for policy reflections and policy-making in Africa and as a tool for empowering African citizens of all genders, generations and classes through knowledge;
2. CODESRIA will increase both the sizes and the numbers of its grants to scholars and undertake oversight reforms in the secretariat that will hasten the completion and publication of work by scholars;
3. CODESRIA will more systematically engage policy communities (particularly African governments and regional institutions), civil society and other stakeholders in African development;
4. The Council will work to secure its funding base along with ongoing efforts at institutional reform.

The CODESRIA of the future will be an organization that:

1. Is still oriented to basic research, plays a leading role in setting the intellectual agenda for the continent, an agenda that contributes to shaping the global intellectual agendas and helps reach new frontiers of social research;
2. Belongs to the category of the most advanced research institutions in the world;
3. Continues to mobilize independent and creative thinking in Africa on African and global issues and whose research is relevant to African problem-solving and the search for solutions to global governance and development challenges;
4. Is well connected to, and works very closely with, policy communities and social movements engaged in the transformation and advancement of Africa and of the Global South;
5. Is equipped with modern infrastructure and makes good use of the new technologies of information and communication.





## OBJECTIVES OF THE 2017–2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

*Summary of problem statement:* There is insufficient production of high quality social sciences and humanities research in Africa that addresses the priority development challenges of the continent and inadequate engagement with such research.

*Overall objective:* The overall objective of the plan is to increase the production of high quality social sciences and humanities research addressing the priority development challenges of Africa and enhance engagement with such research.

Out of this, six specific objectives are discernible:

- *Specific objective 1:* To increase the production of high quality social science and humanities research addressing the priority research areas of the 2017-2021 plan and enhance engagement with such research.
- *Specific objective 2:* To increase the visibility of social science research produced by African researchers, and enhance engagement with such research.
- *Specific objective 3:* To expand academic freedom, strengthen good governance and to enable improvement in the performance of African universities.
- *Specific objective 4:* To increase the quantity and improve the quality of the research outputs of emerging social science researchers in Africa.
- *Specific objective 5:* To increase the effectiveness and funding of CODESRIA.
- *Specific objective 6:* To enhance the consideration of gender in the life and work of CODESRIA.





## THEMATIC PRIORITIES

To ensure the relevance of its thematic priorities to the most important issues affecting Africa, CODESRIA undertook a wide-ranging, multi-stage process of consultations and debates within the social science community. Discussions at the 2015 General Assembly raised a broad set of issues that boiled down into 6 specific propositions. The Scientific Committee discussed these propositions in December 2016 and decided on three themes and several cross-cutting issues. A final Strategic Planning workshop that involved members of CODESRIA Executive and Scientific Committees, the Secretariat as well as other invited scholars and practitioners and some of CODESRIA's main funders, further discussed these thematic areas. The Executive Committee at its December 2016 meeting endorsed the Strategic Plan while noting a few areas that needed more attention.

The following three themes represent areas around that the Council will focus on over the next five years:

1. Democratic processes, governance, citizenship and security;
2. Ecological transitions, economies and societies;
3. Higher education dynamics in a changing Africa.

In addition to these three, there are several cross-cutting themes that should suffuse research, training and publications on these themes. They are:

1. Gender;
2. Inequality;
3. Generations;
4. Alternatives and futures;
5. Rurality and urbanity;
6. Memory and history;
7. Epistemology and methodology.

Beyond their individual relevance, the interactions between these cross-cutting themes provide junctures whose exploration stands to further our understanding of Africa and its role in the world, and also contribute significantly to policy processes and practice in Africa.

