



Institute for Security Studies

POLICY BRIEF

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for South Africa are:

- Develop a vision and strategy – aligned to continental and regional frameworks – for engaging in development assistance.
- Effectively plan for longer-term engagements that require a sustained presence within the post-conflict country.
- Build the expertise to engage in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa.
- Develop dual strategic-level roles – one as watchdog for the African Agenda within the development community and the other as mediator between donors and post-conflict countries.
- Develop a track-two approach to development assistance and abide by principles of local ownership.
- Coordinate with other donors and local stakeholders to develop a shared vision.

South Africa and South Sudan Lessons for post-conflict development and peacebuilding partnerships

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SUMMARY

This policy brief analyses South Africa's post-conflict development and peacebuilding in South Sudan. South Africa has fraternal relations with South Sudan stemming from the ties of the liberation struggles of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). Following the signing of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, South Africa has also been instrumental in providing development and mediation assistance to South Sudan. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki, as chair of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), plays a key mediating role between Sudan and South Sudan. Recently, the ANC committed itself to 'deepening and broadening its relationship with the SPLM' and the South African government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for closer co-operation with the Government of South Sudan (GOSS).

South Africa's long history with South Sudan provides it with potential access for deeper engagement and the ability to shape the nature of development there. What type of post-conflict development and peacebuilding activities has South Africa engaged in? What, if any, is the overall thrust guiding South Africa's programming? What lessons can we learn from South Africa's interventions in South Sudan? This brief contends that South Africa should be charting a new way forward for development assistance in Africa; one that is aligned with, and facilitates, the overarching post-conflict development and peacebuilding programmes in the AU's Agenda 2063 as well as the AU's Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa seeks to strengthen and deepen its commitment to addressing underdevelopment and the marginalisation of Africa through the formation of a development agency, SADPA. Many of South Africa's government departments are engaged in international development cooperation. These initiatives, however, are largely uncoordinated and lack coherence in implementation, primarily because of the absence of an overarching policy and coordinating authority. SADPA is intended to provide this strategic direction. A good place to start is to reflect on South Africa's past engagement, using this as yardstick and/or compass for future policy and programming orientation.

This policy brief focuses on South African post-conflict development and peacebuilding engagements in South Sudan. It is based on desktop and field research, the latter conducted in Juba in August 2013. Some 30 interviews and two focus group discussions,

the latter with civil society and women's organisations, were conducted.

BRIEF CONFLICT HISTORY

South Sudan's quest for autonomy began in 1955 with the independence of Sudan. Southerners asserted that Khartoum imposed an Arab identity and reneged on an agreement to implement a federalist system of government.¹ A civil war ensued and lasted until 1972. A second civil war began in 1983, prompted by the then President Jaafar Nimeiri's decision to introduce Sharia law and his default on the autonomy arrangements. The SPLA's 22 year rebellion, led by John Garang, resulted in the deaths of more than 2.5 million people and the displacement of another 4 million.²

In 2005 the signing of the CPA led to a ceasefire. Key provisions in the agreement related to regional autonomy for southern Sudan, representation in a national power-sharing agreement and a referendum in the south in 2011. Following the referendum, South Sudan became the newest state in the international system on the 9th July 2011, but its newfound freedom brought with it a host of additional challenges.

South Sudan has a predominantly subsistence-based agricultural economy and relies heavily on oil, which accounts for 98% of the public revenue.³ Although 75% of pre-2011 Sudan's overall oil reserves are in South Sudan, the refineries and pipeline are in Sudan creating interdependence, uncertainty and continued tension between the two states. There are also other unresolved issues between these two countries, including those relating to citizenship, cross-border security, border demarcations and the status of Abyei. The AUHIP, led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, is charged with mediating these outstanding issues.⁴

South Sudan is characterised by poverty, lack of services, rapid population growth, weak institutions, limited human resource capacity and continued instability as a result of ethnic tensions.⁵ In addition, President Salva Kiir's recent sacking of the Vice President, the Secretary-General of the SPLM, and many ministers in July 2013, may be the result of a growing power struggle among the political elite. Some view these dismissals as an effort to stem the tide of corruption in South Sudan, while others perceive it as a clampdown on rivals to the President.⁶

The SPLM remains the dominant party in South Sudan and, given the newness of its independence, it seems unlikely that the political space will be opened in the near future. The next elections are scheduled for 2015, but there is a possibility that these will be delayed to allow for the completion of a new census.

