The role of social capital and conflict transformation in Africa.
Levels of social capital

Social Capital

- Social bonding
- Social bridging
- Social linking
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<th>Main concepts and mechanisms</th>
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<td>Trust, Reciprocity, Values</td>
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Social capital is defined here as ‘as the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively and bridge divisions.

It includes the following levels:

- **Social Bonding** – linking individuals and groups along horizontal lines through trust; reciprocal support and positive identity

- **Social Bridging** – diverse groups with various access to symbolic power and resources

- **Social Linking** : connecting across vertical levels of power especially in relation to governments and the international community
Elements of social capital

- Networks and associations
- Trust
- Reciprocity
- Norms and values

The elements are necessary for facilitate co-ordination and co-operation but crosscutting ties amongst the levels is necessary for growth.

Connection with groups that have different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds (such as broad-based social movements and human right organisations) can further foster social capital.
SOCIAL BONDING
(PUTNAM)

- Similar backgrounds
- Inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups
- Can be both bounded and exclusive
- Not always representative
- Based Trust, reciprocal support & positive identity
- Linking individuals along horizontal lines
SOCIAL BRIDGING

- Networks and associations are both formal and informal
- There can be an overlap of membership
- Explore if the relationships are insular or co-operative parochial or inclusive; do they operate for the benefit of a few or for the public good
- How aware are they of other organisations and how motivated to co-operate and co-ordinate their services?
- Bridging social capital integrates the levels and nature of contact and engagement between different social groups or communities linking diverse groups with varying levels of access to material and symbolic power.
- Brings people in contact with resources and benefits that are accrued from having a wide and varied range of social contacts
Linking social capital has more recently been defined as an important conceptual distinction and refers to connecting people across explicit vertical power differentials, while working in poor communities.

It is especially in relation to the role and responsibility of representatives of government institutions for delivering key services and for influencing relevant policies.

The synergy between the levels and the overall context in which they are embedded is seldom addressed adequately.
Challenges

- Mistrust
- Lack of participation and co-operation
- No co-ordination
- Fighting for the same resources and claim to fame
- Local politics
- Lack of synergy
- Exclusion versus inclusion
- Often a lack of ‘cultural match’ between external policies and local, traditional methods of understanding and dealing with problems.
Inter-relational reflexivity to enhance co-operative behavior

Figure 1: Four inter-relational reflexive loops
Inter-relational reflexivity

- Understanding power: Who has the power; why do they have it and how is it being used?
- Moral positioning: What will be good for all of us as opposed to only some of us – where do we want to get to?
- Account-ability and Response-ability which is named, clarified and negotiated (rights come with responsibilities). What will this look like in practice?
- Performance – waking the talk - where actions (or lack there of) are transparent and followed up. How can preferred actions be enhanced and appreciated?
Dominant ideology comprises of beliefs and practices that frame how people make sense of their experience and live their lives. It manages to reproduce itself with minimal opposition in unequal societies when it works well. So it convinces people it is in their best interest to go along with the dominant discourse and to actually perpetuate these inequalities themselves.
Here we mainly refer to the Foucauldian view of power relations (Foucault, 1980: 96–102), which involves examining power in local situations where it becomes capillary (grassroots level)

- unpacking the operations of power and seeing how power can be not only repressive and negative, but also positive and productive. Who has what kind of power and how is it being used

- considering power in terms of how it is negotiated between people; how power circulates and creates individuals who experience and exercise power, rather than act as inanimate objects or victims in micro-practices of power
It is important to shift the locus of control for addressing the effects of the war from the external agencies, who implement interventions, to the people who are directly experiencing the effects.

The power to determine processes, gain access to resources and achieve outcomes, needs to shift from those outside the local context to those within it.

Strategies must enable people to see the power they have to determine the processes of engagement with more powerful others as well as to bring forth their own strength and power.
Deconstructing power

- Critically examine position of power and how this power is used – thus grapple with comparative outcomes of multiple stand points
- Applying this understanding to the problem story on a micro level through mapping effects.
- Collectively creating a shift in operations of power and control towards a preferred outcome.
- Examining and marshalling the social controls at macro level on a more long term basis
I will ask you – you have been sleeping in the bush at night – do you think the politicians slept in the bush?