1. ***Democratic processes, governance, citizenship and security in Africa:*** How Africa, along with all the changes and transformations that define it today, is and should be governed will constitute an area of major concern under this theme. Issues of the state, democratization, the rule of law and human rights, transitional justice, governance processes and mechanisms at local, national, regional and international levels that continue to constitute some of the most important issues of concern in many African countries will continue to orient the work of CODESRIA. Questions of citizenship, rights, migration and issues related to belonging, language, and the changing boundaries and configurations of states and communities (ethnic, religious, cultural, regional groups and nations) will similarly be in focus. Security with its multiple meanings, the panoply of evolving threats that compromise security and the regimes deployed to keep people, societies and institutions safe will be a central subject of investigation by CODESRIA. Domestic and global threats; violence involving states, communities and individuals; threats implicating youths and women; terrorism, counter-terrorism and civil protection; and environmental threats and disaster management will all receive attention.
2. ***Ecologies, economies and societies in Africa:*** The interaction of human populations with the environment in Africa, the forms it takes, its histories and trajectories and its impact on a broad set of sectors including the continent's burgeoning economies, properly understood as phenomena that are embedded in societies, will be the subject of work under this thematic cluster. The issues of land, food security and poverty in the developing world and especially in Africa have dominated public debate and are of global concern. Exacerbating these issues are the complex subjects of climate change and population growth. The evolving nature of rural and urban zones and the complex interactions between these is also of importance in identifying challenges as well as suggesting possibilities. The means through which the most vulnerable populations can acquire the capacity to withstand catastrophes and even transform them into opportunities for advancement will command attention just as the ability of societies to plan and work toward long-term visions. The roles of technological innovation in addressing societal challenges will be the subject of research. Attention will also focus on the possibilities for African structural transformation (including agricultural development and industrialization), and the challenges of ensuring sustained growth and high employment that can lead to the reduction of poverty and more equitable societies.
3. ***Higher education dynamics in a changing Africa:*** Over the last two decades, the renewed faith in and acknowledgement that higher education is a major driving force for improved standards of living, economic development and forging national cohesion in Africa has resulted in increased support to revitalize and expand higher education institutions. At a continental level, the African Union Commission has tied the realization of the objectives of its development blueprint, 'Agenda 2063,' to the effective functioning of the higher education sector. The reform of African Higher Education along with the challenges of uncoordinated and uncontrolled growth in enrolments that challenge quality, the proliferation of 'private'

as well as public institutions of higher education, increased crisis of graduate employability, the lack of differentiated institutions as well as programs within each institution, to cater for different types of learners and needs of the continent will be subjected to critical investigation. The financing of institutions of higher education, recruitment of students, the recruitment and promotion of faculty, the question of STE[A]M and the Social Sciences and Humanities in these institutions all constitute important areas of reflection. The critical challenge of crafting curricula and stimulating and supporting research that address the continent's needs remains a thorny one that will receive the attention of CODESRIA. Suffice it to note that, as an institution, the Council has been at the center of many of these interventions to revitalize African higher education.

***Cross-cutting themes:*** CODESRIA's cross-cutting themes are issues that should orient and suffuse research on the three themes highlighted above for two reasons. First, their consideration stands to facilitate a better understanding of questions posed under the three thematic priorities above. Second, taking them into consideration provides better ways to practically address the real-life challenges that arise under these strategic themes.

For the 2017–2021 program cycle, CODESRIA has identified the following as cross-cutting themes:

1. ***Gender:*** The implications of social constructions around masculinities and femininities in social processes and the varied forms and sites of struggles for gender equity and equality.
2. ***Generations:*** The specificities of age groups and the complex ways in which they interact with each other and those outside their cohort.
3. ***Futures and alternatives:*** The changing ways of imagining futures and alternative worlds in their multiplicity and diversity across time and space and how such imaginations in both their inclusionary and exclusionary bents help us make sense of our present and past. The far-reaching scholarly, ideological and practical implications of these changing and contested visions of and approaches to the future will also be engaged.
4. ***Rurality and urbanity:*** The specificities of rural and urban spaces, their interactions and how they influence policies, institutions and lives will be of prime importance. The rurality and urbanity pair should be understood as a dichotomy. These phenomena should be considered on their own terms as well as in relation to each other. Given CODESRIA's long history of work on rurality, urbanity and urbanization, their interactions with the rural as well as their interactions with questions of citizenship, migration, inequality and poverty will receive particular attention.
5. ***Inequality:*** The extent and nature of economic and social inequities and how they influence and are in turn shaped by various social processes.