SOUTH AFRICAN POST-CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

South Africa's connection with South Sudan spans decades. The ANC was an ardent supporter of the SPLA/M during the Sudanese civil war. When the SPLM was founded in 1983, the ANC proclaimed that it shared a common vision with the SPLA/M for a 'democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society [...] free from enslavement and oppression'.⁷ There was a shared experience of exclusion, repression, racism, armed struggle and exile that linked the ANC and the SPLM and South Africa's successful liberation provided a good case study from which to draw best practice.

South Africa quickly established official relations with South Sudan signing agreements to establish diplomatic relations, an MoU on General Cooperation,⁸ and a Declaration of Intent on Defence.⁹ Other MoUs have been proposed in areas such as trade and economic cooperation, transport, agriculture and culture. There is a lack of co-ordination on these agreements, but the South Sudanese Department of Foreign Affairs is now in the process of collating all previously signed MoUs.

On the whole, respondents in South Sudan were positive about South Africa's interventions with South Africa frequently being described as a 'big brother' or 'older uncle' and seen as a role model for transformation. Furthermore, there is the continued belief that South Africa has a better understanding of the local context than Western donors. As one official remarked 'The West has gone too far ahead so South Africa is easier to match'. There were, however, some negative perceptions of the protracted mediation by the AUHIP, which is causing frustration in South Sudan. South Africa's interventions are outlined below.

The table shows the diverse areas of engagement by the South African government and non-governmental agencies. The belief that South Africa has valuable experience to share with South Sudan has been translated into capacity-building programmes and many information sharing/best practice exchanges. In 2004 the South African government, UNISA and the SPLM signed a tripartite MoU for human resource capacity and institution-building in southern Sudan and by January 2010 more than 1000 officials had been trained.¹⁰ The training areas included leadership, diplomacy, public service administration, public finance management, legal affairs, policing, intergovernmental relations, government communications, and management of government information.¹¹

Though much appreciation was expressed for this training, interviewees highlighted that at times the wrong people had been selected, the training was not specific enough for their professions and there was a need for continuous training.

Further capacity building has been undertaken by PALAMA. They subcontracted Regenesys business school in 2011 to implement the Khaedu project, which began in 2008.¹² This CIDA funded project was implemented in Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan and focussed on improving service delivery in the public service.

Interviewees noted that it was too short (two-weeks), was concentrated in Juba, required monitoring and evaluation and that it came to an abrupt end. By contrast, IGAD professionals engaged in capacity building were embedded in the public service for long periods (approximately two years).

For South Africa to have an impact on the public service of South Sudan, it needs long-term commitment, and coordination with other actors so that it does not duplicate programmes. It also needs to narrow to areas where it can best make an intervention. Public administration is not South Africa's strongest point and it therefore needs to be discerning on where it can best add value.

Given its limited resources, its energies might be better channelled to more strategic issues, for example, instilling ownership of and pride in the public service. This can be done by highlighting the good and the bad experiences of post-independence transformation of the public service across Africa so that the same mistakes are not repeated; concentrating on creating an enabling environment and/or regulatory frameworks; focussing on training diplomats so that a common African

Table 1 Examples of South African post-conflict and peacebuilding engagement in South Sudan

Governance	Development of the Child Act (University of Cape Town).
	Observing the referendum (35-member team consisting of members of parliament, government officials and representatives from civil society).
Capacity-building	Training of diplomats by the Department of Foreign Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO), Policy Research and Analysis Unit (PRAU).
	Workshops on peace, reconciliation and governance; work with the Peace Commission and the Community Security and Small Arms Commission; work on human rights and public media (ACCORD).
	Regional Capacity Building Project for civil service by the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA).
	Capacity building of top and middle-level government managers by the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).
	Training of the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) by the South African Police Service (SAPS) on operational training and senior management, crime prevention, sexual harassment, community policing, cyber crime and crowd management, etc.
	Training of key security personnel and institution building by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).
	Exchange between the universities of Juba and Fort Hare (Higher Education Department) and University of the Western Cape (Law Department).
Implementation support	Mediation between the Sudan and South Sudan (Mbeki as Chair of AUHIP).
	Support with electoral materials for elections in 2010.
	As part of UN Police (UNPOL) under UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
	Securing airspace during independence day celebrations (SANDF).
	Demining (Mechem – subsidiary of Denel).
	Refurbishing government buildings (KV3).
Economic development & trade	Arms (Denel), beer (SAB Miller), mining exploration (New Kush Exploration), agribusiness (Joint Aid Management), cellular network (MTN), cement (Afrisam), banking (Stanbic).
	MoU with the Council of Geoscience to map minerals.
Other	NGO's engaged in information sharing, namely, IJR, ACCORD, ISS, SAWID, IGD, AISA and the SA Council of Churches. There are also South Africans working for other organisations in South Sudan in their individual capacities.