And when you are away in the bush some houses are burnt down - Did you see any of the politicians’ houses being burnt down?

And now you are too scared to send your children to school in the meantime the politicians are sending their children to school so they can build a future.

So what do you think about that?
From a moral development angle

- Concerned with individual rights and democratically decided laws.
- Individual is entirely guided by his or her own conscience.

From a moral action position the light moves to being a public rather than a private act and is sensitive to on-going interaction with others, whilst being mindful of the particular context.
Negotiating accountability and responsibility

- Establish who are all involved e.g. family and community members.
- The exact nature of this responsibility and accountability is negotiated with everyone involved.
- Collectively assessing if the outcome is in the interest of self or one another and does it include the most vulnerable.
People examine how they experience themselves in relation to others and context.

Often this means questioning and challenging the status quo through a carefully facilitated process in a safe space.

Performativity is both pragmatic and interactionist bringing culture and the person into play.

After creating an awareness the negotiated aim is for people to perform a specific position rather than state it.
Examples of social capital (or lack of) on different levels

- No national agreement on per diems.
- Initially no government response on training programmes
- Local response in close partnership with communities
- Intervention by big donor on government level – no consultation
- Government intervention
- Local collapse
- Similar example from Sri-Lanka where psycho-social workers are not recognised on government level in either policy or structural and professional level.
How can external parties foster an effective collaboration with local parties and decision makers?

- International – Regional – National & Local interventions
- Participatory and inclusive methods with the relevant people on every level of policy making and programming (assessment; planning; implementation and monitoring & evaluation) not only for donor reports.
- Develop knowledge and skills in local programmes of which those involved can take ownership
- Be aware of and name power differentials
- Play an active role in facilitating social capital in bridging and linking the different parties.
What steps can ensure sustainability after external parties leave?

- Involvement from the onset on an appropriate scale
- Create networks with on-going support
- Being clear about the role of external actors = what we can and can not respond to as well as at what point the external party will withdraw
- Advocate for governmental support for inclusion of whatever group you are representing in policy development and legal frameworks for protection of youth
- Foster Response-ability and Account-ability of all levels
STRENGTHENING SOCIAL FABRIC AND HEALING COMMUNITIES

(Yvonne Sliep, 2008)

INTER-SECTORAL & MULTILAYERED INTERVENTIONS

PARTICIPATION - COMMUNICATION - CO-ORDINATION

MOBILISING EXISTING RESOURCES & CAPACITIES

SOCIAL BRIDGING SOCIAL LINKING

GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES
  - community stories
  - local solutions

ELECTED COMMITTEES
  - sustaining action
  - referral system

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
  - multiple roles
  - inter-sectoral

COMMUNITY COUNSELLORS
  - individuals/families
  - communities

DISTRICT AUTHORITIES
  - accountability
  - responsibility

OTHER ACTIVE LEADERSHIP
  - formal
  - informal

NGOs; CBOs; TRADE SECTOR
  - co-operation
  - co-ordination

DONOR SECTOR
  - local support
  - national visibility

GOVERNMENT & MINISTRIES
  - co-operation
  - policy & legislation

(INTER)NATIONAL AGENCIES
  - rights & responsibility
  - resources
FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

- Increasing understanding of the problem and especially the contextual and inter-personal relational influences on the problem.
- Promoting creative problem solving
- Building agency, efficacy and capacity
- Ability to transfer understanding and skills to different contexts
- Building self- and collective confidence and esteem
- Fostering mutually supportive relationships
- Creating more equitable relationships
From individuals to communities

- Interventions usually focus on either individual or structural approaches in post-war or post-disaster contexts.

- Grappling with processes that operate recursively amongst individuals, households, communities and society are complex and often avoided.

- If there is to be a shift away from external agencies towards more independence then strategies need to be strength based focusing on local solutions for local problems.