6. ***Memory and history:*** The ways in which history and memory are constructed and fostered as resources for differentiation and conflict as well as cooperation and collaboration, and the important roles they play in the regulation of social life and the fashioning of futures will inform our approach.
7. ***Epistemology and methodology:*** The varied approaches to apprehending social realities, the relationship between the apprehension and creation of realities and the distributional and policy consequences of various ways of approaching the process of knowledge reaction will be preoccupations of work undertaken by the initiatives.

# **PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES**

As with previous strategic plans and programme cycles, the work of the Council will be organized in five different but interconnected areas: Research; Research Training and Capacity Enhancement; Publications and Dissemination; Documentation, Communication and Public and Policy Engagement; and Institutional Development. Some of the programmes launched during the previous cycles will be continued in new ways and many new initiatives will be launched. The guiding principle is to make all programmes, initiatives, convening, and publications contribute to the realization of the objectives set for the cycle and achieve the desired results and outcomes, as specified in the attached log frame.





## RESEARCH

### **Tying research to the shaping of African futures**

The production of knowledge by CODESRIA over the 2017–2021 period will be made in a context of widespread (re)commitment across the continent to project into, envision, deliberately plan for and build African futures. The AU's Agenda 2063, the many national plans across Africa as well as diverse global agendas all point to this effort to shape the future. This is a marked departure from the 1980s and 1990s when many African countries were embroiled in Structural Adjustment Programs that involved day-to-day efforts at recovering from economic crises and dealing with emergencies. Renewed focus on the future signals a recapturing of the spirit of long-term planning that characterized many countries just after gaining independence. The multi-year development plans and visions of today seek to go beyond the pre-occupation with the short-term to engage and shape societies in the long run. In engaging in prospective thinking with such a deliberate focus, CODESRIA brings peculiar advantages. In previous efforts, CODESRIA's interventions have provided alternative ways of thinking about Africa's developmental challenges that are informed by history and rooted in research that is committed to challenging orthodoxies associated with dominant, but often problematic discourses. The Council's work in this regard, though focused largely as basic research, has advertently or inadvertently translated into major policy impact.

The research produced by CODESRIA will critically engage, support and continuously evaluate these continental and national agendas for imagining, planning and creating African futures that are better than the current situation on the continent. This represents a consolidation of CODESRIA's ongoing engagement with prospective thinking on the continent. It is this engagement that influenced the choice of 'Creating African futures in an era of global transformation' as the theme of the Council's General Assembly in 2015. Commitment to this effort is also evident in the choice of 'alternatives and futures' as one of the cross-cutting themes that should inform work produced under the three priority themes of the Council. The title of the Council 2017–2021 Strategic Plan – 'Reaching New Frontiers in Social Research and Knowledge Production for African Transformation and Development' – also captures this preoccupation.

Deliberately tying its contributions to basic research towards efforts of shaping African futures in the long run is grounded in the understanding that basic research is invaluable to the process of policy-making and implementation. The same can be said about struggles for positive grassroots changes in Africa. First, basic research ensures African intervention in the intellectual debates that act as the broad maps that structure, guide and shape policy discourses

in the world. Second, basic research acts as the fulcrum from which policy research is rooted and drawn. Third, because many scholars straddle the academic and policy worlds, those who undertake basic research often transfer the competencies and knowledge produced to the policy world through their roles as consultants, policy-makers and practitioners. Fourth, when disseminated in forms that are easily accessible to policy audiences, basic research can directly influence decision-making by practitioners. Finally, the policy process itself is a subject of research since policy does not just happen but is rather borne out of complex processes of struggle. This process, just like the outcome, needs to be studied and understood.

The critical engagement with the continent's present and its past is key to shaping its future since what is and has been the substrata on which the continent's future will be built. The identification and understanding of successes and failures of the past will facilitate the reproduction of successes and an avoidance of past failures.