agenda develops; and assisting with the establishment of a public service academy.

Given the limited funding available, South Africa has preferred to engage with South Sudan in terms of trilateral arrangements, where it provides the 'expertise' and the third party provides the funding. Cognisant of South Africa's access and potential to share experiences, other governments have been interested in entering into such agreements. For example, South Africa and South Sudan entered into a trilateral agreement with the German government to conduct training of rule of law institutions, and with the Norwegian government to conduct police training to support the CPA and provide overall security capacity building.¹³

There are obviously gains and disadvantages to be had in these tri-lateral arrangements. The gains revolve around a win-win situation where South Africa and South Sudan are able to access funding to implement agreed-upon projects, while the donors' access and credibility is also enhanced. However, the project is then also at risk of collapsing if the donor decides to pull out – as has been the case with some of the projects. Here too, South Africa would need to make strategic decisions regarding in which projects it can depend upon third-party assistance for, and which are important enough for it to want to sustain and therefore would need to invest in.

ACCORD has had a long-term physical presence and concentrates on training the Peace Commission. It was also the only South African organisation with which civil society actors stated they had worked. Generally respondents were enthusiastic about the organisation's work noting that its appropriateness and context-specificity. There is merit in ACCORD's approach of immersing itself within the country,

listening to the people's needs, working with a cross-section of the populace and responding accordingly by providing a wide range of experiences from other countries.

One concern raised by South Sudanese civil society actors was that donors had taken on the role of implementers, thus taking opportunities that could have been given to local organisations, or that they cherry-picked organisations. This impacts on local ownership. Civil society in South Sudan is relatively weak, under-resourced and in need of capacity building initiatives to increase impact and sustainability of its projects.

South Africa would do well to consider a 'track-two' approach to development, taking into account the principle of local ownership and grounded in communities' needs and wants. South Africa, through SADPA, must therefore engage in local level dialogues and engage with civil society, including women's organisations, to generate relevant and sustainable interventions.

Despite the emphasis on trade relations with South Sudan,¹⁴ and the many business exchanges, few South African companies are present. SAB Miller chartered a path for South African companies by establishing a brewery in 2009. With an initial investment of \$37 million it has been able to create employment for more than 500 South Sudanese as well as building an educational facility, providing the local community with access to clean water and financial gain through royalties.

They indicated that there were many challenges in conducting business (electricity, sewerage, foreign currency etc), but these were not insurmountable and encouraged companies to come to South Sudan. South Africa's arms manufacturer, Denel, has also been active in South Sudan – on the one hand demining through its subsidiary Mechem, and on the other selling arms.¹⁵

When asked about future South African engagement, South Sudanese stakeholders referred to the need for self-sustainability and for projects relating to entrepreneurship for youths, micro-financing, training on trade negotiations and international trade standards, drafting of regulatory frameworks, mapping of mineral deposits, civic education, technical and financial advice for statistics, census data collection and donor proposal writing.

However, it is not prudent for South Africa to respond to every request – it needs to develop its own strategic plan to guide its interventions. It also needs to align its vision with broader continental and regional PCRD processes. Post-conflict countries, in the face of an onslaught of donors with their concomitant policies, programmes and projects, need guidance to retain ownership of development agendas.

Within the development community, South Africa can play the role of watchdog for the implementation of the African Agenda and act as mediator between donors and post-conflict countries. Within specific post-conflict countries South Africa should determine its own capacity and match those to the requirements of the country within the framework of its own strategy. It also needs to become more innovative in its approaches to have maximum impact with limited resources.

DDR and SSR are still the game-changers for South Sudan – South Africa can do much more in assisting the country with these processes. Much also remains to be done in terms of bolstering a peace architecture and gender equality in South Sudan and Africa at large.

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NOTES

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