## **Enhancing the quality of research: A recommitment to theorization and critical inquiry**

CODESRIA will introduce the Meaning-Making Research Initiative (MRI) as its principal tool for generating and supporting research on Africa and its place in the world over the 2017–2021 strategic cycle. The MRI will privilege analysis, interpretation and understanding in research. It will seek to support work that deliberately goes beyond the mere description of Africa and its place in the world to question, probe and analyze them in ways that suggest interesting ways of comprehending the continent. It represents a recommitment to a long tradition of critical analysis and theorization that saw CODESRIA contribute significantly to some of the most important debates on Africa and the rest of the world.

Beyond the tasks of explanation and interpretation, meaning-making also demands efforts to come to terms with and surpass challenges. Here, the work of imagining and suggesting alternative worlds and ways of being becomes a key aspect of the research that MRI will promote. The rigorous scholarly work involved in investigating the promise and pitfalls of certain visions of the future will be central to such work. So too will be the careful elaboration of approaches, strategies and tools for building futures and alternative social realities that are grounded in serious scholarly work. This pre-occupation with futures, therefore, is critical to the passage from sense-making to meaning-making.

As noted above, the engagement with futures and alternatives must first start with a rigorous interrogation of the concepts 'futures' and 'alternatives.' What is the distinction between the future and the long-term? How does the preoccupation with futures relate to early attention to 'long-term planning?' How do the multiple, changing and contested meanings of these terms affect how people approach the tasks of shaping lives and societies beyond the present? How do immediate needs (and desires) shape visions of and the preoccupation with the future? How are these needs (and desires) influenced by the same? Which vision of the future gains the upper hand in these contests and which understandings are marginalized in the process?

**Criteria for winning projects:** Projects funded under the MRIs will meet many of the following criteria:

- i. Propose research on important aspects of African social realities that fall under CODESRIA's priority themes;
- ii. Be guided by clear questions that explore puzzling aspects of African social realities;
- iii. Be grounded in the thorough exploration of the continent's social realities and history;
- iv. Engage constructively and rigorously with African futures;
- v. Be theoretically ambitious with a clear goal of providing new and innovative ways of understanding and making sense of African realities;
- vi. And explore multiple spatial, temporal and sectoral settings where such work contributes to the process of meaning-making.

**Types of grants:** The MRI will award both individual and group grants. Groups may be constituted by researchers from one country or from multiple countries.

**End products:** All MRIs will have a strict 18-month lifetime. Each individual or group grantee is required to produce a book manuscript or three articles publishable in leading journals in their field.

**MRIs in CODESRIA's reform context:** In 2014 CODESRIA instituted three internal reviews focusing on its governance and membership, its management and its intellectual agenda. Specific concerns over the current work of the Council included the view that the Council was working on too many activities and programs, ultimately jeopardizing quality and legibility. There were also doubts over the potentially positive impact of the Council's work on scholarship and policy in Africa. MRIs will help address many of these concerns in the following ways:

- Increase the *quality of research* by focusing attention on theoretically ambitious work that seeks to understand African realities instead of just describing them.
- Reduce the *multiplicity of research vehicles* currently employed by the Council (National Working Groups, Multinational Working Groups, Comparative Research Networks, Transnational Working Groups, and Postdoctoral Fellowships) to one : the MRIs.
- Render CODESRIA's support for research more *legible* and *visible* by offering (potentially) multiple grants under this one programme instead of offering a few grants under each of a dizzying array of research vehicles.
- Tie CODESRIA's research programme in an explicit way to broad continental, national and global *policy agendas for change* that responds to concerns over the Council's contribution to making Africa a better place for all.

*Convenings*: Convenings will be better deployed to fulfil the goals of stimulating research in important, but under-explored fields, disseminating knowledge, connecting knowledge to policy and practice and increasing the visibility of CODESRIA. *Conferences* will be scaled at the right level even as their number is reduced to achieve these goals. Half-day *pre-conference briefings* will be organized to increase the visibility of conferences, attract partners for such conferences and reach out to policy makers who are often not captured by the normal system of submitting abstracts and papers. Half-day *dissemination workshops* will be introduced as small virtual or face-to-face meetings to increase the visibility of the work supported by CODESRIA. They will also serve to increase the impact of these works. The products highlighted in these meetings may be policy briefs, books or journal articles. The consistent production of *policy briefs* from research supported by CODESRIA as well as the Council's conferences is meant to make knowledge produced by CODESRIA more accessible to a policy audience.

But even more important, and to complement our published policy outputs, the Council will launch a Reflections on Policy Series as a major initiative through which CODESRIA Policy work will be conducted. The key aim is to link basic research to policy by subjecting the policy process to study so academics and policy-thinkers understand the complex processes of policy-making and implementation. This will enable the study of the policy process towards understanding how to better think about the question of policy impact. The main idea here is to reflect on the complexity of policy-making processes and to signal that previous attempts to influence policy have been less impactful, not because there is some deficiency in data but rather that the policy process operates in circumstances that do not easily lend themselves to a straight forward way of translating research into policy impact. The Reflections on Policy Series will not only focus on the process but it will aim to highlight ways in which different methods can be deployed and assess impact.

The Series will also enable a set of activities that make possible the distillation of key policy messages out of CODESRIA's work, locate them in relation to prevailing policy processes and better assess how to structure basic research in relation to policy thinking and practice. This will allow the combined mobilisation of its resources among partners for understanding the realm of policy, policy actors and process. The Council will therefore mount research, in the framework of the MRI, specifically on the policy process. Second, the Council will organize several convenings over the year that will culminate in an annual high-level policy dialogue at which the key CODESRIA research and policy messages will be shared, discussed and disseminated on-site and through various media. Further, within its framework of training, the Council will convene a Social Policy Institute in which selected participants will come from the academy, policy practitioners and policy activists. The CODESRIA Publication series will produce major publications on the policy process and actors. Partnerships with key policy actors will also be strengthened. This initiative is long overdue given the weight accorded to the question of policy relevance without a sustained inquiry into what policy relevance really means in a context of complex policy processes.



# RESEARCH TRAINING & CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

During the Strategic Plan period, the activities of the Training, Grants and Fellowships programme (TGF) will continue to focus on enhancing the methodological and research skills of early career and middle level academics, strengthen institutional bases for the training and emergence of a new generation of social scientists on the continent and contribute to increasing the pool of academics in the HSS.

The overall objective of the activities is to respond creatively, innovatively and in a timely manner to the training needs of African researchers, while encouraging innovation and experimentation in the development of new activities designed to address the constantly changing field of social science research on the continent and beyond. The following considerations will guide the nature of activities and mode of implementation:

- The need to decentralize certain activities with the aim of strengthening the role of regional institutions and universities in CODESRIA's activities and ease implementation of programmes;
- The need to continue and enrich the focus of the 'CODESRIA Annual Humanities and Social Science Campus' as a platform for senior scholars to engage in advanced dialogue on issues of theory and epistemology in the humanities and social sciences with a focus on mentoring a new generation academics;
- The need to have the methodological workshops go beyond discussion of field research methods as has been the case, and include focus on pedagogical and policy issues. This will holistically help the laureates improve capacity in the different roles they perform in universities as researchers, teachers and policy actors.
- The need to focus activities on regions and countries that are under-represented in CODESRIA programmes.

3 vehicles will be used to meet these objectives:

1. **Thematic Institutes:** annual thematic institutes targeting younger researchers and mid-career scholars mainly located in universities and research centres in Africa will be offered. The institutes will serve as platforms for mid-career and senior academics to engage in intellectual reflections on the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of undertaking research on identified themes, revisit emerging intellectual concerns, pose new questions that arise from the passage of time and the generation of new insights, and develop a new, collective intellectual agenda. The existing four thematic institutes: the Governance Institute,

the Gender Institute; the Child and Youth Studies Institute, and the Institute on Health, Politics and Society will be retained but will subsequently be conducted in more innovative ways to increase the number of participants and improve the quality of outcomes. Every year, particular themes will be identified and used to deepen researchers' technical and analytical skills. The training of trainers institute will be transformed into the *Senior Scholars Research Teaching and Graduate Mentorship Institute* to provide a platform for senior academics to engage in intellectual reflections on issues of conceptualization and methodology that would provide direction to the work of young scholars. Two new institutes will be launched; *'the Doctoral Students' Mentorship Institute* and Institute on Social Policy. The Doctoral Students' Mentorship Institute will entail scaled up interventions from the Small grants programme for thesis writing. The focus on contributing to the development of the social sciences in Africa, and the continuous renewal and strengthening of research capacities in African universities through the funding of primary research conducted by post-graduate students and professionals will be retained. From 2016 the programme has phased out support for Masters students to scale up support for PhD students. The Institute on Social Policy will provide a framework to train scholars and policy practitioners on the policy processes in Africa and discuss its intersections with basic research.

2. **Methodological and writing workshops:** these workshops have been offered in the past at regional levels. In the new programme cycle, the programs will continue to be offered in a more revamped manner focusing on individual institutions or a collaboration of individual institutions that will partner to host the programmes. CODESRIA will select a Director to oversee the workshops who will return a comprehensive scientific report to the Council on the quality and outcomes of the workshops. The programme will target early career academics and doctoral students to contribute to a new pool of academics who are able to publish their work through visible outlets. Subsequently, this will entrench perspectives that positively influence discourse and policy on and about Africa. Other grants under this intervention will focus on institutional strengthening targeting doctoral schools in HSS to undertake seminars, writing workshops and enhance supervisory capacities. Part of the support for conducting the workshops will be awarded to graduate schools on a competitive basis.
3. **Interventions to rebuild/re-create scholarly infrastructures and academic communities in the HSS:** Faculty seminars, journals publication and conferences are institutional practices that are crucial to maintaining an active and engaged scholarly community. In most universities, this infrastructure is a pale shadow of what existed before. Through the TGF Programme, CODESRIA will, in the 2017–2021 plan period, intervene in recreating these communities in selected universities on the continent to act as the vanguard to a truly HSS discourse. Through this intervention, CODESRIA hopes to achieve improved research capacity, collaboration and networking in HSS within African universities. By focusing on rebuilding centres of excellence in HSS, the objective is to have the centres collaborate more, both nationally and regionally, in research and teaching. The recreated centres will

serve as institutional units/hubs for research training and mentoring interventions. This intervention is aimed at fostering a strong HSS research community in Africa that can take its full place in international research networks. It will also contribute to institutional capacity by providing opportunities to HSS centres to improve their overall ability to manage research.

Many of the interventions outlined here will be part of the decentralization of select activities to partner universities. For instance, partner universities and research centres will be competitively selected and supported to conduct methodological workshops. CODESRIA Research Chairs will also be established in collaboration with carefully chosen university or other institutional partners engaged in or supporting research. The research chairs will be a critical complement to rethinking and initiating new graduate programmes in the HSS and higher education studies.





## PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Publications are a core component of the CODESRIA project. Providing publishing outlets for African scholars was one sure way of overcoming some of the obstacles to the projection of African scholarly voices both within Africa and on the global stage.

CODESRIA Publications will, during the 2017–2021 plan period, promote greater visibility and accessibility of African scholarship, scholarship that is informed by perspectives derived from and/or sympathetic with experiences emanating from the African continent, and increase the support to younger and female scholars. The Council will do this by publishing and disseminating the research findings in the CODESRIA Book Series and its peer-reviewed journals, supporting scholarly writing workshops for books and journals, organising dissemination and outreach activities, and working closely with the other programmes to ensure high quality publications on the strategic thematic areas. In doing so, the Council takes cognisance of recent transformations in African universities. The evolution of African universities has important implications for CODESRIA: many are doing better and want to partner with CODESRIA in conducting research and publishing. More universities are aware of the importance of research and aim to become strong research universities. They find CODESRIA a good partner for this reason.

However, owing to the excessive demand from within the community, especially pertaining to the growth of younger scholars, CODESRIA must be more selective in what it publishes. In the current Strategic Plan period, CODESRIA's aim is to publish mainly the best books from its programmes. The Council will reserve the right of first refusal over manuscripts coming out of its own programmes and projects, but will authorize the publication elsewhere of manuscripts that can be speedily published by other publishers so long as they acknowledge CODESRIA's research support.

CODESRIA will continue to publish its flagship journals in-house. The publication of the journals of professional associations will be restricted to only those that are up-to-date and maintain the regularity of their publication. Contracting journals to commercial publishers will be limited to the strict minimum given the problems of access in Africa associated with such arrangements. It has been difficult for Africans to be published in 'high quality journals' published elsewhere; therefore, instead of reducing the number of journals, CODESRIA will be compelled to devote more resources to publishing in the key areas of its intellectual agenda.

So far, the bulk of the articles published in CODESRIA journals are based on work done outside of its programmes. Under the new plan and programme cycle, a much greater effort will be made to ensure that CODESRIA journals also carry enough of the outstanding

research coming out of its programmes. Further, CODESRIA Bulletin will be revitalised to become a truly pan-African forum for debate not just among academics but also policy-thinkers. This is important because CODESRIA seeks to recapture the traffic of debate on African issues and direct both academics and policy actors to the core ideas and messages emanating from CODESRIA forums. An extension of this debate will also be available online on the CODESRIA website where a portal will be created as an extension for debating.

The main components of the CODESRIA Publications and Dissemination Programme will be maintained and improved upon during the new programme cycle. The aim is to ensure timely publication of the highest quality: CODESRIA Book Series, CODESRIA Journals, CODESRIA Working Papers, and CODESRIA Policy Briefs. The Council will invest more in quality control, and more consistently publish Policy Briefs out of the work that it supports. In addition to scholarly articles and book manuscripts, grant recipients and some conference participants will be invited to write Policy Briefs and disseminate material through other forms. Given the policy relevance of most of this work, the Briefs promise to play the very important role of furthering policy uptake of CODESRIA research and promoting conversations between policy-makers and researchers to the benefit of all. The Reflections on Policy Series will reinforce this goal.

Dissemination will be done using a combination of traditional as well as web-based methods. CODESRIA freely distributes all the works it publishes on its website and this open approach to knowledge will be continued albeit in a revised form with the goal of making knowledge available across Africa. Social media will also be used much more effectively than has so far been the case.



## DOCUMENTATION, INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Documentation and communication have become core components of the lives of all research institutions. Currently, both are largely driven by information and communications technologies (ICTs). The CODESRIA Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) has been expanded to reflect the changing nature and growing importance of knowledge management, particularly for developing countries. CODICE now has five sub-units, each engaged in a set of activities that are key to the research and knowledge management process that CODESRIA is engaged in. The key commitment of CODICE during the Strategic Plan period will include the following:

- CODESRIA will continue its work toward transforming the Documentation and Library Services Unit into the African Library of note for the social sciences and humanities. It will be made to better support CODESRIA research and research training and capacity enhancement programmes. Further, it will be enhanced to serve the larger African research community with adequate, up-to-date documentation, and access to sources of data and documentation. It will also serve as an effective outlet for CODESRIA research.
- The Information Technology Unit is the nerve centre of the Council, given that IT is indispensable to research and knowledge production and management processes. It will be reformed and reinforced to better serve these roles.
- The Communications Unit is being realigned to ensure effective communication within the organization and with CODESRIA's members, stakeholders and the general public. The knowledge produced by CODESRIA is only useful when people know it is there to be exploited in the first place and communication is central to this. Better communication is central to the Council's visibility, its convening power and its capacity to raise funds.

CODICE anchors on a series of knowledge management activities that address a very important objective of CODESRIA in the new plan and programme cycle, namely the radical democratization of knowledge about Africa and its place in the world through a process that will generate, acquire and make readily accessible to Africans significant amounts of knowledge. The aim is to boost knowledge production and teaching, provide a sound basis for policy-making and implementation as well as empower citizens to have more of a say in interactions with their leaders. Key components of this process include:

- i. The organization of biennial conferences on electronic publishing and communication whose present focus is the advocacy of a Common African Position on Open Access as

- enshrined in the Dakar Declaration on Open Access in Africa and the Global South jointly developed by CODESRIA, UNESCO and CLACSO in 2016. This project connects to the implementation of CODESRIA Open Journal System and Open Conferences System all aimed at ensuring conformity to modern technology applications in knowledge publishing and dissemination;
- ii. The rebranding of CODESRIA through, among other initiatives, the reconstruction of its website;
  - iii. The creation and deployment of the African Citation Index (ACI) for better gauging of the quantity and quality of African contributions to knowledge in the world. Alternative citation indexes reflecting the nature, scope and significance of the knowledge produced have been developed in Latin America, India and China. No such index exists in Africa. The ACI would fill that gap and allow for a much more comprehensive account and showcase of knowledge produced in Africa;
  - iv. The implementation of a CODESRIA Virtual Campus Project to extend the reach of CODESRIA institutes, workshops and conferences well beyond those scholars who are physically present for these activities;
  - v. The pooling of resources with Latin American, Asian, Middle Eastern and other Southern partners;
  - vi. The digitization of CODESRIA-funded theses, and other resources as well as acquisition of access to significant international knowledge resources;
  - vii. The expansion in the newly built CODESRIA Repository where the digitized resources, as well as other resources created in other formats are displayed for free public access;
  - viii. With the gradual transition to Open Access and the realization of the African Citation Index in October 2016, it is anticipated that dissemination and use of CODESRIA's publications will increase more rapidly in the course of the new Strategic Plan period.

**Outreach:** Strengthening relations with African governments, Regional Economic Communities, and regional and international organisations, and civil society. CODESRIA has an observer status with the AU and with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Council also has very good relations with the UNECA, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and several other multilateral organisations. The time has come for CODESRIA to take the links with some of these organisations, particularly the African Union Commission, to higher levels, by opening a Liaison Office at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The office will help in mobilising the research community to critically engage AU's work in a broad range of areas, including international partnerships. Among other things, the Liaison Officer will organise briefings for policy-makers; draw attention to CODESRIA publications and major events, and help identify experts from CODESRIA who could help with certain tasks for the AU.



## INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CODESRIA will continue the process of strengthening its institutional capacities to ensure it is an organisation that is well governed and has a secure financial foundation in the new plan period and programme cycle. The main objective is to ensure that the Council remains a premier institution that is governed in modern, democratic, transparent and accountable ways; an institution that upholds the principles of academic freedom and social responsibility and one whose knowledge output pioneers in key areas of intellectual work. In the new Strategic Plan period, work will go into ensuring that CODESRIA respects the principle of complementarity with, and subsidiarity vis-à-vis, African Universities, with the Council intervening programmatically only in areas that add value to the work of these institutions. Concrete steps will include investment in the following:

- i. Strengthening and renewing institutional governance and management of CODESRIA through the implementation of the recommendations of the three internal review committees on governance and membership, management and the intellectual agenda. Many of the recommendations of the governance and membership committee have been debated, adopted and are already in the process of implementation. The 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 2018, where new rules concerning membership and the election of the Council's leadership will first be implemented is thus a critical activity in which CODESRIA will invest significant resources and effort. Ensuring that the Council's reformed Executive and Scientific Committees function well is also something that requires financial investment and effort;
- ii. Increase in the size of CODESRIA's membership, in addition to better management and engagement with will be a critical aspect of the life and sustenance of the Council in the new Strategic Plan period;
- iii. Securing the funding base by diversifying the sources of funding and developing and raising funds for the sustainability of CODESRIA. Possibilities for up-scaling the endowment fund initiative and/or establishing a foundation will be explored;
- iv. Raising funds for and constructing a new CODESRIA headquarters (HQ) building. This will save rental costs and allow it to put in place facilities that are more in line with the Council's activities. The Government of Senegal has given land to CODESRIA for a new HQ building in a 'Science City', that is part of a new urban growth pole close to Dakar.

- v. Investing in M&E: The careful monitoring and evaluation of the Council's work and its outcomes are critical to augmenting CODESRIA's visibility, fundraising, reporting, improving programmes and influencing both that academic and policy worlds. The Council will invest in creating an M&E unit within the Council tasked with this work.
- vi. Staff training and the purchase of modern equipment such as servers, digitizing facilities, computers and a telephone system with the goal of increasing productivity and lowering overhead costs over the long run.



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